



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

TURKMENISTAN

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 25 MARCH 2018

ODIHR Election Assessment Mission
Final Report



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**TURKMENISTAN
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ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 25 March parliamentary elections. The mission assessed the compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation.

The 25 March elections lacked important prerequisites of a genuinely democratic electoral process. The political environment is only nominally pluralist and does not offer voters political alternatives. Exercise of fundamental freedoms is severely curtailed, inhibiting free expression of the voters' will. Despite measures to demonstrate transparency, the integrity of elections was not ensured, leaving veracity of results in doubt. Additional efforts must be undertaken to develop democratic institutions enabling people's participation in public affairs in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations.

Turkmenistan is a presidential republic, with legislative power vested in the 125-member parliament (*Mejlis*) elected for a five-year term in single-mandate constituencies. Checks on the executive power are weak and the office of presidency is dominant in the constitutional architecture. The reintroduction of national People's Council in the Constitution has the potential to further weaken the parliament's authority and role in political life.

The legal framework for parliamentary elections was improved with amendments that expanded the rights of observers, adjusted electoral deadlines, enhanced the role of political parties in candidate nomination, and mandated publication of final election results. However, further legal reforms are necessary to address prior ODIHR recommendations in key areas, including suffrage rights, election administration, voter registration, campaign and campaign financing, and election day procedures.

Election administration is headed by the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC), which published a calendar of activities, issued guidance for lower-level election commissions, and prepared voter information videos. However, transparency of election administration was limited due to the absence of regular public sessions and published decisions. Days before election day, web cameras were installed in a number of polling stations throughout the country, reportedly at the presidential order, without a CEC decision or other legal basis. The lack of independence of election administration from state authorities is of concern.

Voter lists are compiled by Precinct Election Commissions, anew for each electoral process. There are no safeguards against multiple registration and prior ODIHR recommendations on this matter remain unaddressed. According to the CEC, 3,286,138 voters were registered as of 1 March 2018, but the lack of any published data on adult population of Turkmenistan prevents any assessment of accuracy and inclusiveness of voter registration. The law continues to restrict voting rights of prisoners and persons with mental disabilities, at odds with international standards.

¹ The English version of this report is the only official document. An unofficial translation is available in Turkmen and Russian languages.

According to the CEC, all 284 candidates, including 71 women, nominated by political parties and groups of citizens, were registered. Most candidates were officials or public sector employees. Two or more candidates were registered in every constituency. The law imposes a 10-year residency requirement for candidacy and bans anyone with unexpired or unexpunged criminal record, irrespective of its gravity. These limitations are not fully aligned with international standards for democratic elections.

Under the Electoral Code, candidates are entitled to campaign freely and enjoy equal rights regarding campaign meetings and access to mass media. In practice, the CEC arranged for uniform campaign activities, which consisted of candidates' biographies published in print media, one pre-recorded appearance of each candidate on a state television channel, and three meetings with voters for each candidate. All candidates aligned themselves with the incumbent president's policies. The campaign was barely visible and appeared to generate little public interest.

Regulations on campaign finance are scarce and do not correspond to the reality of how the electoral campaigns are organized. The law mandates that political parties have to report on their financial activities and provides for sanctions if they fail to submit reports on campaign expenditures. However, parties and candidates did not incur any campaign costs as the CEC organized and financed all campaign activities. Political parties have never reported any donations.

The media landscape is characterized by the state's monopoly and absence of alternative or critical views, depriving voters of the ability to make informed choices. With only one state provider of Internet and mobile communications, restrictive regulations constrain the publication of online content and many websites and social media are blocked. Candidates addressed voters in uniform ten-minute pre-recorded TV appearances. There were no joint discussions or debates with candidates. With the exception of the incumbent president's son, candidates did not appear to be featured in the news.

The law provides for national and international election observation, which is in line with OSCE commitments. National observers were nominated by political parties, candidates, public associations and groups of citizens. However, independent citizen observation is hampered by the absence of independent civil society organizations. Activities of state-endorsed public associations did not amount to meaningful observation. Contrary to the Electoral Code and CEC instructions, the ODIHR EAM was prevented from observing vote count in several polling stations.

The Electoral Code provides for the right to seek legal redress of all electoral participants. The lack of clarity in the jurisdictions and appeal procedure may jeopardize the right to an effective remedy. As no complaints were filed with any bodies, the complaint resolution mechanisms were not tested.

In line with ODIHR's methodology, the EAM did not observe election day processes in a systematic or comprehensive manner. The limited number of polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM were well equipped. Voter turnout data reported from the polling stations visited appeared to be significantly inflated. Serious irregularities were observed during voting, counting, and tabulation of results. The CEC published final results on 30 March with all seats decided in the first round.

This report offers a number of recommendations to support efforts to bring elections in Turkmenistan in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations relate to freedom of the media, election administration, voter registration, campaigning, and election day procedures. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities to improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan (MFA) to observe the 25 March parliamentary elections the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for these elections.² The ODIHR EAM, headed by Miklos Haraszti, consisted of six election experts from six OSCE participating States. The EAM was based in Ashgabat from 13 to 30 March, but the experts also visited Dashoguz and Mary during the campaign and the conduct of the early voting.

The electoral process was assessed for its compliance with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, and with the national legislation. In line with ODIHR's methodology, the EAM did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner. However, mission members visited a limited number of polling stations during voting, counting, and tabulation of results.

The ODIHR EAM wishes to thank the authorities of Turkmenistan for the invitation to observe these elections, as well as the MFA and its delegation to the OSCE, the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC), and other state and local authorities for their assistance and co-operation. The EAM also wishes to express gratitude to the representatives of political parties, candidates, public associations, media, embassies of OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation and international organizations for their co-operation, and special gratitude to the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat for its generous co-operation and support.

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

According to the Constitution, Turkmenistan is a democratic, secular presidential republic based on the rule of law. A new version of the Constitution, enacted by the parliament in 2016, provides for separation of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial. However, checks on the executive power are weak and the office of presidency is dominant in the constitutional architecture.³ Political space is effectively monopolized by the incumbent President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who holds the office since 2007 and was re-elected in 2017 for a new seven-year term. There is no constitutional limit on the number of presidential terms of office.

The legislative power is exercised by a unicameral parliament (*Mejlis*), which convenes for sessions at least two times a year.⁴ The reintroduction of national People's Council (*Halk Maslahaty*) in the Constitution in October 2017 has the potential to further weaken the parliament's authority and role in political life.⁵ *Halk Maslahaty* is defined in the constitutional law as the highest representative body. It has the authority to issue binding decisions that must be executed by the president, cabinet of ministers, *Mejlis* and other state bodies.⁶

² See [previous ODIHR reports](#) on Turkmenistan.

³ See [ODIHR Comments on the Draft Constitution of Turkmenistan](#), Warsaw, 21 July 2016.

⁴ Current members of parliament (MPs) informed the ODIHR EAM that the outgoing *Mejlis* held as many as seven sessions during some years, each session lasting two to three days.

⁵ *Halk Maslahaty* is chaired by the president and its members include speaker and all members of the *Mejlis*, all ministers, chair of the Supreme Court, General Prosecutor, ombudsperson, and representatives of local administration and councils. The current Constitution revives this constitutional body abolished in 2008 and gives it competencies that overlap with and may, in reality, supersede powers of the *Mejlis*.

⁶ *Halk Maslahaty* is expected to be appointed after the 25 March elections.

The Democratic Party (DP) got the majority of seats in the outgoing *Mejlis*, elected in 2013.⁷ At the initiative of President Berdymuhamedov, a possibility for more than one political party to exist was introduced in law in 2012, and two new political parties have been registered since then – the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (PIE) in 2012 and the Agrarian Party (AP) in 2014.⁸ While nominally pluralist, the political landscape lacks diversity of views, as all three political parties align themselves with the President Berdymuhamedov’s policies and differ only in their professed support base.⁹

Fundamental political freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly are proclaimed in the Constitution but their exercise is strictly limited in practice, with all related spheres being in firm state control. ODIHR has previously noted undue restrictions on fundamental freedoms, which have also been subject of recommendations by the UN Human Rights Committee.¹⁰ These recommendations are yet to be implemented by Turkmenistan.

IV. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under the Constitution, the 125-member *Mejlis* is directly elected for a five-year term in single-mandate constituencies. To be elected, a candidate must receive above 50 per cent of the votes cast. If no candidate gains more than half of the votes in the first round, a second round is held within two weeks between the two frontrunners from the first round.

The Electoral Code provides that no later than 70 days prior to election day the 125 constituencies should be established by the CEC. Constituencies are formed for electoral purposes only and do not correspond to administrative territorial units. The law specifies that the number of voters per constituency shall be similar and not deviate from the average by more than 10 per cent (15 per cent in remote areas). Prior to election day, the number of voters registered per constituency was not made public. According to the data presented by the CEC after the election day, with the exception of constituency 9 in Ashgabat, the deviation in the number of voters among constituencies was generally compliant with the legislation, in line with previous ODIHR recommendations.¹¹

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 2016 Constitution and the 2013 Electoral Code. The Constitution, last amended in October 2017, declares fundamental freedoms and the right to elect and to be elected on the basis of universal, equal, direct suffrage through secret ballot. However, despite previous ODIHR recommendations, undue limitations to suffrage rights remain,

⁷ Successor to the Communist Party of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, the Democratic Party was led by Turkmenistan’s first President Saparmurat Niyazov until his death in 2006. The incumbent President Berdymuhamedov suspended his membership in the DP in 2012.

⁸ OSCE participating States in the paragraph 3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document recognize “the importance of pluralism with regard to political organizations”. Paragraph 20 of the 2010 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation recommends that “Legislation regarding political parties should aim to facilitate a pluralistic political environment. The ability of citizens to receive a variety of political viewpoints, such as through the expression of political party platforms, is commonly recognized as critical element of a robust democratic society”.

⁹ The PIE claims over 10,000 members and appeals primarily to business people; the AP claims over 40,000 members and appeals to the rural population; the DP claims over 210,000 members and a broad support base.

¹⁰ See UN Human Rights Committee’s (HRC) [Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Turkmenistan](#), 20 April 2017, paragraphs 42-49.

¹¹ As compared to the national average of 26,329 registered voters per constituency, four constituencies varied by more than 15 per cent. The largest deviation was that of constituency 9 in Ashgabat, with 46 per cent difference from the national average. No explanation of the reasons for such a deviation was given to the ODIHR EAM.

including based on residency and disability. Turkmenistan is a party to major international instruments related to democratic elections.¹²

The 2013 Electoral Code has been amended four times since the last parliamentary elections, most recently in 2017. Positively, some changes were aimed to enhance the transparency of the process. For instance, 2014 amendments grant observers access to more phases of the electoral process, and the right to claimants to be informed of the decisions on their complaints; 2017 amendments mandate the CEC to publish final election results in mass media and adjust some electoral deadlines.¹³ Other amendments excluded public associations from the right to nominate candidates with the stated aim to strengthen political parties. However, most ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed and legal reform is still needed regarding key aspects, including the formation of election commissions, the compilation of voter lists, the system for complaints and appeals, and campaign and campaign finance regulations.

The legal framework is supplemented by decisions issued by the CEC. On a positive note, for these elections the CEC issued detailed guidelines for lower level commissions, published information about the candidates competing for elections, which included their party affiliation, and established a website. However, the principles of accessibility of the legislation and legal certainty remain compromised. CEC is not required to publish its decisions either in an official gazette or on the website. Instead, only summary notes of CEC decisions were published. Moreover, updated versions of the laws applicable in these elections were not made publicly available by the CEC.

Overall, the legal framework lays the ground rules for the conduct of electoral processes. However, genuine political competition would require the development of more detailed procedures. The current regulatory framework on key elements, including voter registration, candidate registration, election day procedures, tabulation of election results, political party and campaign finance, complaints and appeals, would be clearly insufficient in a competitive electoral process.

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The parliamentary elections were conducted by a five-tier election administration: the CEC, 6 Regional (*velayat*) Election Commissions (RECs), including in the City of Ashgabat, 60 District (*etrap*) Election Commissions (DECs), 125 Constituency (*okrug*) Election Commissions (ConECs), and 2,604 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), including 39 in diplomatic representations of Turkmenistan.¹⁴ All election commissions are appointed for a five-year term.

The CEC is a permanent body with 15 members nominated by political parties, public associations, and groups of citizens and appointed by the president. Although declared by the legal framework, the CEC's independence is not effectively ensured by this method of appointment. Just days before the elections, the President Berdymuhamedov reportedly instructed the CEC to implement live

¹² Including the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2003 UN Convention against Corruption, and 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

¹³ The mandate of lower level election commissions has been extended to five years, same as the term of higher level commissions; constituencies have to be formed 70 days prior to election day, instead of 60 days, to allow for better preparation of elections.

¹⁴ One additional level of election administration, *Gengesh* Election Commissions, administers only local elections.

webcasting from polling stations.¹⁵ ODIHR has previously recommended revising the selection and appointment procedures of CEC members to safeguard compliance with international standards.¹⁶

Although *de jure* any citizen may become a member of an election commission, in practice many RECs, DECs, ConECs and PECs are composed of public sector employees. For instance, at the REC level only 2 out of 63 commissioners work in the private sector. Most PEC members met with by the ODIHR EAM were employees of the institution where the PEC was located and their positions in the PEC often mirrored the professional hierarchy, with the manager serving as the PEC Chair. Such arrangements do not ensure independence of election administration and individual commission members.

While 4 out of 15 CEC members are women, none of them holds a leadership position.¹⁷ Women's representation is equally low at the REC level, where 15 out of 63 REC members are women and only one of them holds the position of REC chair.¹⁸

Safeguards should be developed and implemented to ensure that election commissions are independent from the government and local self-governance bodies, and guided by the principles of transparency, professionalism, and impartiality. In particular, PEC members could be appointed from different institutions, and workplace hierarchy should not be transferred to the commissions. Mechanisms to improve gender balance among the commissioners should be considered.

RECs perform mostly administrative and logistical tasks in support of the ConECs, aggregate the voting results in each region (and in the city of Ashgabat), and deliver the ConEC results protocols to the CEC. DEC's role consists in establishing the PECs and providing operational support. ConECs have a wide range of responsibilities, including the registration of candidates, organization of campaign meetings for contestants, and establishing the voting results in the electoral constituency. The PECs are responsible for the compilation of voter lists and the conduct of voting and counting.

In spite of efforts made by the CEC, the administration of elections generally lacked transparency. Partially addressing previous ODIHR recommendations, the CEC published a calendar of electoral activities, guidelines for all lower-level election commissions, observers and media representatives, as well as instructions on voter and candidate registration. In a positive development, information was channelled through the CEC website, supplementing the information available in mass media.¹⁹ During the election period, the CEC held only three sessions.²⁰ Although the law requires that CEC decisions be published, only basic voter information was made available in the mass media and on

¹⁵ The CEC did not issue any public decision regarding the webcasting and acknowledged that the web cameras were installed based on the President Berdymuhamedov's order. The CEC selected 37 polling stations throughout the country, from which voting was streamed on the CEC website on election day from 7.00 until 19.00.

¹⁶ Paragraph 20 of the 1996 [UN HRC General Comment No. 25 to Article 25 of the ICCPR](#) requires that "[a]n independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and to ensure that it is conducted fairly, impartially and in accordance with established laws which are compatible with the Covenant".

¹⁷ The CEC leadership is exercised by its chair, deputy chair, and secretary.

¹⁸ The CEC did not provide information on the composition of DECs, ConECs, and PECs.

¹⁹ The CEC website is in Turkmen, Russian and English, with the Turkmen version being the most resourced.

²⁰ The final CEC session, where the results of parliamentary elections were reportedly approved, took place on 28 March, while the ODIHR EAM was still present in the country. However, the EAM was not invited to attend this session.

the CEC website.²¹ To fully comply with international standards, key ODIHR recommendations related to the transparency of the CEC decisions and operations remain to be addressed.²²

According to the CEC, the webcasting from a number of polling stations was meant to enhance the transparency of the electoral process. However, as the decision was not communicated to the public and the procedure was not foreseen in the legislation, this last-minute exercise could potentially have an intimidating effect on voters and PECs.

Innovations and changes to the electoral process should be developed in consultation with the stakeholders, well ahead of the elections, be based on the appropriate legal framework and imply wide voter education.

VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens over 18 years of age have the right to vote, except those declared incompetent by a court or those serving prison sentences. Disenfranchisement of all prisoners, irrespective of the gravity of the crime, is at odds with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and has been subject of recommendations by the UN Human Rights Committee.²³ Restrictions on the right to vote for persons with mental disabilities are contrary to the CRPD.²⁴ Prior ODIHR recommendations to reconsider these restrictions remain unaddressed.

Voter lists are compiled by PECs, anew for each electoral process.²⁵ According to the law, PECs should rely on population data provided by district administration. To be included in the list, a voter must have resided on the territory of a given precinct for a minimum of three months. In practice, some PECs updated the information they received by conducting door-to-door verifications or compiled the lists without initial input from the district authorities. In spite of previous ODIHR recommendations, the legislation does not provide for any safeguards against multiple registration.

Consideration should be given to improving the accuracy of the voter lists, possibly through the introduction of a permanent, centralized voter register. The voter register should be regularly updated ahead of elections and be centrally checked for errors and multiple registrations.

²¹ The CEC decisions were not published in full. Instead, a brief summary or the meeting agenda without specifying the outcome were shared. This information included the announcement of campaign period, candidate registration period, and trainings for election commissioners. CEC-produced voter education videos were broadcast on most TV channels.

²² Paragraph 19 of the 2011 [UN HRC General Comment No. 34 to Article 19 of the ICCPR](#) states: “[t]o give effect to the right of access to information, States parties should proactively put in the public domain Government information of public interest. States parties should make every effort to ensure easy, prompt, effective, and practical access to such information”. See also Article 10 of the [2003 UN Convention against Corruption](#).

²³ Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document provides that participating States will “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”, while Paragraph 24 provides that restrictions on rights and freedoms must be “strictly proportionate to the aim of the law”. Paragraph 14 of the 1996 UN CCPR General Comment No. 25 to Article 25 of the ICCPR states that grounds for the deprivation of voting rights should be “objective and reasonable”. See also UN Human Rights Committee’s (HRC) [Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Turkmenistan](#), 20 April 2017, paragraphs 50-51.

²⁴ According to Article 29 of the [CRPD](#), “State Parties shall [...] ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected”. The UN CRPD Committee in its [Concluding Observations on Turkmenistan](#) (May 2015) recommended that Turkmenistan “make sure that all restrictions on the right to vote of persons with disabilities are removed, by immediately restoring the right to vote for persons deprived of legal capacity and by providing full accessibility and information in relation to their right to vote” (paragraph 46).

²⁵ Additional lists are compiled in military units, hospitals, and pre-trial detention centres by the directors of these institutions. Voters residing abroad can request to be included on the lists of their respective embassy/consulate.

Voter lists are to be displayed for public consultation at the polling stations no later than 15 days prior to elections. While the CEC instructed that confidential personal data of voters were to be protected, it neither specified what data are to be protected nor any clear and effective measures to ensure such protection. Among the limited number of polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM, some did not display the voter lists and most were unaware of the requirement to protect confidential data.

Voters could seek inclusion to or correction of the voter list, without any deadline specified in the Electoral Code. None of the election commissions met with by the ODIHR EAM received such requests. According to the CEC, 3,286,138 voters were registered as of 1 March 2018. After the election day, the CEC provided two other figures.²⁶ The lack of published data on adult population of Turkmenistan prevents any assessment of accuracy and inclusiveness of voter registration.²⁷

Voters whose names do not appear in the voter lists displayed could still be registered on supplementary lists after the finalization of voter lists, including at the polling stations on election day.²⁸ This is contrary to international good practice and could result in multiple voting.²⁹

Consideration could be given to removing the possibility for voters to register at the polling stations on election day to avoid the possibility of multiple registrations. A legal deadline for closing voter lists could be introduced, with additional entries permitted only in accordance with clearly defined legal requirements, subject to judicial control.

VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

A candidate for *Mejlis* must be a citizen of Turkmenistan, above 25 years of age, and with permanent residence in the country for the last 10 years. Citizens with an unexpired or unexpunged criminal record cannot stand for parliament. Limitations based on the length of residency may be regarded as excessive, while the ban for those with criminal records, irrespective of the crime committed, as disproportionate.³⁰

The restriction on the right to stand due to a criminal conviction could be reconsidered in line with the principle of proportionality. Consideration should be given to reducing or removing the residence requirement for candidates.

²⁶ On 26 March, the CEC Chair announced that the total number of registered voters was 3,291,312. On 29 March, the CEC website provided a new figure of 3,291,525 registered voters. The ODIHR EAM was unable to clarify the different figures since CEC representatives were not available for a meeting after the election day.

²⁷ The State Committee on Statistics did not disclose any population data to the ODIHR EAM, alleging that such data are confidential and for official use only. Data from the 2012 population census are still not published.

²⁸ According to the Electoral Code, voter lists are to be compiled no later than 15 days prior to election day in order to be available for display.

²⁹ According to paragraph I.1.2.iv of the 2002 Council of Europe Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), “[...] polling stations should not be permitted to register voters on election day itself”.

³⁰ See paragraphs 7.3 and 24 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and paragraph 15 of the 1996 UN CCPR General Comment No. 25 to Article 25 of the ICCPR, which says that “any restrictions on the right to stand [...] must be justifiable on objective and reasonable criteria. Persons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent, or by reason of political affiliation”. See also the 2002 Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, paragraphs I.1.1.c and I.1.1.d.

Candidates may be nominated by a political party or a group of citizens starting from 60 until 30 days before the election day.³¹ Political parties nominate candidates during party conventions, which may also be convened jointly by several parties. Nomination by a group of citizens requires a meeting of 200 or more voters registered in the respective constituency, with a majority decision in support of the nomination.

For registration, decision of the nominating entity and a statement of agreement from the nominee are submitted to relevant ConEC between 50 and 25 days prior to election day. Groups of citizens also submit the meeting protocol that includes the name, date of birth, address and signature of each participant. A group of citizens may nominate only one candidate and each citizen may participate in only one such meeting.³² Several political party representatives met with by the ODIHR EAM were not aware of these legal requirements, casting doubt on the genuine conduct of the candidate nomination process.

The restriction that citizens may support only one candidate could be reconsidered in order to improve the openness and inclusiveness of the candidate registration process.

While the ODIHR EAM was not present in the country during the nomination and registration process, it was informed by the CEC that all nominated candidates were registered. In total, 284 candidates were registered, with 117 nominated by the DP, 23 – by the PIE, 28 – by the AP and 116 by groups of citizens. Two or more candidates were registered in each constituency. From 5 to 17 March, candidates' biographies were published in print media but not on the CEC website.

There are no requirements for gender representation of candidates or elected MPs. Among the 284 candidates, 71 were women of whom 31 (some 25 per cent of MPs) got elected, a ratio similar to the gender composition of the outgoing *Mejlis*. Turkmenistan committed itself to promote gender equality.³³

Consideration should be given to introducing temporary special measures to promote women's political participation. Political parties could be encouraged to promote women to leadership positions and nominate female candidates.

VIII. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

According to the Electoral Code, the campaign period starts from a candidate's registration and ends one day before the election day. Political parties, public associations, citizens, candidates and their proxies are entitled by law to campaign freely. Candidates have equal rights to participate in campaign meetings and to access mass media. This entitlement to equal rights is interpreted by the CEC and other stakeholders as a requirement of absolute equality of campaign means that effectively prohibits any campaigning other than that organised by the CEC.³⁴

³¹ The right of public associations to nominate candidates that existed previously was removed in 2016.

³² Paragraph 77 of the 2010 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation recommends that "in order to enhance pluralism and freedom of association, legislation should not limit a citizen to signing a supporting list for only one party".

³³ In paragraph 23 of the 1999 [OSCE Istanbul Document](#) participating States committed to "making equality between men and women an integral part of our policies". See also article 7(b) of the CEDAW and Paragraph 26 of the 1997 Committee's General Recommendation 23 on CEDAW.

³⁴ Several interlocutors stated to the ODIHR EAM that if a candidate printed his/her own campaign leaflets, this would violate equality of candidates.

The provision on equal rights of candidates to campaign should be interpreted broadly, allowing candidates to freely pursue their own methods of campaigning within the limits set by the law.

Campaign environment was orderly and subdued. Campaigns basically consisted of candidates' biographies published in print media, meetings with voters, and free airtime on state television (TV). Candidates did not organize any outdoor assemblies. Meetings with voters, scheduled by election commissions, took place in schools and other public buildings, always during working hours. Each candidate was guaranteed three such meetings during the campaign period, and all candidates met with by the ODIHR EAM were satisfied with this quantity and arrangement. The campaign appeared to generate little public interest.

Most candidates were officials, public sector employees, or party functionaries and their campaign messages followed a similar script, highlighting the initiatives of President Berdymuhamedov to improve people's livelihoods. Political parties have not published their programmes during the campaign and did not campaign for their candidates.³⁵

The campaign was barely noticeable. A limited number of small identical posters with candidates' photos and biographies were produced by the CEC. Negligible visibility of these posters, placed inside of or in close proximity to polling stations around election day, stood in sharp contrast with the ubiquitous images of the incumbent president that routinely decorate public spaces and premises.

IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The Law on Political Parties provides for private and public sources of financing for political parties. Parties may be financed by membership fees, donations and economic activities. Donations from state authorities, charity and religious organizations are forbidden, as are anonymous and foreign donations. The law provides for a maximum annual amount of donations made by individuals to political parties.³⁶ State support to political parties includes access to the state media and the provision of state owned premises. According to the Ministry of Justice, to date, political parties have never received any donations and are exclusively financed by membership fees.³⁷

Regulations on campaign finance are scarce and do not correspond to the reality of how the electoral campaigns are organized. The Law on Political Parties stipulates that expenses incurred by parties connected with their participation in elections shall be reimbursed. The Electoral Code guarantees equal conditions and public funds to cover campaign costs of candidates and candidates' nominating bodies. The legislation does not foresee limitations to campaign donations and expenditures, nor any reporting, disclosure, monitoring or oversight mechanisms.

In these elections, political parties and candidates have not incurred any campaign costs, as they neither organised nor financed any campaign related activity. All campaign events and expenditures were directly managed and financed by the CEC.

³⁵ The AP explained that since candidates know their constituencies best, they choose their own issues for campaigning. The DP indicated that using party resources for their candidates' campaigns would be in violation of equal conditions for candidates.

³⁶ One person may annually donate up to a tenfold amount of the average monthly salary. According to the [State Statistics Committee](#), in 2016, the average monthly salary amounted 1,386 Turkmenistani *Manats* (some EUR 330, officially, EUR 1 was approximately TMT 4.2).

³⁷ The Ministry of Justice explained that a donation to a political party would require a contract with the donor and approval by an inter-agency commission under the Ministry of Finance.

Consideration should be given to providing direct public funding for electoral campaigns to candidates and allowing political parties to directly fund their campaigns. In line with international good practice, regulations could be put in place for campaign donations, expenditures, disclosure, reporting, and auditing.

X. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

State-owned television and newspapers are the main sources of information in Turkmenistan. The media landscape is characterized by the state's monopoly, as all 11 audio-visual media and most of the 58 print media are state-controlled.³⁸ Although the January 2018 Law on Audio-visual Media introduced the right to secure funding from private advertisements, it also provided for the establishment of increased state oversight on broadcasting through the creation of a new Broadcasting Development Commission.³⁹ No private media was registered after the Law on Mass Media was passed in 2012. The noted absence of alternative or critical views points to a strict control of all news and information services. Self-censorship is a common practice. The lack of media pluralism and independence deprives voters of the variety of views necessary to make informed choices and contradicts OSCE commitments and other international standards.⁴⁰

The widespread use of satellite dishes throughout the country provides access to a more diverse array of opinions and information through foreign TV channels. Access is, however, more constrained in Ashgabat due to an apparent ban on satellite dishes.⁴¹

Since the termination of services of the privately-owned mobile telecommunications company in September 2017, there remains only one state-owned provider for mobile telephone and Internet. The cost of Internet remains prohibitive for most of the population.⁴² The number of Internet users is increasing⁴³ but restrictive regulations constrain the publication of online content and many websites and social media are blocked.⁴⁴ Previous ODIHR recommendations to ease restrictions on the right to information and expression on the Internet remain unaddressed.

An enabling environment should be created for the establishment of private and independent media, free of administrative and other impediments, to encourage the exercise of free speech and access to information.

³⁸ There are seven TV channels, including six nation-wide (*Altyn Asyr, Miras, Sport, Türkmen Owazy, Türkmenistan* and *Yaslyk*) and one for the capital (*Ashgabat*), and four nation-wide radios (*Char Tapadan, Miras, Owaz* and *Watan*). According to the Turkmen state news agency (TDH), there are 28 newspapers and 30 magazines in circulation.

³⁹ According to the State Committee on Television, Radio and Cinematography, the Broadcasting Development Commission was established within this Committee, which is itself under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

⁴⁰ Paragraph 11 of the 1996 OSCE Lisbon Document states that "Freedom of the press and media are among the basic prerequisites for truly democratic and civil societies". The OSCE participating States, in 1997 [OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 193](#), further reaffirmed that "freedom of expression is a fundamental and internationally recognized human right and a basic component of a democratic society and that free, independent and pluralistic media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government".

⁴¹ A number of ODIHR EAM interlocutors mentioned that such ban is enforced in practice but the ODIHR EAM could not identify the requisite legislative or administrative act.

⁴² TMCcell provides 4 GB for 160 Turkmenistani *Manats*, which amounts to 11 per cent of the average monthly salary.

⁴³ Internet penetration is low at 17.9 per cent according to [Internet World Stats](#).

⁴⁴ Blocked websites include Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp, Yahoo Mail, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Turkmenistan Alternative News, Mail.Ru, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression and the right to freely seek, receive and impart information. The Electoral Code and the Law on Mass Media expressly refer to freedom of expression and prohibit censorship and interference, in line with international standards and principles. The Law on Audio-visual Media reiterates these principles. However, there are no legal requirements for balanced or neutral reporting.

The Electoral Code provides for equal access to the media during the electoral campaign; however, media coverage of the campaign remained limited across Turkmenistan.⁴⁵ The one-hour daily time allocation was not systematically provided by the TV channels. Candidates were provided free print space for the publication of their profiles and were only able to address voters in one 10-minute pre-recorded TV appearance during the free airtime slots.⁴⁶ Candidate presentations were carried out in a uniform manner against identical backgrounds and without party symbols.⁴⁷ No radio broadcast on the campaign was observed or reported. The provision stipulating that a third of free airtime must be devoted to joint discussions and meetings was not implemented, thus limiting the ability of voters to be informed about the differences between the candidates' programmes.

All political parties and candidates met with by the ODIHR EAM stated that the free airtime and print space provided by the state were sufficient and offered equal access and coverage by the media.

Although no systematic monitoring of media coverage was conducted by the ODIHR EAM, it was observed that the official news programme *Watan* provided coverage of the incumbent *Mejlis* member and candidate Serdar Berdymuhamedov, who is also the son of the incumbent president. No similar coverage was provided to other candidates.

Consideration could be given to creating an independent media regulator, which could also oversee media conduct during elections and to introducing provisions requiring balanced and impartial media coverage. Consideration could also be given to holding debates between parties and candidates.

XI. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The Electoral Code provides for national and international election observation, in line with OSCE commitments.⁴⁸ National observers may be nominated by political parties, candidates, public associations and groups of citizens. According to the CEC, 4,072 national observers were accredited.⁴⁹ However, independent citizen observation is hampered by the absence of independent civil society organizations. All public associations, which fielded observers, are endorsed by the state.

⁴⁵ Candidates have the right to equally share a minimum of one hour of free airtime between 21.00 and 23.00 on three public TV channels - *Altyn Asyr*, *Miras*, and *Yaslyk*.

⁴⁶ The programme of TV appearances was not published and voters could not know when a particular candidate would appear.

⁴⁷ Affiliation with a political party or group of citizens was mentioned by the candidates during their TV presentations and in the text of their published biographies.

⁴⁸ Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states: "The participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process".

⁴⁹ According to the official information, 591 observers were nominated by the DP, 392 - by the AP, 311 - by the PIE, 1,109 - by candidates, 253 - by the Women's Union, 525 - by the Youth Union, 665 - by labour unions and 226 - by groups of citizens.

The scope of activities conducted by national observers did not amount to a meaningful observation.⁵⁰ The nominating organisations explained that their observers, deployed on election day only, were not asked to follow the tabulation of results and had no systematic reporting obligations to the headquarters. Observers encountered by the ODIHR EAM on election day were often unsure who nominated them. The ODIHR EAM is not aware of any public reports issued by national observers.

According to the CEC, 142 international observers were registered. Although the legal framework guarantees their independence, the ODIHR EAM had no direct access to election stakeholders and had to request meetings through the MFA.⁵¹ The MFA or CEC officials accompanied ODIHR EAM members to almost all meetings.⁵²

The authorities should allow direct access of international observers to all election stakeholders and facilitate their independent observation.

XII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Electoral Code provides for the right to seek legal redress of all electoral participants. Voters, candidates, candidates' proxies, observers, groups of citizens, representatives of mass media and election officials may lodge complaints with election commissions and courts. Such complaints must be resolved within three days or immediately, if complaints are filed on election day or the day before.

Decisions taken by lower election commissions may be challenged before a higher commission or a court. CEC decisions may be appealed before the Supreme Court, which is also the appellate instance for regional (*Velayat*) courts. The law is clear that courts have precedence when a complaint is submitted to both courts and election commissions at the same time. However, courts and election commissions have the authority to consider first instance claims, making it possible to bring the same complaint before several fora. Moreover, the ODIHR EAM interlocutors expressed different understandings as to the jurisdiction of different bodies dealing with complaints.⁵³ The lack of clarity in the appeal procedure and the potential conflicts of jurisdiction are not in line with good practice and may jeopardize the right to an effective remedy as required by OSCE commitments.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Paragraph II.3.2.b. of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters advises that "observation must not be confined to the election day itself, but must include the registration period of candidates and, if necessary, of electors, as well as the electoral campaign. It must make it possible to determine whether irregularities occurred before, during or after the elections. It must always be possible during vote counting".

⁵¹ Article 6.5 of the Electoral Code provides that "international observers shall carry out their activities on their own and independently".

⁵² Paragraphs 89 and 90 of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, Explanatory Report, state that "international observers play a primordial role in states which have no established tradition of impartial verification of the lawfulness of elections" and "generally, international as well as national observers must be in a position to interview anyone present, take notes and report to their organization".

⁵³ For example, the CEC stated that a citizen could choose to bring any election related complaint to any election commission, to any court, directly to the CEC or to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court explained that it was competent to hear complaints against CEC decisions only, while decisions of lower level commissions had to be challenged before their corresponding court (district and regional). The Prosecutor's Office stated that allegations on violations of electoral rules could be substantiated by prosecutors at any level, while the law stipulates that first level courts (district courts) exercise jurisdiction over allegations of electoral offences.

⁵⁴ Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that "everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity". Paragraph II.3.3.c of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that "the appeal procedure and, in particular, the powers and responsibilities of the various bodies should be clearly regulated by law, so as to avoid conflicts of jurisdiction (whether positive or negative). Neither the appellants nor the authorities should be able to choose the appeal body".

Both the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code provide sanctions for the obstruction of electoral rights and breaches of electoral rules, which include damaging electoral campaign material, proxy and multiple voting, violation of the secrecy of the vote, vote-buying, interference in the work of election commissions, and manipulation of election results. Sanctions range from fines to imprisonment. Allegations of electoral offences are investigated by public prosecutors and tried in district (*etrap*) courts. For election day, the General Prosecutor's Office set up a special 'rapid response unit', which did not receive any applications.

To provide legal certainty, the legal framework could be amended to eliminate concurrent jurisdictions and establish a hierarchical process for complaints and appeals. Relevant complaints and appeals provisions for different types of electoral disputes could be consolidated and clearly referenced in the Electoral Code.

No complaints were filed during the entire electoral process with any instance. Thus, the ability of the complaint resolution mechanisms to resolve contentious electoral matters was not tested.

XIII. ELECTION DAY

In accordance with the ODIHR methodology, the EAM did not conduct a comprehensive and systematic observation of election day proceedings. However, mission members visited a limited number of polling stations in Ashgabat and in Ahal region on election day and in Ashgabat, Dashoguz and Mary regions during early voting.

A. EARLY VOTING AND VOTING

Early voting, intended for those unable to vote on election day, was available for all voters during 10 days preceding election day. Although the law does not require voters to justify their decision to take part in the early voting, several PECs informed the ODIHR EAM that they asked for reasons and proofs from voters. According to the CEC, 3 per cent of voters used the early voting procedure.

On election day, voting took place from 7.00 to 19.00 and mobile voting was provided for homebound voters, upon justified request to the respective PEC.⁵⁵ The limited number of polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM were properly equipped and the layout allowed for an orderly flow of voters. No lines of voters waiting to cast ballots were observed. Most of the polling stations visited were accessible for voters with physical disabilities. According to the CEC, Braille ballot papers were produced, but they were not available in the polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM.⁵⁶

Although the guidelines for PECs issued by the CEC provided a list of authorized people in polling stations, PEC members did not enforce the rule. In several polling stations, the ODIHR EAM observed unauthorized people who, in some cases, assisted or supervised the PEC activities. These included school directors and local officials, as well as law enforcement personnel.

CEC training for PECs should emphasise that unauthorised people shall not be present in polling stations and interfere with PEC activities. This information could also be conveyed in public voter education materials.

⁵⁵ Requests have to be submitted no later than six hours before the closing of the polls.

⁵⁶ In several instances, PECs explained that no voters with visual impairments were registered at the polling station.

Ballot papers and plastic seals for ballot boxes lacked sufficient security safeguards, such as serial numbers, while sensitive election materials were not always stored securely during the early voting period, which is of concern. Prior ODIHR recommendations related to the implementation of appropriate security features for sensitive election materials remain to be addressed.

The ODIHR EAM observed several indications that turnout reported throughout the day was significantly inflated. In most polling stations visited, evident discrepancies were observed between the turnout figures reported by the PEC and the number of signatures in the voter lists as well as visible quantity of ballots cast in the ballot box.⁵⁷ In all polling stations visited by ODIHR EAM, multiple cases of identical signatures on the voter lists were observed, and, in some cases, there were clumps of ballots in the ballot boxes, indicating multiple voting and/or ballot box stuffing. In one case, the ODIHR EAM observed that the remaining ballots for the parliamentary race were pre-marked. The ODIHR EAM also directly observed several instances of proxy voting.

The authorities and election administration should undertake measures to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, in particular by preventing proxy voting, multiple voting, ballot box stuffing, and inflation of the voter turnout.

B. COUNTING, TABULATION, AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

While the legal framework grants observers access to all stages of the election day process, in some polling stations the ODIHR EAM was not allowed to observe the counting. In one polling station, access was granted but attempts were made to obstruct observers' view of the procedures, reducing transparency of the counting process.

In the limited number of polling stations where counting was observed, the ODIHR EAM noted a number of irregularities. Determination of validity and counting of ballots were carried out simultaneously by individual members of the PEC, without announcement and display of the ballot content. The ODIHR EAM observed that validity of ballots was not determined consistently and invalid ballots were sometimes assigned to candidates. PEC results protocols were filled on computers, outside the counting premises. In one instance observed, figures announced after the end of the count did not match those in the protocol. This protocol was signed by the PEC members with some fields left blank. While copies of PEC protocols were provided to the ODIHR EAM, they were not publicly displayed in the polling stations observed. As no standard procedure was foreseen for the packing of election materials, the improvised packing implemented by PECs was insufficient to protect election materials against potential manipulation.

Observation of ConECs left the genuineness of the tabulation process in doubt. At the time when transmission of results from PECs was ongoing, several ConECs visited by the ODIHR EAM were closed, without any sign of activity inside. In one ConEC, results protocols, reportedly received from PECs, remained in sealed envelopes until the arrival of ODIHR observers. No other election materials were delivered to this ConEC, with all ballots and voter lists reportedly going to the DEC. In another ConEC, ballots for parliamentary elections were delivered together with the protocols but these were not checked or inspected during handover. Constituency results protocols were not posted at the ConEC, further undermining the transparency of the process.

The integrity of the process would benefit from elaborating and enforcing detailed procedures on counting and tabulation of results. In line with the Electoral Code, ConECs should genuinely

⁵⁷ In the first part of the day, high turnout figures reported by the PECs did not match the evidently smaller numbers of ballots in the ballot boxes and signatures on the voter lists. In several polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM towards the end of voting, voter lists had few entries, while the ballot boxes were full and the reported turnout above 90 per cent.

establish the results in each constituency, including scrutiny of the PEC results and materials. Transparency of the process should be enhanced, and the existing requirements to display results must be observed.

The CEC published the final results of the elections within the legal deadline on 30 March.⁵⁸ Contrary to good practice and previous ODIHR recommendations, the disaggregated results by polling station were not provided. The CEC declared turnout of 91.75 and winners emerged in the first round in all 125 constituencies. Further undermining their veracity, published results did not reflect invalid votes correctly.⁵⁹

XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in Turkmenistan and to support efforts to bring them fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with past ODIHR recommendations that remain to be addressed. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Turkmenistan to improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.⁶⁰

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. An enabling environment should be created for the establishment of private and independent media, free of administrative and other impediments, to encourage the exercise of free speech and access to information.
2. Safeguards should be developed and implemented to ensure that election commissions are independent from the government and local self-governance bodies, and guided by the principles of transparency, professionalism, and impartiality. In particular, PEC members could be appointed from different institutions, and workplace hierarchy should not be transferred to the commissions. Mechanisms to improve gender balance among the commissioners should be considered.
3. Consideration should be given to improving the accuracy of the voter lists, possibly through the introduction of a permanent, centralized voter register. The voter register should be regularly updated ahead of elections and be centrally checked for errors and multiple registrations.
4. The provision on equal rights of candidates to campaign should be interpreted broadly, allowing candidates to freely pursue their own methods of campaigning within the limits set by the law.
5. The authorities and election administration should undertake measures to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, in particular by preventing proxy voting, multiple voting, ballot box stuffing, and inflation of the voter turnout.

⁵⁸ In spite of requests made, the ODIHR EAM did not receive a copy of the national results protocol.

⁵⁹ In 36 constituencies the percentages of votes for candidates are calculated against valid votes, rather than the votes cast (valid votes plus invalid votes), as required by the Electoral Code (Article 76.3). In one constituency, calculation based on the votes cast would decrease the winning candidate's margin below 50 per cent, requiring a second round. The reported number of invalid votes is "0" in 79 constituencies, including the constituency where the results protocol obtained by the ODIHR EAM from one PEC recorded 5 invalid votes.

⁶⁰ In paragraph 25 of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Document, OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations".

6. The integrity of the process would benefit from elaborating and enforcing detailed procedures on counting and tabulation of results. In line with the Electoral Code, ConECs should genuinely establish the results in each constituency, including scrutiny of the PEC results and materials. Transparency of the process should be enhanced, and the existing requirements to display results must be observed.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Election Administration

7. CEC training for PECs should emphasise that unauthorised people shall not be present in polling stations and interfere with PEC activities. This information could also be conveyed in public voter education materials.
8. Innovations and changes to the electoral process should be developed in consultation with the stakeholders, well ahead of the elections, be based on the appropriate legal framework and imply wide voter education.

Voter Registration

9. Consideration could be given to removing the possibility for voters to register at the polling stations on election day to avoid the possibility of multiple registrations. A legal deadline for closing voter lists could be introduced, with additional entries permitted only in accordance with clearly defined legal requirements, subject to judicial control.

Candidate Registration

10. The restriction on the right to stand due to a criminal conviction could be reconsidered in line with the principle of proportionality. Consideration should be given to reducing or removing the residence requirement for candidates.
11. The restriction that citizens may support only one candidate could be reconsidered in order to improve the openness and inclusiveness of the candidate registration process.
12. Consideration should be given to introducing temporary special measures to promote women's political participation. Political parties could be encouraged to promote women to leadership positions and nominate female candidates.

Campaign Finance

13. Consideration should be given to providing direct public funding for electoral campaigns to candidates and allowing political parties to directly fund their campaigns. In line with international good practice, regulations could be put in place for campaign donations, expenditures, disclosure, reporting, and auditing.

Media

14. Consideration could be given to creating an independent media regulator, which could also oversee media conduct during elections and to introducing provisions requiring balanced and impartial media coverage. Consideration could also be given to holding debates between parties and candidates.

Citizen and International Observers

15. The authorities should allow direct access of international observers to all election stakeholders and facilitate their independent observation.

Complaints and Appeals

16. To provide legal certainty, the legal framework could be amended to eliminate concurrent jurisdictions and establish a hierarchical process for complaints and appeals. Relevant complaints and appeals provisions for different types of electoral disputes could be consolidated and clearly referenced in the Electoral Code.

ANNEX I: FINAL RESULTS⁶¹

Constituency	Elected candidate	Votes, in total	Votes for the candidate	Percentage, as announced by the CEC
Democratic Party (56 seats)				
Garashsyzlyk	Kasymguly Babaev	24,731	21,768	88.02
Azatlyk	Jennet Ovekova	26,639	17,573	65.97
Parahatchylyk	Gulshirin Tagandurdyeva	25,518	16,151	63.50
Kopetdag	Suleyman Suleymanov	24,634	14,042	57.02
Dostluk	Sulgun Tagandurdyeva	24,198	16,054	66.34
Ashgabat	Resulberdy Mammedov	24,188	14,602	60.37
Ruhabat	Gulgeldi Gulgeldyev	26,193	19,771	75.48
Gokdje	Orazgylych Orazgylychov	25,855	14,133	54.79
Yzgant	Keringuly Geldyev	24,392	12,469	51.12
Darvaza	Gurbangul Berkelieva	25,001	13,293	53.17
Anau	Annamammed Sardjaev	24,997	12,808	51.24
Ak bugdai	Movlyam Oraev	22,534	15,167	67.31
Kaka	Aishat Godjenova	22,895	11,916	52.05
Dushak	Serdar Berdymuhamedov	28,112	25,700	91.42
Agalan	Shatlyk Ishanov	23,661	15,055	63.63
Babadaihan	Bairamsoltan Muradova	28,265	16,633	58.85
Sarahs	Gurbangeldy Ashirov	27,248	15,026	55.15
Dasharbat	Mengli Divanova	25,510	15,124	59.29
Avaza	Berdymammet Gurbanov	25,605	16,842	65.78
Serdar	Tahyr Ovezov	22,799	17,399	76.31
Shabat	Bahar Pirieva	24,363	15,035	61.71
Diyar	Serdar Arazov	23,463	12,834	54.70
Akdepe	Ovez Buzlyev	25,433	13,174	51.80
Novruz	Tyazegul Nepesova	24,965	14,455	57.90
Georogly	Merdan Tuvakov	22,680	16,289	71.82
Aksarai	Bayli Seyilov	23,007	15,581	67.72
Gubadag	Merdan Eovbasarov	23,569	13,103	55.59
Gurbansoltan edge	Oguldjan Ovezova	26,219	13,450	51.30
Agzybirlik	Shatlyk Gurbandurdyev	23,639	15,294	64.70
Kunyaurgench	Ashirdurdy Allaev	23,268	19,494	83.78

⁶¹ Final results were published in *Neitralnyi Turkmenistan* newspaper on 30 March 2018 without the candidates' party affiliations. Candidates are grouped in this table on the basis of information published earlier.

Gurgench	Baimurad Babaev	23,080	16,594	71.90
S. Rozmeov	Tamara Tadjieva	23,806	15,147	63.63
Novbahar	Nurgeldy Meredov	21,966	11,279	51.35
Ruhybelent	Rasul Sadullaev	22,100	12,465	56.40
Darganata	Kadyr Danatarov	24,245	15,596	64.64
Deinau	Muratdjan Metkuliev	21,642	11,962	55.29
Khodjagala	Merdan Dosmedov	23,221	13,793	59.68
Zerger	Serdar Djoraev	22,259	12,724	57.43
Chardjou	Azizdjan Narbaev	22,909	14,473	63.60
Faral	Gahryman Rozyev	24,981	13,044	52.22
Turkmenabat	Maksat Khanov	22,611	11,528	51.51
Amul	Dunyagozel Kerimova	22,965	14,138	61.90
Sakar	Mahym Gubyeva	22,848	19,567	86.00
Garabekevul	Govher Amanova	21,890	13,730	62.72
Kerki	Agadjan Movlyamberdyev	21,460	13,542	63.10
Khodjambaz	Agamurad Berdyev	22,318	15,376	69.04
Garlyk	Merdan Babakulov	21,605	12,303	56.95
Magdanly	Nurgeldy Mahmatkulov	21,998	16,423	74.86
Kemine	Sapargeldy Taganov	23,254	14,294	61.47
Djemgyet	Seidov Gurbangeldy	22,401	13,422	60.19
Peshanaly	Yusupguly Eshshaev	23,401	17,563	75.10
Turkmenistan	Sapardurdy Allahanov	22,689	16,046	70.76
Sakarchyage	Soltangeldy Babaev	23,295	16,083	69.06
Garayap	Kakageldy Gurbanov	23,653	12,695	53.70
Turkmengala	Muhammetnazar Tyashliev	24,841	18,775	75.58
Miras	Gurbanmurad Ashyrov	24,791	16,176	65.25
Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (11 seats)				
Berkararlyk	Saparmurad Ovganov	26,908	23,396	86.95
Archabil	Serdar Durdyev	26,476	18,212	68.94
Archman	Velmurad Gutlyev	24,938	13,948	55.93
Gumdag	Bairammurad Hadjymammedov	25,586	15,446	60.37
Dashoguz	Muradgeldy Gochmedov	23,351	12,212	52.30
Seidi	Lachin Azimova	23,819	18,677	78.60
Amudarya	Dovran Khudaiberdiev	22,627	13,942	61.89
Djeihun	Shovket Kerimberdyev	23,628	11,803	50.23
Pelvert	Annadurdy Eolbarsov	21,923	12,794	58.35
Bairamali	Dovlet Mammedesenov	25,307	13,074	51.66

Vekilbazar	Sapa Khodjanepesov	23,146	12,910	55.78
Altyn ol	Djeren Gylychmyradova	23,932	12,509	52.27
Rovachlyk	Sapargeldy Kurtov	24,130	12,765	52.90
Tyaze zaman	Oguldjemal Mollaeva	23,304	12,213	52.41
Lebap	Bahtiyar Derkarov	22,397	12,230	55.33
Koitendag	Yusup Khudainazarov	21,352	11,917	55.81
Zarpchy	Byashim Annagurbanov	22,341	14,288	63.96
Rysgally	Maksat Pirkulyev	25,299	14,463	57.17
Merv	Durdy Saparov	23,007	12,515	54.40
Garagum	Berdy Amanov	27,132	14,212	52.46
Tagtabazar	Guvanch Gurbangeldiev	24,987	16,314	65.29
Nominated by groups of citizens (48 seats)				
Bitaraplyk	Gurbangul Bayramova	26,417	23,208	87.85
Gunesh	Gulshat Mammedova	24,279	20,152	83.00
Alem	Batyr Bailiev	35,533	18,934	53.41
Bahtyyarlik	Shemshat Saparaliev	25,391	14,074	55.43
Keshi	Azat Seidibaev	24,135	16,976	70.54
Buzmeyin	Muhammetnazar Gurbanberdiyev	25,546	16,699	65.49
Baherden	Maksatberdy Gurbanov	23,171	13,698	59.12
Geoktepe	Nury Komekov	26,197	15,231	58.14
Tedjen	Ahmet Charyev	27,430	21,886	79.79
Goniamasha	Pirnazar Hudainazarov	27,877	18,903	67.81
Altyn asyr	Bairammurad Atageldiev	26,346	13,706	52.03
Balkan	Atamurad Tailiev	25,615	16,304	63.65
Balkanabat	Yazpolat Keriev	24,148	15,776	65.03
Turkmenbashi	Amangurban Tanaev	25,618	14,085	54.98
Bereket	Dovran Annataganov	25,154	15,064	59.89
Esenguly	Davuturdy Tagandurdyev	24,970	16,758	67.12
Mahtumkuli	Saparmammed Durdiyev	22,963	11,740	51.13
Boldumsaz	Tirkesh Gazakov	22,330	11,340	50.78
Yzmykshir	Almagul Nazarova	22,653	13,787	60.86
Baidak	Khaldjan Nurdjanov	25,584	16,322	63.80
Deryalyk	Aigul Annakurbanova	22,196	11,947	53.83
Bossan	Enedjan Amanyazova	23,330	12,995	55.70
S. A. Niyazov	Djahan Gurbandurdyeva	25,417	13,243	52.10
S. Turkmenbashi	Orazgulych Amanov	23,680	16,429	69.38
Aibovur	Aina Taganova	24,992	13,369	54.81

Sarygamash	Gulbahar Kakalyeva	25,349	13,080	51.60
Asuda	Mamadjan Mustakova	21,651	11,598	53.58
Yashlyk	Guncha Kulieva	22,577	13,529	60.42
Sayat	Rovshen Djadjiev	22,753	15,345	67.44
Khalach	Bairamguly Gurbannazarov	22,221	12,341	55.54
Chohpetde	Djoramurat Begendjev	21,830	13,697	62.75
Astanababa	Murad Khudainazarov	21,777	16,399	75.30
Yalkym	Aganiyaz Khezretov	21,331	13,360	62.63
Dovletli	Rustem Rahmankulov	20,943	13,575	64.82
Mary	Azat Annamammedov	23,748	14,060	59.20
Shapak	Shatlyk Muhammetberdyev	22,704	13,390	58.98
Oguzhan	Maksat Djanmuradov	25,516	19,308	76.82
Vekil	Begench Charyyev	24,157	14,290	59.24
Chashgyn	Murad Ogshukov	22,013	17,649	80.18
Soltan Sandjar	Djeren Egenova	23,485	12,225	52.06
Mekan	Sapargylych Suleimanov	23,946	12,428	51.90
Rehnet	Atamurad Garaev	25,607	13,574	53.01
Iolotan	Redjepgeldy Meredov	26,523	21,218	80.00
Soltanbent	Mayagozel Khummedova	26,823	14,679	54.80
Murgab	Gurbanmurad Muhammedorazov	24,576	16,260	66.16
Ylham	Guldjahan Charygulyeva	23,706	15,364	64.81
Pendi	Kasym Rozyev	24,725	12,772	51.66
Serhetabat	Agadjuma Setdarov	26,224	16,101	61.43

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 150 staff.

ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it coordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programmes annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

ODIHR also assists participating States' in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights and fundamental freedoms** consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked people, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance** and **non-discrimination**, ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihr).