



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

28 November 2021

ODIHR Election Observation Mission
Final Report



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 28 November 2021 parliamentary elections. The ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as national legislation. For observation of election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

The Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions issued by the IEOM on 29 November concluded that “The 28 November parliamentary elections were competitive but constitutional changes weakening parliament, subsequent extensive legislative changes to key aspects of the elections, a stifled campaign and overall voter disillusionment hindered meaningful engagement. The new legislation provides an adequate basis for democratic elections but the overall legal framework is undermined by limitations on civil and political rights and diminished separation of powers and independence of the judiciary. Fundamental freedoms were generally respected during the campaign and the authorities displayed the political will to ensure “clean” elections; however, strict enforcement of subsequent measures led to candidates campaigning with caution. Voters had a wide range of political options to choose from, and technical aspects of the elections were handled by the election administration in an efficient way. Most media outlets were reticent to cover activities of contestants while the regular activities of the President and authorities were extensively covered, limiting voters’ ability to make an informed choice. While election day was peaceful and voting was well organized in the vast majority of polling stations observed, significant procedural problems were noted during the vote count and the initial stages of tabulation”.

A new Constitution entered into force in May 2021. Among other significant changes, it changed the electoral system, reduced the number of seats in parliament from 120 to 90, unduly limited some civil and political rights, and granted the president a greater role in the appointment of judges. The introduction of a fully presidential system was initiated by President Japarov, who, since taking office in October 2020, has significantly shaped the political environment. These elections were largely viewed as the next step of the reform process towards a more centralized form of governance that followed the annulled October 2020 elections and public protests.

The electoral legal framework was subject to extensive review by a parliament, whose constitutional mandate expired in October 2020. Numerous amendments were made shortly before elections were called, which limited the opportunity for voters and election officials to familiarize themselves with the new electoral system and procedures. Moreover, changes to the legislation were introduced in a manner that did not fully meet the principles of democratic law-making and compromised legal stability and the confidence of stakeholders in the electoral process. Previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations were not included in the reforms, and in some instances, amendments departed further from recommendations.

¹ The English version of this report is the only official document. Unofficial translations are available in Kyrgyz and Russian.

Elections were held under a new mixed electoral system. The number of members of parliament (MPs) was reduced from 120 to 90; of these, 54 are elected from open party lists in one nationwide constituency. The national electoral threshold for the allocation of these seats is 5 per cent. In addition, a regional threshold of 0.5 per cent applies for each of the seven regions and two cities. Regardless of the number of votes received, a political party is limited to maximum 27 seats in the proportional contest. The remaining 36 MPs were elected in single mandate districts (SMDs) in a first-past-the-post system.

The elections were well administered by the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC), 36 newly formed District Election Commissions (DECs) and 2,494 Precinct Election Commissions. The election administration generally enjoyed stakeholder confidence in their technical abilities and efficiency. Sessions of the CEC and DECs were often not announced in a timely manner, and the vast majority of regulations adopted by the CEC were not published on its website during the electoral period, which detracted from transparency and limited the information available to stakeholders. The CEC took a proactive approach in its response to election related violations. However, in the adjudication of complaints, in particular concerning campaign activities, it often applied a restrictive and formalistic interpretation of the Election Law. To address the complexity of the new electoral system, the CEC organised an information campaign which targeted a broad array of stakeholders but was not uniformly implemented across the country.

Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the Election Law continues to disenfranchise citizens serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the crime committed, and those who have been declared incapable by a court, contrary to international standards and obligations. The passive voter registration system overall enjoyed public confidence. Voter lists included some 3.6 million voters who have registered their biometric data. Despite continuous efforts made by the authorities, some 290,000 voters, mostly residing abroad, have not undergone biometric registration and remained disenfranchised.

Voters who are 25 years and older have the right to stand for elections. Recent legal amendments introduced a higher education requirement as a prerequisite to stand as a candidate, which is contrary to international standards and commitments. Citizens in possession of another nationality are also not eligible, despite prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations. The CEC registered in an inclusive manner all 21 parties that submitted candidate lists and 321 out of 387 candidates nominated in SMDs. Gender quotas and quotas for national minorities, youth and persons with disabilities were respected at the time of registration, but there are no provisions to maintain the quotas after registration, which limits their effectiveness.

While recent legal amendments strengthened the 30 per cent gender quota for candidates competing in the proportional race, the re-introduction of the majoritarian component made existing quota mechanism insufficient to advance equal representation of women and men in parliament. The ODIHR EOM noted an overall low visibility of women in campaign events, and gender equality issues did not feature in the campaign discourse. Some 36 per cent of candidates in the proportional contest and only 6.5 per cent in the SMDs were women. The new parliament only has 19 female MPs (21 per cent), including one elected through a SMD. Women were well represented in the election administration.

Fundamental freedoms were generally respected in the campaign. The legal framework provides for equal campaign opportunities for all contestants. Parties and SMD candidates used diverse means to campaign, including door-to-door canvassing, leafletting and social networks. The authorities' call for "clean" elections and the subsequent 1 November presidential decree reportedly deterred campaign violations such as vote buying and misuse of administrative resources. However, strict enforcement of the rules, including through the State Committee of National Security, stifled the campaign and impacted the free exercise of campaign activities.

The legal framework for campaign finance provides for a certain degree of transparency. Campaigns may be financed from private sources, and the law sets limitations on the sources of funding and expenditures for parties and candidates. The CEC made available on its website the incomes and expenditures of all electoral contestants. However, some parties and candidates failed to comply with reporting requirements. Final financial reports were not published by the CEC, which disregarded regulations. Despite previous ODIHR recommendations, oversight of campaign finance continues to remain insufficient, and there are no dissuasive and gradual sanctions for campaign finance violations.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, access to information and prohibits censorship as well as criminal liability for defamation. However, certain legal provisions are unduly broad and vague in reference to potential grounds to limit freedom of expression. The CEC's restrictive definition of what constituted campaigning in the media and the choice of many media outlets not to cover the campaign had a detrimental effect on news and editorial coverage. Most media monitored by the ODIHR EOM offered only minimal information on contestants' campaigns, which narrowed voters' access to information beyond the free airtime formats on the state TV channels. Critical and analytical reporting was, with the exception of a few online media, largely absent during the official campaign in the monitored media, limiting the voters' ability to make an informed choice.

The CEC received 142 complaints, including on vote-buying and misuse of administrative resources, and issued 51 warnings and fines for violations of campaign rules in a timely manner. The CEC handled complaints in a collegial and transparent manner, with the complainants having the opportunity to present their case. However, the ODIHR EOM noted considerable delays in resolving some complaints by the CEC. The reluctance of the judiciary to rule on election-related cases was manifested by the tendency of courts to dismiss many appeals on formalistic grounds. This compromised the right to an effective remedy against electoral violations contrary to Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. The new pivotal role of the president in the appointment of judges at all levels further compromises the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers.

The Election Law provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by political parties, civil society organizations and international observers, and for the first time, by representatives of candidates in SMDs. Of concern, recent amendments to the CEC regulation on registration of citizen observers introduced more restrictive eligibility requirements, potentially hindering the participation of civil society in election observation. Consequently, one organization was not granted the right to observe.

Election day was peaceful, and the voter turnout was 34.6 per cent. The IEOM assessed the voting process positively in 96 per cent of polling stations observed, while problems with the secrecy of the vote and instances of procedural violations were noted. Transparency was overall ensured, and party and citizen observers were present in nearly all polling stations observed. Overall, the biometric identification equipment and ballot scanners worked well, although occasional technical problems were noted by the IEOM. The vote count was assessed negatively in over one third of observations, which is of serious concern. Many PECs failed to perform basic reconciliation procedures and completed results protocols based on ballot scanner's data instead of counting the votes manually, which is required by law. The tabulation was assessed negatively in almost half of the DEC observed due to the disorganised process and problems with the electronic data entry. The CEC posted detailed preliminary and final voting results, contributing to transparency. However, a CEC mistake in the formula used for the allocation of the seats led to doubts about the reliability of the results at the initial stage. Subsequently, the CEC corrected the error and finalized the election results on 15 December.

This report offers recommendations to support efforts to align elections in the Kyrgyz Republic with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations focus on the need to further review the legal framework, foster the environment for meaningful voter and candidate engagement, strictly uphold media freedom and ensure full respect for freedom of expression, strengthen the independence of the CEC, clearly define the rules for the

campaign and provide media coverage for the benefit of voters, address the issue of vote-buying and pressure on voters and enhance the effectiveness of election dispute resolution. ODIHR is ready and willing to assist the authorities to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 19 October 2021. The EOM, headed by Ambassador Audrey Glover, consisted of a 13-member core team based in Bishkek and 26 long-term observers who were deployed on 27 October throughout the country. The ODIHR EOM remained in the country until 8 December to follow post-election developments.

For election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Peter Juel-Jensen was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. The OSCE PA delegation was led by Farahnaz Karimi, and the PACE delegation was led by Marina Berlinghieri. Each of the institutions involved in this IEOM has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

On election day, 351 observers from 41 countries were deployed, including 39 long-term and 231 short-term observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as a 55-member delegation from the OSCE PA and a 13-member delegation from the PACE. Some 40 per cent of observers were women. Opening was observed in 139 polling stations across the country, voting - in 1,256 polling stations, counting - in 123 polling stations, and the tabulation - in 30 District Election Commissions.

The ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. This final report follows a Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions which was released at a press conference in Bishkek on 29 November.²

ODIHR wishes to thank the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic for the invitation to observe the elections and the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for their assistance and co-operation. ODIHR also expresses its appreciation to representatives of state institutions, political parties, civil society, media and international community for sharing their views.

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The last parliamentary elections were held on 4 October 2020, with the results cancelled by the CEC following large-scale and violent protests. A period of uncertainty followed, during which a former member of parliament (MP), Sadyr Japarov, took the office of the Prime Minister. After resignation of the then-President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, the acting presidency passed to Mr. Japarov. Since then, he has taken a dominant role in the political life of the country, shaped the current political environment and significantly shifted the balance of power.

Between mid-October and early November 2020, upon the initiative of Mr. Japarov, parliament proposed a new draft constitution for a presidential republic, with significantly increased powers for the president. A referendum on the form of government was scheduled for 10 January 2021 alongside an

² See [all previous ODIHR election related reports on the Kyrgyz Republic](#).

early presidential election, which Mr. Japarov won.³ The outcome of the referendum was in favour of a presidential republic.⁴ The draft constitution was swiftly approved by parliament, without meaningful consultation with stakeholders or parliamentary debate, and a referendum on the draft took place on 11 April.⁵ The new Constitution entered into force on 5 May and created a strong presidential republic, granted the president the right to appoint all members of the government subject to parliamentary consent, and reduced the size of the parliament from 120 to 90 seats.⁶ A number of provisions on the institutional framework and separation of powers as well as those dealing with human rights and freedoms have been assessed by ODIHR and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) as not in line with international standards and OSCE commitments.⁷

The constitutional mandate of the outgoing parliament ended in October 2020 but was extended by law to June 2021.⁸ Since June, parliament adopted numerous laws, *inter alia* to streamline the president's new constitutional powers.⁹ These changes were widely perceived as steps towards a consolidation of power in response to public sentiment which called for strong decisions to address issues of public concern, such as corruption and efficiency of the public administration.¹⁰ On 29 August, President Japarov called parliamentary elections for 28 November.¹¹ These elections were widely considered as the next step towards a more centralized form of governance.

IEOM interlocutors noted the continued fragmentation of a predominantly personality driven political environment, with traditional parties losing clout, and new ones emerging.¹² Many interlocutors also noted a lack of a clearly identifiable ruling party in these elections, with a few parties considered to be closely associated with the President. The President stated that he would not support any party.

³ Mr. Japarov won 79.2 per cent of the votes. Voter turnout for the latest presidential election was 39.2 per cent.

⁴ Some 81.3 per cent of those who voted chose a presidential republic, 10.9 per cent - a parliamentary one and 4.4 per cent voted "against all". Voter turnout for the referendum was 39.1 per cent.

⁵ Some 79.3 per cent of those who voted chose 'yes' for the proposed text, 13.7 per cent voted 'against', and voting results in 21 polling stations were declared invalid. Voter turnout was 36.7 per cent.

⁶ The new Constitution, among other things, transferred the powers of the head of the executive branch from the prime minister to the president, and replaced the single six-year mandate for the president with the possibility of two five-year terms. It also grants the president the right of legislative initiative as well as the right to speak at sittings of a newly-established 2,500 member "People's *Kurultai*" - a traditional consultative assembly amongst historic nomadic communities.

⁷ See the ODIHR and Venice Commission March 2021 [Joint Opinion on the Draft Constitution](#) (2021 Joint Opinion).

⁸ Of note, the law stated that repeat elections should be held no later than 1 June 2021. While in December 2020, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court found the relevant law constitutional, it criticized the length of the extension, stating that it was "excessive and unjustifiable by objective circumstances". It further stated that in the prolongation period of the parliament, its activity "must be guided by the principle of reasonable restraint".

⁹ ODIHR EOM interlocutors estimated that up to 400 laws were affected, including according to the [presidential decree](#) mandating an extensive review of legislation. The new constitutional Law on the Cabinet of Ministers has replaced the Prime Minister with a Chair-of-Cabinet of Ministers who heads the Presidential Administration and is subordinate to the president. The law further forbids criminal investigations against members of government, unless approved by the president. The Law on Local State Administration and Local Self-Government Bodies grants the president sweeping powers in the appointment and dismissal of local officials. Both laws were adopted in October 2021 during the ongoing electoral process.

¹⁰ The Venice Commission, in its November 2020 [Urgent Amicus Curiae Brief related to the Postponing of Elections motivated by Constitutional Reform](#), stated that: "during the *prorogatio* that takes place after the legal term of the legislature has expired, the parliament is only allowed to carry out some ordinary functions, whereas it is not allowed to approve extraordinary measures, including constitutional reforms".

¹¹ The outgoing parliament, elected in 2015, consisted of six parties: Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK, with 38 seats), *Respublika - Ata Jurt* (28 seats), Kyrgyzstan Party (18 seats), Bir-Bol (12 seats), *Ata Meken* (11 seats), *Onuguu*-Progress (10 seats), and three MPs without party affiliation.

¹² Of the 21 parties that contested the elections, only 5 ran in the 2020 parliamentary race (*Yiman Nuru*, *Ata Meken*, *Butun Kyrgyzstan*, *Ordo*, and Social Democrats). The other parties contested elections for the first time or were the outcome of a process of re-branding. Of note, the August 2021 amendments to the Election Law repealed the requirement for parties to be registered at least six months prior to election day.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for parliamentary elections primarily consists of the 2021 Constitution, the 2011 Constitutional Law on Presidential and Parliamentary Elections (Election Law), the 2021 Law on CEC, and the 2011 Law on Election Commissions.¹³ The Kyrgyz Republic is party to the main international treaties related to holding democratic elections.¹⁴

The current Constitution unduly limits some civil and political rights. In 2021, ODIHR and the Venice Commission reviewed the draft constitution and provided a number of recommendations none of which were addressed in the final text of the Constitution.¹⁵ Among other election related amendments, the new Constitution changed the size of the legislative body, the term of office for the president, prohibited the creation of political parties on a religious and ethnic basis, provided for a possibility for voters to recall MPs, increased the eligibility age for parliamentary candidates from 21 to 25 years of age and granted the president a pivotal role in the appointment of judges and election officials.

Although the Election Law was amended several times after the invalidation of the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections, ODIHR and Venice Commission's recommendations were not on the agenda of those reforms, and, in some instances, the new provisions further departed from prior recommendations.¹⁶ A number of recommendations remain unaddressed, including with regards to restrictions on the suffrage rights of prisoners and persons with disabilities, the campaign finance audit mechanism, legal standing in electoral disputes and campaign regulations. Further, certain changes have created conflicting legal provisions.¹⁷ Other provisions are broad, which leaves a wide room for interpretation, and the CEC, at times, interpreted the Election Law restrictively, in particular when resolving complaints and accrediting citizen observers (see *Complaints and Appeals* and *Election Observation*).¹⁸

Recent changes to the electoral legislation, initiated and driven by the President, were adopted by parliament through an expedited procedure that did not provide an opportunity for inclusive and meaningful consultations. On 26 August, the President signed legislation, which, amongst other provisions, introduced a mixed electoral system. The introduction of the new system was accompanied by requisite changes in provisions on voter and candidate registration, campaign finance, election

¹³ Other relevant acts include the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Peaceful Assemblies, and legislation providing for sanctions for electoral offences. The new Criminal Code, the Code on Criminal Proceedings and the Code on Infractions entered into force on 1 December 2021.

¹⁴ These include the [1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR), the 1965 [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), the 1979 [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) and its optional protocol, the 2002 [CIS Convention on Standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights and Freedoms](#), the 2003 [UN Convention Against Corruption](#) (UN CAC), and [the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD).

¹⁵ For example, Article 10 (4) of the Constitution provides that “[i]n order to protect the younger generation, activities that contradict moral and ethical values and public conscience of the people of the Kyrgyz Republic may be restricted by law”. Paragraph 136 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion recommended to remove this restriction. In addition, it stated that “a blanket ban on the establishment of political parties with religious or ethnic attributes would, as a rule, be disproportionate”, while Article 8.3.3 of the Constitution prohibits, *inter alia* “creation of political parties on a religious and ethnic basis”.

¹⁶ For instance, the change to the mechanism of the CEC appointment runs contrary to a previous recommendation on strengthening the independence of the CEC. The updated law prohibits the possibility to vote at a temporary place of stay, thus not foreseeing sufficient safeguards to ensure voting rights of internal migrants.

¹⁷ While Article 3 of the Election Law states that “[t]he citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic shall have the right to elect and be elected regardless of their origin, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, education, official and property status, religion, political and other convictions”, a higher education is now included in candidate eligibility requirements. Recent amendments introduced a new level of election administration, but did not include rules on their composition.

¹⁸ For example, the CEC introduced additional requirements for registration of citizen observers; certain CEC decisions on violation of campaign rules had a restraining effect on campaigning and on freedom of expression.

administration and election day procedures. The change of fundamental elements of the Election Law three days before the call for elections did not give electoral stakeholders sufficient opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new rules.¹⁹ The negative consequences of the last-minute changes were observed by the IEOM during the voting and counting process (see *Election Day*).

The legal framework, including provisions in the Constitution, should be reviewed to ensure compliance with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and address other identified shortcomings through an inclusive, consultative and transparent process well in advance of the next elections. The law-making process must comply with the principles of rule of law requirements and law makers should refrain from using expedited procedures for introducing significant changes to election legislation that require proper consultation.

V. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Under the newly adopted electoral system, voters elected 90 MPs for a five-year term, with 54 MPs elected in a single nationwide constituency through open party lists, and 36 MPs - in single mandate districts (SMDs) under a one round plurality system (first-past-the-post).

In the SMDs, the candidate who receives the most votes cast is elected.²⁰ To qualify for seat distribution in the proportional component, political parties must pass a 5 per cent threshold of votes cast nationwide and 0.5 per cent in each of the seven regions and in the cities of Bishkek and Osh.²¹ In the proportional contest, the number of parliamentary seats held by any one political party cannot exceed 27.²² While it aims to prevent one party dominance in the legislature, this limitation challenges the principle of equality of the vote. ODIHR and the Venice Commission have previously recommended revising seat allocation rules as well as reconsidering the double threshold.²³

Following recent amendments, the CEC delineated boundaries for the 36 SMDs. The law requires the number of eligible voters across districts be approximately equal, with a possible deviation of up to 20 per cent from the nationwide average number of voters per SMD. The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that the number of voters in eight districts deviates by more than 15 per cent from the national average due to the specificities of the geographical distribution of the population within the country.²⁴

The 2008 Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women prescribes equal political rights for women and men and limits representation of each gender in state and local self-government bodies to 70 per cent. The same representation requirement is also reflected in the proportional component of the new electoral system. Some IEOM interlocutors expressed concern

¹⁹ The explanatory report of the Venice Commission's 2002 [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) states that "Stability of the law is crucial to credibility of the electoral process, which is itself vital to consolidating democracy. Rules which change frequently – and especially rules which are complicated – may confuse voters. Above all, voters may conclude, rightly or wrongly, that electoral law is simply a tool in the hands of the powerful, and that their own votes have little weight in deciding the results of elections".

²⁰ Should a seat remain vacant as a result of a candidate's withdrawal after being elected, new elections in this district should be held within two months.

²¹ Although, as demanded by the protesters in October 2020, the national electoral threshold was lowered from 7 to 3 per cent, it was subsequently increased in August 2021 to 5 per cent.

²² If, as a result of voting, a party wins more than 27 mandates, the number of mandates exceeding 27 will be redistributed among the parties that passed the required thresholds.

²³ See Paragraphs 15 and 18 of ODIHR and Venice Commission [2014 Joint Opinion on the Draft Election Law](#).

²⁴ The deviation in districts was as follows: Aksy (20 per cent deviation), Ak-Suu (17), Ala-Buka (20), Kok-Zhar (20), Manas (17), Nookat (18), Talas City (20) and Toloikon (18). Section 2.2.iv of the Venice Commission 2002 Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that "The permissible departure from the norm should not be more than 10%, and should certainly not exceed 15% except in special circumstances (protection of a concentrated minority, sparsely populated administrative entity)".

that the reduction in the size of parliament, combined with the introduction of a majoritarian component of the electoral system, which traditionally favours male contestants, negatively impacted women's overall participation in the campaign and their representation in parliament. Women held only 20 seats in the outgoing 120-seat parliament (17 per cent) and won 19 seats in the new parliament (21 per cent) including 1 elected through a SMD during February by-elections.²⁵

VI. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections were administered by the CEC, 36 District Election Commissions (DECs), and 2,494 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), including 59 PECs abroad.²⁶ The CEC and PECs are permanent bodies appointed for five years. The DECs are temporary bodies established for every parliamentary elections. Women were well represented in the election administration, comprising four out of 12 CEC members, including the CEC chairperson, around half of the DEC members and some 70 per cent of PEC members. National minority groups were underrepresented in the election administration, including in the areas where they comprise a substantial part of the population.²⁷

Authorities should adopt measures to ensure that national minorities are adequately represented in election commissions, especially in areas where they constitute a considerable part of the population.

The CEC was appointed on 30 June 2021.²⁸ ODIHR and the Venice Commission have previously recommended reconsidering a selection and dismissal process for the members of the CEC with the aim of establishing an independent impartial body in charge of applying electoral law.²⁹ Under the new procedures, the president now nominates half of the CEC members, and the other half are nominated by parliament.³⁰ In general, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the technical abilities and efficiency of the election administration. Some noted the more proactive approach of the CEC in reacting to election related violations.

To enhance the independence and impartiality of the CEC, the law should be amended to guarantee more balanced political representation. Consideration could be given to reverting to the previous model of the CEC formation.

Sessions of the CEC were open to observers and media and were streamed online, which enhanced transparency.³¹ However, CEC sessions were often announced only shortly before they started.³² While the law requires that members be present at all sessions, CEC rules also allow for attendance through

²⁵ Paragraphs 25-26 of the UN Committee on the Discrimination against Women [Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan](#) (15 November 2021, CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/5) recommended to “[r]eview its electoral legislation to reach parity of women and men in political life and to that effect take targeted measures, including temporary special measures, such as increased quotas, to strengthen the representation of women at all levels of government [...], in particular at decision-making levels”.

²⁶ Voters abroad may vote only in the proportional contest. The voting was organized in 29 countries.

²⁷ According to the CEC, 12 per cent of DEC members and 17 per cent of PEC members belonged to national minorities. Eight CEC members were newly appointed. The chairperson has held this position since 2016.

²⁸ Paragraph 111 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion noted that the “proposed model assumes broader involvement of the president in formation of the CEC detracting from the current balanced approach”.

²⁹ Paragraph 111 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion noted that the “proposed model assumes broader involvement of the president in formation of the CEC detracting from the current balanced approach”.

³⁰ The six CEC members nominated by parliament represent *Ata-Jurt Kyrgyzstan*, *Ata-Meken*, *Bir Bol*, *Onuguu-Progress*, *Respublika*, and *SDPK*. Prior to recent amendments, the president, the parliamentary majority, and the parliamentary opposition each nominated four CEC members.

³¹ The CEC sessions were subsequently archived on the CEC's *YouTube* channel. The CEC also provided regular and detailed election updates and announcements through its account at social network *Telegram*.

³² For instance, sessions on 19 and 26 October were announced on the *Telegram* account 17 and 8 minutes before the start, respectively; on 20 October - 10 minutes before, and on 21 November - 3 minutes after the session started. On 24 October, the session was announced only when it was over.

videoconferencing.³³ During the CEC sessions observed by the ODIHR EOM, the decisions were adopted in a collegial manner and mostly unanimously.

By law, the CEC is mandated to publish its decisions on its website within 24 hours; however, not all decisions, particularly those on complaints, were made public in a timely manner. By election day, only 8 of 27 regulations adopted for these elections were published on the website, detracting from transparency. In particular, the important regulation which described election day procedures was adopted as late as 15 November and not published by election day, leaving some electoral stakeholders uninformed.³⁴ Some of the older regulations were amended for these elections and published without an indication that changes had been made.³⁵ This created challenges for some stakeholders to follow which regulations had been amended and applied. The CEC attributed these delays to the lack of human resources within its secretariat and published most missing decisions after election day.

As previously recommended, the CEC should publish all its regulations and decisions in a timely manner as provided for in the law.

The DEC's have no less than 12 members who are drawn from members of the relevant Territorial Election Commissions functioning within the respective electoral district.³⁶ All DEC's were established by 12 September, within a legal deadline.

By law, during the election period, the DEC's should hold sessions at least once a week. Most DEC's informed the ODIHR EOM that they only held the sessions based on necessity. On multiple occasions, the ODIHR EOM noted a lack of transparency and co-operation on the side of the DEC's.³⁷

PEC members are nominated by political parties and local self-government bodies.³⁸ While collectively political parties may nominate up to half of the PEC members, they nominated only 6 per cent nationwide. This was attributed by some ODIHR EOM interlocutors to increased confidence in the integrity of the electoral process following the introduction of new technologies as well as to the reported limited human and financial resources of political parties.

Technical preparations for these elections were managed efficiently and within legal deadlines. Lower-level election commissions were provided with sufficient resources and logistical support from the CEC and local authorities. The CEC trained lower-level commission members, operators of biometric identification equipment, and ballot scanner operators. The ODIHR EOM assessed the training sessions it attended as informative, practical and interactive. The CEC also provided tools to assist voters with visual impairments in all polling stations, including ballot guiding templates.

³³ CEC sessions had both online and in-person attendance. At times, some CEC members submitted their votes in advance using WhatsApp social messaging platform, which is not provided for in the procedures. If a draft decision was amended during the discussion, the vote cast in advance was not counted by the CEC.

³⁴ The eight published regulations related to candidate registration, registration of citizen observers, campaign rules, CEC working groups, determining the order of candidates in ballot, campaign finance rules, status of party/candidate proxies and voter information. Unpublished regulations *inter alia* addressed formation of election commissions, campaign rules, consideration of complaints and other issues.

³⁵ For example, the amended CEC regulation "On observers".

³⁶ Territorial Election Commissions are appointed for five-year term and are part of the election administration system but do not have a specific role in administering parliamentary elections. One half of the members of these commissions are nominated by political parties, and the other half - by local self-government bodies.

³⁷ Cases of lack of cooperation with observers and transparency from DEC's were observed in Bishkek city as well as Batken, Chuy, Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Talas regions.

³⁸ A PEC includes a minimum seven members and depends on the size of the precinct. PEC members were appointed in January 2020.

To address the complexity of the new electoral system and ballots, the CEC organised an information campaign.³⁹ It was conducted through seminars, billboards, posters, explanatory videos on media platforms and state TV channels, supported by sign language. However, the ODIHR EOM observed that the amount of voter information in the regions varied. The CEC acknowledged that voters' confusion about how to properly mark the ballot resulted in a high number of invalid votes.

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens who are at least 18 years of age on election day are eligible to vote. Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the Election Law continues to disenfranchise those serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the crime committed, and those who have been declared incapable by a court, contrary to international obligations and standards.⁴⁰

Blanket deprivation of voting rights of prisoners should be reconsidered taking into account the gravity of the crime committed; suffrage limitations based on disabilities should be repealed.

Voter registration is passive, and voter lists are extracted from the Unified Population Register administered by the State Registration Service (SRS). Biometric civil registration is mandatory for all citizens above the age of 16 and is a prerequisite for inclusion into voter lists. ODIHR has previously recommended that the authorities continue their concerted efforts and facilitate biometric registration of all eligible voters, including those who reside abroad. According to the CEC, some 290,000 citizens, mostly residing abroad, do not have biometric registration and thus remained disenfranchised.⁴¹ Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed general trust in the voter registration system.

The 2020 amendments removed the possibility for voters to change their voting address and vote at their temporary place of stay. While these amendments were aimed at preventing vote buying, it ultimately created obstacles for the voters concerned to exercise their right to vote.⁴² The new legal amendment adopted four months before elections set a minimum 90 days residency requirement for voters to be able to vote for a majoritarian candidate in an SMD.⁴³ The CEC enabled those people working in polling stations to change their voting locations.⁴⁴

According to the SRS, there is a discrepancy between the databases of national IDs and the registry of permanent and temporary addresses. Despite a previous ODIHR recommendation, the lack of harmonization between these databases led to voters being assigned to a polling station according to their addresses in their national IDs, regardless of their current registered place of residence reflected in the registry of addresses. This resulted in confusion among some voters as to which polling station they

³⁹ The information campaign covered areas such as candidate registration, the election campaign, complaints and election day procedures. By law, election commissions as well as state and local self-government bodies are responsible for providing reliable information to voters in a timely manner.

⁴⁰ Paragraph 48 of [General Comment No. 1 to Article 12 of the CRPD](#) states that “a person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising [...] the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election”. See also Article 29 of the CRPD. 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”.

⁴¹ This is a 36 per cent decrease as compared to the 2021 presidential election (450,000).

⁴² ODIHR has previously recommended that “[c]onsideration should be given to providing all voters with a right to request a temporary change of voting address under the conditions of a valid justification and a limited number of requests submitted by one voter within an election period”.

⁴³ There is no such requirement for voting in the nationwide constituency.

⁴⁴ The law allows for out-of-country voters to vote at their current place of stay. Of note, although not foreseen in the law, a CEC regulation grants the opportunity for members of election commissions, police officers, biometric voter identification and scanning equipment operators and medical workers to be included in the voter list of the polling station to which they are assigned to work on election day.

were assigned to and necessitated additional actions taken by voters prior to election day. While it was positive that the CEC introduced a mechanism for voters to check their voter registration data and request changes, due to issues with the electronic system, this service was not always accessible for all voters.⁴⁵ Voter information on this matter lacked sufficient detail on what procedures a voter had to follow. On election day, the IEOM observed a relatively high number of voters who were turned away from polling stations because their names were not on the voter lists.

To enhance the accuracy of voter lists, authorities should introduce additional measures to facilitate the proper exchange of data between the registry of addresses and voter lists.

The final voter lists included 3,703,420 voters, of whom some 52 per cent - women, and 84,128 voters registered for out-of-country voting.⁴⁶ Voters had sufficient opportunity to check their data and request corrections at the PECs during the scrutiny period which ended on 12 November. After election day, the CEC published on its website names and surnames of citizens who had voted. The information was also displayed in polling stations. International good practice recommends avoiding the publication of the lists of voters that have participated in the elections.⁴⁷

VIII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Eligible voters who are 25 years and older on election day can stand for election. Kyrgyz citizens in possession of another nationality are not eligible to stand, despite prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations.⁴⁸ Recent amendments to the Election Law also introduced the requirement for higher education for all candidates, at odds with international standards.⁴⁹ The right to stand also excludes individuals incapacitated by the court and those with an unexpunged criminal record. The law obliges certain categories of state and municipal officials to resign or take a leave of absence in order to be registered as a candidate.⁵⁰ While the latter provision represents an additional safeguard against potential misuse of administrative resources during the campaign, it was not always clear to what officials the law applies.⁵¹

⁴⁵ The CEC developed an online service "[Tizme](#)" to facilitate access of voters to information on voter lists and request changes. Only 700 voters requested updates. The ODIHR EOM was aware of some mistakes in the system used. For example, a voter in Bishkek applied to update a voting address via the "[Tizme](#)", but the service was not operational at the time of application; subsequently the service became available only for the voters residing abroad. As a result, the voter had to apply to the respective PEC and managed to change the voting address. Another voter in Bishkek applied to the respective PEC to update the voting address but was instructed to address the MFA and the respective consulate as the voter had been registered abroad. The voter was eventually registered according to the new address.

⁴⁶ The number of voters registered abroad has more than doubled as compared with the 2020 parliamentary elections. According to the CEC, this was due to an easier registration procedure which included the possibility to apply online. Voters abroad have the right to vote only for the nationwide constituency.

⁴⁷ See [Interpretative Declaration 840/2016](#) to the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.

⁴⁸ Paragraph 32 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission [2020 Joint Opinion on the Amendments to Some Legislative Acts Related to Sanctions for Violation of Electoral Legislation](#) recommended "to give due consideration to minimizing and eventually abolishing limitations on holding public offices for citizens with dual nationalities".

⁴⁹ Paragraph 15 of the UN Human Rights Committee's [General Comment No. 25](#) to the ICCPR states that "[p]ersons 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".

⁵⁰ Political officials (except for MPs) as well as heads of state and municipal enterprises and their affiliated entities should resign from the moment they are nominated as candidates. Public servants, municipal employees or media workers suspend the exercise of official or office powers from the moment they are nominated as candidates. The list of positions is specified in the [Register for State and Municipal officials](#).

⁵¹ According to the CEC, 136 nominees resigned or took a leave of absence from state and municipal offices. The CEC initially did not register the current speaker of parliament Talant Mamytov nominated on *Yntymak* party list, as he had not stepped down from his position. This decision was later overturned on appeal (see *Complaints and Appeals*).

Only political parties can nominate candidates through party lists for the proportional component.⁵² For the SMDs, candidates can be nominated either by political parties or through self-nomination.⁵³ To register a candidate list or a candidate in an SMD, contestants are required to pay a deposit of KGS 1 million (some EUR 10,500) and KGS 100,000, respectively.⁵⁴ While the CEC is in charge of registration of all candidates, the DEC's facilitated the receipt and transfer of SMD nominees' documents to the CEC, which eased registration for SMD candidates in the regions.

The law establishes quotas that party lists must meet to be registered. The gender quota for the proportional component was recently strengthened, and a candidate list must have at least 30 per cent of candidates from each gender, with the less represented gender given at least one place in each group of four candidates on the list. In line with recent legal amendments, women receive at least 30 per cent of seats received by each party through the proportional component even if they do not receive enough preferential votes.⁵⁵ Each party should include at least two persons with disabilities in the candidate list; one of them should be among the first 25 names. At least 15 per cent of candidates on a list must belong to national minorities, and 15 per cent of candidates must be younger than 35 years old.⁵⁶ At the same time, the new requirement for higher education in conjunction with an increased age requirement of candidates limits youth representation in parliament.

All parties adhered to the nomination quotas, and the CEC registered in an inclusive manner all 21 candidate lists submitted by parties and 321 out of 387 candidates nominated in the SMDs.⁵⁷ The total number of registered candidates in the lists was 1,037, including 372 women (36 per cent), 46 persons with disabilities (4 per cent), 189 candidates belonging to national minorities (18 per cent) and 267 people under 35 years of age (26 per cent). Only 20 women (6 per cent) and 10 candidates belonging to national minorities (3 per cent) were registered in the SMDs.

However, the law does not guarantee that quotas remain enforced after the registration and does not provide for replacements in the candidate lists before election day, undermining the efficacy of the quotas. After registration, 42 candidates withdrew from party lists, including 15 women, thus leaving two candidate lists with less than 30 per cent of women.⁵⁸

To work towards more equal representation of women in parliament, authorities should increase the gender quota for party lists and provide for additional mechanisms to retain the quota between registration and the election day. Parties could introduce internal mechanisms for mainstreaming a gender perspective in parties' rules, policies and practices, including but not limited to, increasing the number of women candidates, enhancing the support they receive for standing as candidates, and placing more women in higher positions on candidate lists.

⁵² Paragraph 185 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2020 Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states that: “[i]ndependent candidates should therefore be permitted to run for elections according to the same conditions applicable to candidates nominated by political parties.”

⁵³ Parties may nominate up to 54 candidates for the nationwide electoral constituency and one candidate in each SMD, while individual candidates may only stand in SMDs.

⁵⁴ The deposit is returned if a candidate list or a candidate in an SMD gains 5 per cent or 1 per cent of votes, respectively. EUR 1 was equal to approximately KGS 95.

⁵⁵ After election day, the CEC amended its regulation on the distribution of mandates, which provided for rounding up in calculating the number of seats for female candidates for the Alliance party. This change resulted in 3 rather than 2 seats for women. The Alliance party challenged this change and following the appeal, on 21 December, the Administrative Court of Bishkek cancelled this decision of the CEC and assigned two out of seven seats to female candidates from the party.

⁵⁶ At least three people from each category should be included in the first 25 places on the list.

⁵⁷ In total, 31 SMD candidates were not registered due to non-payment of the electoral deposit, and 3 – for not submitting their higher education diplomas. The other nominees withdrew before registration. Further 38 candidates, including 6 women, withdrew from SMD races by election day.

⁵⁸ Both *Yiman Nuru* and *Ordo* party lists each had 15 women candidates (27.7 per cent).

The CEC received three complaints about the registration process.⁵⁹ Shortly before election day, the CEC received information from the State Committee on National Security (GKNB) on the non-validity of education documents submitted for registration by two candidates from the Social Democrats and *Butun Kyrgyzstan*.⁶⁰ After verification with the Ministry of Education, on 24 November, the CEC deregistered one of these candidates, but on appeal the Administrative Court overruled the deregistration. On 18 December, the CEC deregistered the winning candidate Medetbek Sakkaraev from the Chuy-Kemin SMD No. 31 due to alleged information about his citizenship of another state. Following the candidate's appeal, the Administrative Court upheld the CEC decision, but on 28 December, the Supreme Court invalidated the decision of the CEC finding the de-registration unlawful.

IX. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The official election campaign started on 29 October and ended on 27 November, 24 hours before the opening of the polls. The legal framework provides for equal campaign opportunities for all contestants, and the election administration is responsible for ensuring this is respected. Candidates as well as their close relatives are not allowed to engage in charitable activities from the moment the election was called until the publication of results. The use of religious themes, concerts, theatrical performances and sport events are prohibited during the campaign. Contesting parties signed a non-binding Code of Conduct in which they pledged to run an "honest" campaign and to refrain from vote buying and misusing administrative resources.⁶¹ Overall candidates were able to campaign freely, and fundamental freedoms were generally respected.⁶²

The campaign was largely low-key and incident-free. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors pointed out the weakened role of parliament and underscored a high degree of voter apathy when discussing the lack of a vigorous campaign.⁶³ The authorities called for "clean" elections.⁶⁴ The strict enforcement of the 1 November presidential decree, including through the GKNB, reportedly deterred campaign violations such as vote-buying and the misuse of administrative resources.⁶⁵ At the same time, this also

⁵⁹ One case concerned a nominating party not submitting a candidate's diploma to the CEC. In two other cases, the complainants argued that registered candidates had unexpunged criminal records, which is ground for denial of registration. The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that relevant candidates' criminal records were expunged.

⁶⁰ The GKNB is part of the executive branch, and the president appoints the head. According to the 1994 Law on National Security Bodies (last amended in January 2021), the security forces ensure the security of individuals, society and the state; work to identify, prevent and suppress the intelligence and subversive activities of foreign special services and organizations, as well as illegal encroachments on the constitutional order, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kyrgyz Republic.

⁶¹ The [Code of Conduct was signed](#) on the premises of the CEC on 5 November.

⁶² A registered candidate Ravshan Jeenbekov, while in pre-trial detention during the registration and campaign period, petitioned a district court for his release in order to be granted the right to campaign. The court rejected his petition noting that the status of candidate cannot be considered as grounds for altering preventive measures. Seven rivals of Mr. Jeenbekov sent an appeal to the CEC requesting that he be given an opportunity to conduct his campaign.

⁶³ In 2021, some citizens took part in up to five electoral processes: early presidential election alongside a referendum on the form of governance (January), constitutional referendum and local elections (April), and repeat local elections in Bishkek, Osh and Tokmok (July).

⁶⁴ On 21 October, President Japarov [outlined](#) his intention to have honest elections and a flawlessly organized campaign. On 1 November, the President signed [a decree](#) instructing election commissions, state bodies and local state administrations to strictly comply with the electoral legislation during the conduct of campaigns.

⁶⁵ On 9 November, the Chair of the Cabinet of Ministers called on civil servants not to interfere in the electoral process and [announced](#) that the mayor of Osh city and the Minister of Education had been reprimanded, while the Rector, the Dean and three lecturers of Osh State University were dismissed on grounds of misuse of administrative resources for having allegedly pressured students to partake in a rally of the *Azattyk* Party on 3 November. On the same day, the Vice Chair of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Chair of the GKNB [promised](#) to punish civil servants if they interfered in the elections. On 14 November, the President warned voters and candidates through his [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts about criminal liability for vote buying, and urged law enforcement agencies to take strict and decisive measures.

prompted electoral stakeholders to approach the contest with caution and further stifled the campaign.⁶⁶ The strict and overly formalistic interpretation of campaign rules by the CEC also impacted upon the free exercise of campaign activities (see *Complaints and Appeals*).

To foster an environment in which campaign activities and meaningful voter and candidate engagement are not hindered, the involvement of the law enforcement bodies in enforcing campaign regulations should be confined to what is clearly prescribed by their mandate.

The ODIHR EOM noted a number of allegations of vote buying, in particular through family networks. The ODIHR EOM also received reports of intimidation and harassment by a high-level state security official for the purpose of delivering a certain number of votes for a specific candidate. The CEC transferred to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) information about 138 campaign violations, 94 of which were on vote buying.⁶⁷ The MoI was proactive in following up on reports of violations of campaign regulations and opened investigations in 21 cases of alleged vote-buying.⁶⁸ However, the active role the GKNB took in investigating alleged violations of campaign regulations and interrogating some well-known candidates and their relatives had an intimidating effect on some participants,⁶⁹ contrary to Paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁷⁰

Continued efforts are needed to address the issue of vote-buying and pressure on voters, including through a civic awareness campaign, in order to promote confidence in the electoral process. A genuine commitment from political parties to combat vote-buying practices should be made.

Party and candidate platforms generally focused on issues such as the need to change the political class, anti-corruption, economic development, education, healthcare and infrastructure. Significant attention was also devoted to local issues. But the ODIHR EOM observed that the contest was personality-driven, and candidates highlighted their personal profiles and qualities over programmatic visions. Campaign events observed around the country by ODIHR Long-Term Observers also indicated an overall low visibility of women, and gender equality and national minority issues did not feature prominently in the campaign discourse.

Parties and SMD candidates used diverse means to campaign across the country.⁷¹ They campaigned via rallies, door-to-door canvassing, leaflets, posters, billboards, and all types of media. The COVID-19 pandemic and related measures in place did not prevent most campaign activities.

⁶⁶ On 23 October, President Japarov [announced](#) the dismissal of one *Akim* (head of district) for lobbying the interests of a candidate. This was seen by numerous ODIHR EOM interlocutors as a warning for all in Kyrgyzstan.

⁶⁷ As per the CEC [website](#) as of 2 December. After election day, the CEC continued to update relevant information on the status of the consideration of relevant information, including by the MoI.

⁶⁸ As per the MoI website as of [15](#) and [28](#) November.

⁶⁹ On 15 November, the GKNB summoned an SMD candidate, opposition MP Dastan Bekeshev (a person with disabilities) for a four-hour interrogation without a lawyer further to a complaint about the alleged participation of underage activists in his election campaign. On 16 November, the GKNB detained a relative of an SMD candidate, Kamchybek Zholdoshbaev, on suspicion of vote buying; he was later deregistered. On 19 November, candidate Zhanybek Abirov said that the GKNB had summoned him for interrogation over alleged participation of underage activists in his election campaign.

⁷⁰ Paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits participating States to “ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them”.

⁷¹ The ODIHR EOM observed 65 campaign events in the following regions: Batken – 3, Chui – 9, Issyk-Kul – 10, Jalal-Abad – 17, Naryn – 10, Osh – 9, and Talas region – 7. Among those observed, *Ata Jurt Kyrgyzstan* organized 9 events, *Butun Kyrgyzstan* – 9, *El Umutu* – 6; *Ishenim* – 4; *Azattyk* – 3; Alliance – 3; *Ata Meken* – 2; *Uluttar Birimdigi*, *Yntymak*, *Yman Nuru* and *Begyt* – 1 each, SMD candidates – 12. One event was organized jointly by several parties.

Several parties and SMD candidates informed the ODIHR EOM that financial limitations and the new requirement that campaign-related payments be made by bank transfer, had constrained their campaign efforts and negatively impacted the number of staff hired. Financial constraints and declining TV viewership also affected parties' ability and propensity to purchase paid advertisement on traditional media. Social networks became an increasingly popular campaign tool, and contestants relied on several of them, such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *WhatsApp*, *Telegram* and *TikTok*.⁷² A number of SMD candidates campaigned jointly with party candidates to leverage common financial resources. Several parties indicated to the ODIHR EOM that they did not want to commit large financial resources to these elections because they felt that those who opposed the government did not stand a good chance of being elected. The President's presence in the campaign, though not politically overt, was visible in the narrative of some parties that directly or indirectly identified themselves as pro-governmental.⁷³

X. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The legal framework provides a level of transparency in relation to campaign finances, but the transparency remains insufficient. In addition, certain key aspects of campaign finance oversight remain unregulated. Campaigns may be financed from private sources, while direct public funding is not foreseen.⁷⁴ In-kind donations are permitted only for printed, audio-visual and other materials for campaign or information purposes.⁷⁵ The Election Law regulates sources of funding for SMD candidates and political parties,⁷⁶ and sets limits on the expenditures per campaign fund.⁷⁷

In line with the law, all contestants opened designated bank accounts to manage their campaign contributions and expenditures.⁷⁸ The law requires all contributions and expenditures be transferred through these bank accounts. While the recently introduced prohibition on cash payments contributed to transparency, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors alleged that cash was still used to cover campaign expenses.⁷⁹ Some SMD candidates stated that the prohibition on cash payments limited their activities, especially in the regions where banking services were not widely available.⁸⁰ Some candidates in the

⁷² Most parties had a presence on the most popular social networks, in particular on *Facebook* (19) and *Instagram* (18). While around half of the parties actively promoted their activities on those networks, the highest number of interactions and video views were observed on the official accounts of *El Umutu*, *Ata Meken* and *Alliance*.

⁷³ *Ata-Jurt Kyrgyzstan*, *Yntymak*, *Mekenchil El*, *Ishenim*.

⁷⁴ Cash donations as well as donations from foreign, state-owned or anonymous sources and religious and charitable organizations are prohibited.

⁷⁵ Article 62(2) of the Election Law states that in-kind contributions of campaign materials and information material can be received and accounted for; however, of note this provision is only valid for political parties. The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that in-kind donations must be evaluated according to market value and reflected in contestants' final reports.

⁷⁶ Campaign funds of SMD candidates can be financed from their own funds (up to KGS 150,000), funds of a nominating political party (up to KGS 1 million), donations by citizens (up to KGS 200,000 per citizen) and legal entities (up to KGS 500,000 per entity). Campaign funds of political parties can be financed from funds of the political party (KGS 100 million), funds of a candidate included in the list of candidates (up to KGS 1.5 million), donations by citizens (up to KGS 200,000 per citizen) and legal entities (up to KGS 3 million per entity).

⁷⁷ Limits on campaign contributions and expenditures are set at KGS 300 million for political parties contesting nationwide, and KGS 10 million - for candidates competing in the SMDs.

⁷⁸ Two banks, *RSK* and *Aiyyl*, were authorized to hold accounts for campaign funds. The banks transmitted information on income and expenditures of electoral contestants to the CEC on a daily basis.

⁷⁹ For instance, in Karakol (Yssyk-Kul region), the ODIHR EOM was informed that some SMD candidates were paying their activists in cash and using cash to rent campaign premises. In Kochkor-Ata (Jalal-Abad region), a political party mentioned that volunteers paid for taxi services in cash.

⁸⁰ According to the [International Trade Administration](#), 15 per cent of the population use Internet banking and 40 per cent have a bank account.

SMDs fundraised through electronic payment applications.⁸¹ The CEC expressed concerns that electronic payment applications could be misused to finance campaigns beyond the designated bank accounts.⁸²

The CEC oversees campaign finance. It regularly published on its website information on campaign incomes and expenditures of all contestants. In total, all contesting political parties received KGS 233 million (some EUR 2.4 million) and spent some KGS 232.3 million, with five parties spending more than twice as much as all the other parties combined.⁸³ In the SMDs, all candidates combined received some KGS 262.7 million and spent some KGS 245.8 million.⁸⁴

Parties and SMD candidates are required to submit an interim financial report 10 days before election day, but not all contestants complied with the requirement.⁸⁵ All contestants also had to submit a final financial report within 10 days after election day, but not all contestants did so.⁸⁶ The CEC did not publish the financial reports, which contravened its own regulation.⁸⁷ Reports are audited by the CEC audit group to oversee compliance with campaign finance rules. Contrary to previous ODIHR recommendations, the legal framework does not foresee how the audit should be conducted nor does it require publication of audit results, which diminishes the overall transparency of audits.⁸⁸ Contrary to a previous ODIHR recommendation, parties are not required to submit annual financial reports.⁸⁹

To ensure meaningful oversight, a full audit of campaign finance reports should be conducted. The legal framework should regulate audit procedures, timelines and the publication of audit results.

The law provides for criminal sanctions for campaign finance violations in conjunction with some other measures, such as written warnings or deregistration of SMD candidates or candidate lists.⁹⁰ Although certain offences may be sanctioned under provisions dedicated to campaigning, the law lacks specific sanctions for campaign finance offenses in cases such as failure to submit reports.⁹¹

⁸¹ Candidate Bekeshev (SMD 28) displayed on his [website](#) four bank accounts and eight electronic payment apps and called for donations to his election campaign. Similarly, candidate Nurbek Toktakunov (SMD 27) displayed on his [website](#) three electronic payment apps inviting voters to support his campaign through monetary contributions.

⁸² On 15 November, the CEC held a public discussion with representatives of banks, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies with a view to identify methods to prevent the circumvention of electoral rules via cash and non-cash payments.

⁸³ *Ata Jurt Kyrgyzstan* spent some KGS 35.6, *Ishenim* – KGS 32 million, *Yntymak* – KGS 31 million, *Alliance* – KGS 24 million, and *El Umutu* – KGS 19 million.

⁸⁴ Candidates who spent the most in their respective SMDs won the elections in 22 of the 54 SMDs.

⁸⁵ By the legal deadline, 2 parties and 88 SMD candidates did not submit the interim financial reports, yet they did so after the CEC intervened. On 25 November, the CEC issued written warnings to 1 political party and 23 SMD candidates for non-compliance with reporting requirements.

⁸⁶ Within the deadlines, 177 of 282 SMD candidates and 18 of 21 contesting parties submitted final financial reports together with the supporting documents.

⁸⁷ Article 7.3 of the [UN CAC](#) prescribes to consider taking “appropriate legislative and administrative measures ... to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected office”. The CEC regulation requires disclosure of the origins of the sources of funding.

⁸⁸ Paragraph 278 of [the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2020 Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that: “[...] legislation should clearly outline the different steps of the audit process”. See also Section 6 of [ODIHR Handbook for the Observation on Campaign Finance](#). The CEC did not publish the audit results regarding the 2021 presidential election.

⁸⁹ Paragraph 265 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2020 Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states that: “Political parties should be required to submit disclosure reports to the appropriate regulatory authority at least on an annual basis in the non-campaign period”.

⁹⁰ The Criminal Code envisages sanctions for “Violation of campaign finance rules” and for “Illegal use of funds during elections”. The Code of Minor Offences and the Code of Infractions do not contain direct provisions on this matter.

⁹¹ Paragraph 281 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2020 Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states: “[w]hile criminal sanctions are reserved for serious violations that undermine public integrity or may threaten national security (e.g. in the case of foreign funding), there should be a range of administrative sanctions available not only for the improper acquisition or use of funds by parties ... but also for individual wrongdoing”.

The legal framework should provide for a range of gradual, proportional and dissuasive administrative sanctions for campaign finance violations.

XI. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media environment is diverse, with the presence of several independent information sources. Television remains the main source of political information, in particular in rural areas, followed by an ever-growing influence of online media and social networks. The public broadcaster (*KTRK*) has the biggest coverage and viewership. A proposal introduced during the wide-scale legislative review initiated by the President in February 2021, envisages a change of *KTRK*'s status from public to state-owned, with the president appointing managers.⁹²

The media environment is characterized by a small advertising market, part of which is taken up by online platforms. The advertising market was further reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, a lack of funding and under-developed professional journalistic standards often lead to a practice whereby payments are expected in return for presenting a certain viewpoint. Private media outlets traditionally rely on international donors or financial infusions from owners, the latter often being perceived as politically engaged.⁹³

Numerous ODIHR EOM media interlocutors noted difficulties in obtaining information from various public institutions, such as parliament or some ministries. At the same time, they voiced concern in relation to the activities of the GKNB which had over the course of the previous year contacted several media professionals and representatives of civil society organizations (NGOs) and invited them for informal questioning on grounds they found questionable. Taken together, vague media-related legislation (see below *Legal Framework*) coupled with the use of such law enforcement methods have gradually led to self-censorship and had a chilling effect on in-depth investigative and critical journalism.

Media freedom should be strictly upheld. Undue limitations on access to information and interference with the activities of journalists should not be tolerated, so that working conditions of media professionals are conducive to freedom of expression.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and access to information and prohibits censorship as well as criminal liability for defamation. However, it also contains provisions that are unduly broad and vague in reference to potential grounds for limiting freedom of expression.⁹⁴ Also, the 2021 Law

⁹² On 29 October, local media organizations and professionals protested against such a proposal that would, *inter alia*, abolish the broadcaster's Supervisory Council and shift managerial appointments from parliament to the president.

⁹³ For example, according to the public registry, the owner of *Channel 7* and *Region TV* is Kazybek Tashiev, a brother of Kamchibek Tashiev, the head of the GKNB. The owner of *Next TV* is Azat Jeenbekov, the son of candidate Jeenbekov. While Daniyar Myrzaev is officially reported to be the owner of *TV NTS*, it is widely known that the actual owner is Omurbek Babanov, former prime-minister and former leader of the *Respublika* party.

⁹⁴ Paragraph 140 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion recommended the references to the protection of the younger generation and to acts contrary to the "moral and ethical values and public conscience of the people of the Kyrgyz Republic" be removed entirely since they can be used "as a potential ground for limiting freedom of expression and of the media (and potentially other freedoms)" as they appear "unduly broad and vague to comply with the principle of legal certainty".

on Protection from Inaccurate (False) Information preserves the version which the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) criticised in 2020 for its vagueness having potential to seriously restrict freedom of expression.⁹⁵ The Criminal Code still contains provisions that prohibit “incitement of racial, religious or interregional enmity”, a broad interpretation of which has resulted in the blocking of a number of websites, and the detention of bloggers over the past years.⁹⁶

The Constitution, Criminal Code and other media-related laws should be amended in line with previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations to eliminate unduly broad and vague provisions that can be misused as grounds for limiting freedom of expression.

In line with the law, state-funded media provided free airtime for contesting parties (two nationwide broadcasters *KTRK* and *EITR*) and for individual candidates in the SMDs (eight broadcasters based in regional centres) through a CEC lottery conducted on 30 October.⁹⁷ Free airtime formats consisted of individual statements of candidates or party representatives and joint debates. The latter were organized for the first time at a regional level and represented a welcome development.⁹⁸

A total of 243 outlets were accredited by the CEC to offer time and space for paid advertising.⁹⁹ While approximately half of the contesting parties and several candidates utilized this opportunity, others opted to campaign in various social networks. The state-funded *KTRK* and a private *Channel 7* also aired paid advertisements as reports during their news programmes, at odds with good practice for the conduct of political programmes.¹⁰⁰

Airing of paid political advertisements within news and current affairs programmes should be prohibited. The choice of the media to sell advertisement should not be pre-conditioned by accreditation; such a requirement should be cancelled or replaced by a voluntary submission to the CEC of the media outlets’ advertising conditions.

The Election Law requires media to treat electoral contestants equally, prohibits criticism of other contestants within free airtime, including during debates, and allows the CEC, in case of violations, to revoke media accreditation for paid advertisements. A Working Group on Informing and Campaigning was established by the CEC as its advisory panel to oversee the media and contestants’ compliance with campaign regulations. The Working Group, during its sessions observed by the ODIHR EOM, discussed most of the complaints (83 complaints in total) on their merits.¹⁰¹ In several cases, members of the

⁹⁵ In June 2020, the RFoM voiced [concern](#) that “vague legal definitions will not provide media and social media users with the necessary legal certainty in order to foresee the consequences of their activities. Furthermore, the regulation of online content ‘by an authorised state body’ may, in the absence of a clear mechanism and due process, seriously restrict freedom of expression”.

⁹⁶ In October 2021, the RFoM [pointed](#) to the “recommendations of the UN Universal Periodic Review [...] to review Article 313 of the Criminal Code on incitement to racial, ethnic, religious, and other forms of hostility as to comply with Articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR”. Former Article 313 corresponds to Article 330 in the new Criminal Code.

⁹⁷ Article 24(9) of the Election Law stipulates that “the lottery should be held upon completion of registration of candidates, but not later than 35 calendar days before the day of voting”. However, it is not fully implementable since Article 61(1, 3) states that the registration of candidates ends 30 days before the day of voting. As a result, the lottery was conducted 29 days before election day.

⁹⁸ *KTRK* aired debates with party representatives, including 10 leaders, while *EITR* did so with female and young party representatives. At the national level, all parties but *Butun Kyrgyzstan* took part, while only some 70 per cent of SMD candidates participated. Two private regional channels (Osh-based *Nur TV* and *TMG TV*) also organized debates.

⁹⁹ The CEC accredited 92 online media, 71 print media, 51 TV channels and 29 radio stations.

¹⁰⁰ Paragraph 2.2 of the Recommendation 15 (2007) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on measures concerning media coverage of election campaigns recommends to “[...]adopt measures whereby public service media and private broadcasters, during the election period, should in particular be fair, balanced and impartial in their news and current affairs programme”.

¹⁰¹ Before the ODIHR EOM opened, 12 sessions were held. The ODIHR EOM was informed of nine complaints, all of which it observed. The Working Group either recommended to apply fines or dismiss complaints.

Working Group interpreted the mere coverage of contestants as campaigning. A number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concern that such a narrow and restrictive interpretation of the law by the CEC (see also *Complaints and Appeals*) contributed to the choice of many media outlets not to cover the campaign of contestants.¹⁰²

The legal definition of election campaign should be thoroughly amended, so that it does not allow for an interpretation preventing media from comprehensive reporting on and editorial coverage of contestants' campaigns.

C. MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

[Click Here to Read Media Monitoring Results](#)



On 22 October, the ODIHR EOM commenced its media monitoring.¹⁰³ Its findings showed that most media, including at a local level, offered only minimal information on the campaign activities of contestants, *de facto* limiting coverage to cases of violations reported by the CEC and GKNB. Critical and analytical reporting was, with the exception of a few online media, largely absent during the official campaign thereby limiting voters' ability to make an informed choice.

Instead of contestants, the media covered extensively activities of state authorities, predominantly of the President, his administration and the Cabinet of Ministers. For example, state-funded *KTRK* and *EITR* dedicated to the President and his administration 55 and 53 per cent of political coverage respectively, in an exclusively positive and neutral tone, reporting on his visits and a wide range of activities. When reporting about elections, monitored media devoted significant coverage to the CEC and to the procedural aspects of the process. Other monitored media also primarily covered activities of the authorities – of the monitored outlets that produced content on a daily basis, the highest share was observed in *Sputnik Kyrgyzstan* (87 per cent) and *Akipress* (81 per cent). On the other hand, private *NTS* and several online media sources (*Kloop*, *24.kg*, *Azattyk.kg* and *Kaktus.Media*) presented a more critical portrayal of the authorities.

By contrast, state-funded *KTRK* and *EITR* dedicated to parties and candidates combined 3 and 2 per cent of political coverage, respectively. A similar approach was adopted by the state-funded *Radio Birinchi* and *Channel 5*. While private media were also restrained in covering contestants, they showed a more diverse perspective of the political events. *Kloop.kg* offered its readers 26 per cent of political coverage devoted to contesting parties and 9 per cent - to SMD candidates, while *24.kg*, *Azattyk.kg* and *Kaktus.Media* devoted a large share to SMD candidates (13, 13 and 12 per cent respectively). Similarly to their coverage of authorities, these media outlets also presented contestants in a rather critical tone.

Public and other state-funded broadcasters should make genuine efforts in their news and current affairs programmes to provide impartial and comprehensive editorial coverage of the campaign activities of contestants to enable voters to make informed choices.

¹⁰² On 1 and 5 November during meetings with the ODIHR EOM, CEC members opined that coverage of contestants within news programmes could be seen as campaigning, unless the principle of equality was strictly adhered to.

¹⁰³ The ODIHR EOM quantitative and qualitative monitoring included prime-time broadcasts of the nationwide TV channels *KTRK*, *EITR*, *Channel 5* (state-funded); *Channel 7*, *NTS* (private); news programmes of *Birinchi Radio* (state-funded); politics-related content of online *akipress.kg*, *azattyk.kg* (local service of RFE/RL), *Kaktus.Media*, *kloop.kg*, *sputnik.kg* (local service of Russian *Sputnik*), *24.kg*; and weekly newspaper *SuperInfo*. The ODIHR EOM also followed election related content on social networks.

XII. PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

The Kyrgyz Republic has an ethnically diverse population, which includes 26 per cent ethnic minorities.¹⁰⁴ The 2021 Constitution guarantees the equality of all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity. It forbids political parties to be formed on the basis of ethnicity, despite recommendations of ODIHR and the Venice Commission.¹⁰⁵

Ethnic minority candidates registered both in SMDs and on party lists participated in the campaign in areas of concentrated settlement of the respective minority. Minority candidates campaigned in the state (Kyrgyz), official (Russian) and Uzbek languages, but issues related to inter-ethnic relations did not feature prominently in their programmes. Voter education materials produced by the CEC were published in Kyrgyz and Russian, as well as in Uzbek in the areas of concentrated settlement of the Uzbek community.

On 8 November, law enforcement bodies in Osh launched an investigation into the legality of campaigning in the Uzbek language by an Uzbek candidate on the *El Umutu* party list.¹⁰⁶ In a separate development, on 4 December, the authorities opened a criminal investigation against an elected candidate, Akbokon Tashtanbekov, in Issyk-Ata (SMD No. 30), for inciting ethnic and interregional hatred. On 6 December, he was remanded in custody at the pre-trial detention facility of the GKNB.¹⁰⁷

XIII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The legal framework provides for access to an effective remedy; however, contrary to good electoral practice, election results can only be appealed by individual candidates, political parties, and their proxies.¹⁰⁸ All other election-related complaints can be filed by voters, political parties and candidates, their proxies, NGOs and observers.¹⁰⁹

Prior to election day, the CEC considered 142 complaints in 30 open sessions. Most of the complaints related to violations of campaign regulations, including 42 complaints on vote-buying and 31 on the misuse of administrative resources. While handling complaints, CEC members discussed issues in a collegial manner and put their proposals to a vote. Discussions were open to the public and media, and all complainants and other parties had the opportunity to present their cases. Members of the CEC were able to familiarize themselves with the complaints in advance of the discussions.

However, the CEC's interpretation of what constituted an "election campaign" was inconsistent, at times being either too broad or too narrow, and was not always conducive to freedom of expression and

¹⁰⁴ According to the [National Statistical Committee](#), national minorities include ethnic Uzbeks (985,358 or 14.8 per cent), Russians (341,350 or 5.3 per cent), Dungans (75,400 or 1.1 per cent), Uighurs (60,210 or 0.9 per cent), as well as Tajiks, Kazakhs, Tatars, Ukrainians, Koreans and Meskhetian Turks. Ethnic Uzbeks, the most sizable community, mainly reside in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions where they make up to 28 and 24 per cent of population, respectively.

¹⁰⁵ Paragraph 136 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion recommended removal or revision of this provision.

¹⁰⁶ In Osh (SMD No. 7), following the opening of the investigation, alleged cases of nationalistic rhetoric in social networks were brought to the attention of the ODIHR EOM by some interlocutors.

¹⁰⁷ On 31 December, GKNB escorted Mr. Tashtanbekov to the CEC to receive his MP credentials.

¹⁰⁸ Section II.3.3f of the Venice Commission 2002 Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that "All candidates and voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal. A reasonable quorum may be imposed for appeals by voters on the results of elections".

¹⁰⁹ Complaints and appeals lodged with election commissions and courts, including on election results, must be submitted within three days and resolved within three or, in case an additional investigation is required, within five days. Appeals to the Supreme Court must be heard within five days.

campaigning.¹¹⁰ The CEC issued 22 written warnings and imposed fines in 29 cases for violation of campaign rules, including for early campaigning.¹¹¹ When applying sanctions, the CEC did not always explain in its decisions as to what constituted prohibited campaigning.

The interpretation of legal norms by the CEC and courts, including when applying sanctions for violation of campaign rules, should be consistent and aligned with international standards on freedom of expression and election campaigning.

The CEC maintained an online register of complaints on its website, which contributed to the transparency of the electoral dispute resolution process. The registry included 179 complaints submitted before election day.¹¹² However, the ODIHR EOM observed that some complaints were not posted in a timely manner on the CEC register and were subsequently dealt with significant delay. While the CEC claimed that deadlines for resolving complaints were only broken due to delays in responses from law enforcement bodies, the ODIHR EOM noted that this was not always the case.¹¹³ Furthermore, most CEC decisions on complaints were not published in a timely manner on the website, despite the legal obligation of a 24 hour publication deadline, detracting from transparency.

The CEC established a Working Group to discuss complaints. The group was composed of CEC members and staff who provided advisory opinions which were subsequently considered by the full membership of the CEC. The ODIHR EOM was not informed of meetings of this Working Group nor invited to observe their deliberations, despite repeated requests.

The CEC also set up a Rapid Reaction Group composed of members of election commissions and representatives of the prosecutor's office, police and the GKNB.¹¹⁴ Before election day, this group handled 106 complaints and communications.¹¹⁵ Rapid Reaction Groups were also established at the DEC level. The General Prosecutor's office informed the ODIHR EOM that as of election day, 41 investigations were ongoing; 15 cases had been forwarded to the courts, 4 of which related to misuse of administrative resources and vote-buying. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors questioned the impartiality of some of the regional Rapid Reaction Groups.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ The CEC warned an MP for the use of the following expression: "I pledge to speak only the truth and to protect interests of citizens". The CEC decided that this statement was not connected with the professional activity of the MP and therefore constituted illegal early campaigning. In a separate instance, while the CEC Working Group on Informing and Campaigning dismissed a complaint from the *Azattyk* party against a blogger's coverage of the party's rally in Osh, some CEC members verbally recommended the blogger not continue with such activities. In addition, this CEC Working Group as well as the CEC itself strictly enforced an interpretation whereby visual campaign materials could not be displayed and campaign events could not be held within 100 metres from specified places, while the Election Law in its Articles 27(4) and 28(2) foresees different legal regimes for these two different types of campaign activities.

¹¹¹ Candidates, political parties, and their proxies were sanctioned for the use of images of foreign officials as well as religious symbols in their campaign, participation of minors in campaign activities, campaigning in unauthorized places and for the misuse of administrative resources.

¹¹² This figure includes cases which were referred to law enforcement bodies.

¹¹³ For example, a complaint on campaigning was submitted on 30 October, but the CEC only considered it on 13 November. A complaint alleging violation of quota requirements by some parties was submitted to the CEC on 11 November; however, neither the complaint nor the CEC decision were published on the CEC website.

¹¹⁴ The primary role of the Working Group was to decide whether or not to refer complaints to law enforcement agencies.

¹¹⁵ This number includes complaints and communications submitted to the prosecutor's office and the police.

¹¹⁶ Notably, several candidates voiced concerns over the impartiality of law enforcement bodies in Jalal-Abad district, claiming the latter were affiliated with one of the candidates standing in this area.

The Administrative Court of Bishkek received 13 appeals against CEC decisions.¹¹⁷ The court upheld two decisions to reject registration documents submitted by prospective candidates after the deadline. It overturned the CEC decision on non-registration of Mr. Mamytov, Speaker of Parliament.¹¹⁸

The Administrative Court and the Supreme Court dismissed 9 of the 16 cases they heard, at times on questionable procedural grounds, without consideration of the merits of the case, thus departing from good practice.¹¹⁹ The Administrative Court did not examine the substance of the complaint of the NGO *Kloop Media* against the CEC's letter regarding their application to observe, arguing that a CEC letter could not be appealed.¹²⁰ The court further noted that a copy of a payment order was not sufficient evidence that the appellant had paid the court fee.¹²¹ In another case, the CEC's appeal against the Administrative Court's decision was dismissed by the Supreme Court on the grounds that the CEC representative's power of attorney was not valid.¹²² In addition, many appeals, including on CEC inactions, were dismissed on grounds of submission outside the three-day deadline.

The law does not allow appeals to be examined once the deadline has lapsed, which, in some cases, favoured the CEC's inaction.¹²³ The reluctance of the judiciary to rule on election related cases combined with extended deadlines by the CEC in its handling of complaints, often compromised the right to an effective and timely remedy against violations of rights of electoral stakeholders, at odds with the ICCPR and 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.¹²⁴

The courts should not deny admissibility of appeals on formalistic grounds. In order to enhance the effectiveness of judicial remedy in election-related disputes, consideration could be given to extending deadlines for filing certain types of appeals, primarily on inactions of the CEC and ongoing campaign violations.

The 2021 Constitution established the Constitutional Court that received some 20 complaints, including 3 on the constitutionality of candidate registration requirements. But the law on the Constitutional Court was only signed by the president on 15 November, which delayed the review of the constitutionality of electoral legislation.¹²⁵ Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors found that delay to be an additional sign of executive influence on the judiciary and expressed a low level of trust in impartial adjudication of election disputes by the courts. The new pivotal role of the president in the appointment of judges at all levels further compromises the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers.¹²⁶

¹¹⁷ The Administrative Court declined to meet with the ODIHR EOM.

¹¹⁸ The Election Law exempts MPs from the requirement to resign in order to stand for election. The Administrative Court ruled that the CEC should also have applied this exemption to the position of the speaker of parliament.

¹¹⁹ Section II.3.3.96 of the Venice Commission 2002 Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters states that “[i]t is necessary to eliminate formalism, and so avoid decisions of inadmissibility, especially in politically sensitive cases”.

¹²⁰ The information provided to *Kloop Media* that it was no longer eligible to observe the elections was communicated by the CEC through a letter and not through a formal decision.

¹²¹ Payment of the court fee is one of the criteria for the admissibility of appeals.

¹²² The CEC claimed that it used the same document for previous court hearings and complained to the Judicial Council.

¹²³ For example, in dismissing an appeal on the CEC's inaction due to an expired deadline, the court did not take into consideration that the applicant was informed that his complaint was under consideration by the CEC Working Group. After the Court dismissed the appeal, the CEC stopped its consideration of the initial complaint presuming that the court had upheld its inaction.

¹²⁴ Article 2.3 of the [ICCPR](#) requires each State to ensure that “any person whose rights or freedoms ... are violated shall have an effective remedy” and that “the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted”. Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document reads: “everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”.

¹²⁵ The Law on Introduction of the Constitution prescribes that judges of the former Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court keep their offices as judges of the Constitutional Court.

¹²⁶ Paragraph 16 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion mentions potential encroachments on judicial independence as one of the fundamental concerns and stated that “[t]his creates a real risk of undermining the separation of powers and the rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic”.

XIV. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The Election Law provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by political parties, NGOs, international observers and, for the first time, by representatives of SMD candidates.¹²⁷ Observers can be accredited up to election day.¹²⁸ Candidates contesting in the SMDs and competing political parties may appoint up to two observers, and NGOs - up to three observers per each election commission in the relevant constituency.

The CEC amended its regulation on registration of citizen observers less than three months before election day and imposed new eligibility requirements, not specified in the law. These included the need for an organization to specialize in electoral legislation, elections or human rights protection and to have a provision in the organization's charter for observing electoral activities.¹²⁹ On 5 November, the CEC sent a letter to the NGO *Kloop Media* informing them that according to the organization's statute, it was not eligible to observe.¹³⁰ *Kloop Media* understood this letter to be a denial of accreditation and unsuccessfully appealed the letter to the Administrative Court (see *Complaints and Appeals*). These new requirements potentially hinder the participation of civil society as election observers.

Further, some ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns that the recent amendments to the Law on Non-Commercial Organizations may hamper the activities of NGOs.¹³¹

Any regulations related to the status and eligibility of election observers should not hinder the presence of observers in the electoral process, and should be adopted well in advance and in a consultative and transparent manner.

XV. ELECTION DAY

Election day was peaceful, and voter turnout reached 34.6 per cent.¹³² The IEOM followed the voter turnout throughout the day, and data collected by the IEOM was similar to the official figures.

¹²⁷ While it is understood that this right extends to candidates in SMDs, the Election Law was not amended to explicitly reflect this.

¹²⁸ Seven citizen observers' groups were accredited by the CEC. Some of them noted the positive cooperation with the CEC, including in areas of voter education and information. Accredited observer groups were engaged in long or short-term observation of the electoral process, including on election day.

¹²⁹ According to Article 10-1.1 of the Election Law, "Non-profit organizations have the right, in accordance with the procedure established by their charters, to make a decision on observation of elections and the dispatch of their observers". Paragraph 2.1 of the CEC regulation states that non-profit organizations "specializing in electoral legislation and elections, as well as in the field of human rights protection" may observe elections.

¹³⁰ The new regulation was adopted on 5 September, but, according to *Kloop Media*, was published only in October. *Kloop Media* was already accredited as a media outlet and later managed to secure its observation effort through its affiliated organization *Kumar Media*.

¹³¹ The June 2021 amendments to Articles 15 and 17 of this law require disclosure of funding sources, which, according to some NGOs, may put their fundraising operations and even donors at risk. There is also uncertainty about further implications of the amendments as the complete financial reporting procedures have not yet been published. Of note, Paragraph 224 of the [2015 ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association](#) state that "[t]he need for transparency in the internal functioning of associations is not specifically established in international and regional treaties owing to the right of associations to be free from interference of the state in their internal affairs. However, openness and transparency are fundamental for establishing accountability and public trust. The state shall not require but shall encourage and facilitate associations to be accountable and transparent". See also Paragraph 137 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2021 Joint Opinion.

¹³² The CEC [announced](#) preliminary voter turnout periodically at 10:00 (2.86 per cent), 12:00 (9.1 per cent), 14:00 (16.35 per cent), 16:00 (22.47 per cent), and 18:00 (28.53 per cent).

A. OPENING AND VOTING

The opening of polling stations was assessed positively in all but 4 of the 139 stations observed. Some procedural omissions were noted, such as not drawing lots to distribute duties among PEC members (22 cases) and not marking the voters who voted via mobile voting in the voter list (12 cases). In 24 cases, the PECs had difficulties in setting up the ballot scanner. The IEOM also observed delays of the opening of polling stations, but these were in most cases limited to 15 minutes (44 observations).

The voting process was evaluated positively by the IEOM in 96 per cent of 1,256 polling stations observed.¹³³ Procedures were mostly followed in the large majority of polling stations observed; however, in 16 per cent of observations, ballot boxes were not properly sealed. While the layout of polling stations was adequate to conduct polling in 95 per cent of observations, overcrowding was reported in 10 per cent of cases, resulting mostly from limited space inside polling stations. Some 40 per cent of polling stations observed were not accessible for voters with mobility impairments, and in 20 per cent, the layout of polling premises was not suitable for these voters.

The authorities, in consultation with disabled persons organizations, should take additional measures to ensure that accessibility and layout of polling stations are suitable for voters with disabilities.

Voter identification equipment generally worked well, and identification procedures were adhered to in almost all polling stations observed. In 9 per cent of observations, one or more voters were turned away because their names were not on the voter list of the respective polling station. In 6 per cent of polling stations observed, ballot scanners were either not operational or were replaced due to equipment failure.

Unauthorized people were present in a large number of polling stations observed (police and local officials in 22 and 5 per cent, respectively), and the IEOM observed interference from non-PEC members in 3 per cent of cases. Transparency was overall ensured as party and citizen observers were present in 98 per cent and 42 per cent of polling stations observed, respectively. However, IEOM observers were restricted in 2 per cent of observations or did not have a clear view of procedures in 4 per cent of polling stations observed.

The IEOM observed that the secrecy of the vote was compromised due to the design and positioning of voting booths (39 per cent), and voters did not protect their ballots after marking them (23 per cent). The IEOM observed serious violations, including group voting (6 per cent) and attempts to influence voters for whom to vote (2 per cent). In several cases, the IEOM observed indications of vote-buying.

Legal provisions on secrecy of the vote should be implemented and enforced by the PECs.

The CEC published information on 45 complaints received on election day. Alleged violations related to non-compliance with procedures, malfunctioning of ballot scanners, campaigning during election day, bussing of voters, and four cases of vote-buying. According to the CEC, these allegations were referred for verification to the law-enforcement bodies.

B. CLOSING AND COUNTING

The vote count was assessed negatively in over one third of the 123 count observations, which is of serious concern. Manual counting procedures were frequently not followed, and the IEOM negatively assessed the organization (37 cases) and transparency (19 cases) of the counting process. Many PECs failed to perform basic reconciliation procedures, such as cancelling unused ballots (22 cases) or counting the number of signatures on the voter list (30 cases), or did not announce preliminary voting results received from the ballot scanner and sign a related act (44 cases).

¹³³ The IEOM assessed the voting process more negatively in Jalal-Abad and Osh regions compared with other areas.

In over half of the observations, ballots were not counted one by one, and voter's choice was not announced and shown to all present (63 cases). In the vast majority of polling stations observed (84 cases) the validity of contested ballots was not decided by vote. On some occasions, the PECs did not review the ballots considered invalid by the ballot scanner. According to the CEC's final data, the number of invalid ballots was around 10 per cent, which is of concern. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors were of the opinion that the lack of clarity for voters on how to mark the ballot caused a high number of invalid ballots.

In one third of the counts observed, the PECs completed the voting results protocols based on the results produced by the ballot scanners instead of the manual count, which is required by law. In 61 cases, the IEOM observed that official results protocols were pre-signed by PEC members. In half of the counts observed, an enlarged copy of the voting results protocol was not posted for public display after the count completion, and, in over one third of the counts, not everybody entitled was issued a copy of the protocol upon request.

In order to further strengthen the integrity of the vote count, the PECs should strictly adhere to the established counting and reconciliation procedures. The CEC should address procedural mistakes and omissions observed during the reconciliation procedures via enhanced training activities.

Unauthorized people, almost always police, were present in over half of the polling stations observed (68 cases), and non-PEC members interfered in 11 counts observed. Party observers were present in all but three counts, while observers of SMD candidates were present in over three quarters of counts observed (86 cases). Citizen observers were present in only one third of counts observed. The IEOM assessed the counting process as transparent in roughly half of polling stations observed (66 reports).

C. TABULATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

The IEOM assessed negatively the tabulation in 13 of the 30 observed DECAs, which was related to the lack of orderliness of the process (19 reports) and problems with the electronic data entry of voting results (17 reports). The initial stages of tabulation were assessed in many instances as poorly organized and chaotic, potentially due to inadequate conditions and overcrowding in half of the DECAs observed. The process stabilized at a later stage; however, it continued over several days in some SMDs. The CEC attributed the slow tabulation to the complexity of the electronic entry of data for preferential votes.

The IEOM observed that the figures in the result protocols did not always reconcile correctly in 24 DECAs, and voting result protocols and relevant ballot scanner slips did not match in 23 cases. In 15 observations, the PECs were instructed to recount, while, in 17 cases, PEC and DEC members made changes to result figures on PEC protocols without a recount. In half of the DECAs observed, the IEOM had no clear view of proceedings.

The CEC started posting on its website preliminary voting results by polling station for each race, based on the results of the electronic count, shortly after the end of voting. However, the CEC disabled the web portal with preliminary election results for a short period of time, reportedly due to the use of an incorrect calculation formula, which created doubts about the reliability of the election results. This led to protests in front of the CEC in the days following the elections. According to the CEC, the use of incorrect formula for the proportional race resulted in adding the preferential votes received by individual candidates within the party lists to the total number of votes cast for the parties, thereby

inflating the overall numbers. Subsequently, the CEC apologized for the technical error and organized an event for political parties and media offering clarifications.¹³⁴

Within a week of election day, the CEC published results protocols of the manual count by polling station, further contributing to transparency. In the days following the voting, several parties and SMD candidates filed official requests to the CEC for a recount of votes in a number of polling stations. On 10 December, based on appeals from Alliance, *Ata Meken*, *Butun Kyrgyzstan*, *El Umutu*, Social Democrats and *Yntymak* parties, the CEC conducted the recounts in 67 polling stations of 12 SMDs; the recount reportedly confirmed the electronic and manual count results as well as the results published on the CEC website.¹³⁵

By 14 December, the CEC announced the final election results in all SMDs. In Pervomayskiy and Sverdlovskiy districts of Bishkek, elections were declared invalid, as in line with the law, the number of votes cast ‘against all’ exceeded the number of votes received by the leading candidate. On 15 December, the CEC announced the final election results for the proportional race and confirmed that six parties had passed the thresholds.

XVI. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations as contained throughout the text are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in the Kyrgyz Republic 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 have not yet been addressed. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.¹³⁶

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The legal framework, including provisions in the Constitution, should be reviewed to ensure compliance with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and address other identified shortcomings through an inclusive, consultative and transparent process well in advance of the next elections. The law-making process must comply with the principles of rule of law and law makers should refrain from using expedited procedures for introducing significant changes to election legislation that require proper consultation.

¹³⁴ The explanatory event was mediated by several NGOs. On 15 December, based on an earlier agreement, the group of IT specialists from Alliance, *Ata-Meken*, *Azattyk*, *Butun Kyrgyzstan*, *Ordo*, Green Party, Social Democrats and *Yntymak* parties joined the meeting where the CEC confirmed that the error was due to an incorrect formula, and the number and percentage of votes correspond to the data obtained from the ballot scanners. The minutes of the meeting were signed by experts of all attending parties, except for *Ata-Meken* and Social Democrats.

¹³⁵ See the CEC [statement](#) on the recount. *Butun Kyrgyzstan* also requested for a recount in six polling stations in Nookat district but later withdrew the request.

¹³⁶ 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”. See also the ODIHR [electoral recommendations database](#). The follow-up of prior recommendations is assessed by the ODIHR EOM as follows: recommendation 18 from the [ODIHR final report on the 2020 parliamentary elections](#) (2020 Final Report) as well as recommendation 23 from the [ODIHR final report on the 2021 presidential election](#) (2021 Final Report) are fully implemented. The recommendations 7, 8, 10, 12, 16 and 19 from the 2020 Final Report, as well as 8, 11, 14, and 20 from the 2021 Final Report are mostly implemented. The recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6, 14, 23 and 25 from the 2020 Final Report as well as 3, 19, 22, 24 and 25 from the 2021 Final Report are partially implemented.

2. To foster an environment in which campaign activities and meaningful voter and candidate engagement are not hindered, the involvement of the law enforcement bodies in enforcing campaign regulations should be confined to what is clearly prescribed by their mandate.
3. Media freedom should be strictly upheld. Undue limitations on access to information and interference with the activities of journalists should not be tolerated, so that working conditions of media professionals are conducive to freedom of expression.
4. To enhance the independence and impartiality of the CEC, the law should be amended to guarantee more balanced political representation. Consideration could be given to reverting to the previous model of the CEC formation.
5. The legal definition of election campaign should be thoroughly amended, so that it does not allow for an interpretation preventing media from comprehensive reporting on and editorial coverage of contestants' campaigns.
6. Continued efforts are needed to address the issue of vote-buying and pressure on voters, including through a civic awareness campaign, in order to promote confidence in the electoral process. A genuine commitment from political parties to combat vote-buying practices should be made.
7. The courts should not deny admissibility of appeals on formalistic grounds. In order to enhance the effectiveness of judicial remedy in election-related disputes, consideration could be given to extending deadlines for filing certain types of appeals, primarily on inactions of the CEC and ongoing campaign violations.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Election Administration

8. Authorities should adopt measures to ensure that national minorities are adequately represented in election commissions, especially in areas where they constitute a considerable part of the population.
9. As previously recommended, the CEC should publish all its regulations and decisions in a timely manner as provided for in the law.
10. The authorities, in consultation with disabled persons organizations, should take additional measures to ensure that accessibility and layout of polling stations are suitable for voters with disabilities.
11. Legal provisions on secrecy of the vote should be implemented and enforced by the PECs.
12. In order to further strengthen the integrity of the vote count, the PECs should strictly adhere to the established counting and reconciliation procedures. The CEC should address procedural mistakes and omissions observed during the reconciliation procedures via training activities.

Voter Registration

13. Blanket deprivation of voting rights of prisoners should be reconsidered taking into account the gravity of the crime committed; suffrage limitations based on disabilities should be repealed.
14. To enhance the accuracy of voter lists, authorities should introduce additional measures to facilitate the proper exchange of data between the registry of addresses and voter lists.

Candidate Registration

15. To work towards more equal representation of women in parliament, authorities should increase the gender quota for party lists and provide for additional mechanisms to retain the quota between registration and the election day. Parties could introduce internal mechanisms for mainstreaming a gender perspective in parties' rules, policies and practices, including but not limited to, increasing the number of women candidates, enhancing the support they receive for standing as candidates, and placing more women in higher positions on candidate lists.

Campaign Finance

16. To ensure meaningful oversight, a full audit of campaign finance reports should be conducted. The legal framework should regulate audit procedures, timelines and publication of the audit results.
17. The legal framework should provide for a range of gradual and dissuasive administrative sanctions for campaign finance violations.

Media

18. The Constitution, Criminal Code and other media-related laws should be amended in line with previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations to eliminate unduly broad and vague provisions that can be misused as grounds for limiting freedom of expression.
19. Airing of paid political advertisement within news and current affairs programmes should be prohibited. The choice of the media to sell advertisement should not be pre-conditioned by accreditation; such a requirement should be cancelled or replaced by a voluntary submission to the CEC of the media outlets' advertising conditions.
20. Public and other state-funded broadcasters should make genuine efforts in their news and current affairs programmes to provide impartial and comprehensive editorial coverage of the campaign activities of contestants to enable voters to make informed choices.

Complaints and Appeals

21. The interpretation of legal norms by the CEC and courts, including when applying sanctions for violation of campaign rules, should be consistent and aligned with international standards on freedom of expression and election campaigning.

Election Observation

22. Any regulations related to the status and eligibility of election observers should not hinder the presence of observers in the electoral process, and should be adopted well in advance and in a consultative and transparent manner.

ANNEX I: FINAL ELECTION RESULTS¹³⁷

Data in CEC Results Protocol for Nationwide Electoral District	Total number
Number of voters included in the voter lists in polling stations	3,703,420
Number of voters who received ballots in polling stations	1,269,554
Number of voters who received ballots for mobile voting	12,068
Number of voters who participated in the elections	1,281,622
Number of valid ballots	1,162,131
Number of invalid ballots	119,334

Final Election Results for Nationwide Electoral District

	Political Party	Votes	Percentage	Seats
1	<i>Ata-Jurt Kyrgyzstan</i>	222,005	17.32	15
2	<i>Ishenim</i>	174,470	13.61	12
3	<i>Yntymak</i>	141,009	11.00	9
4	Alliance	106,955	8.34	7
5	<i>Butun Kyrgyzstan</i>	90,223	7.04	6
6	<i>Yiman Nuru</i>	79,025	6.17	5
7	<i>El Umutu</i>	57,642	4.50	
8	<i>Azattyk</i>	52,183	4.07	
9	<i>Ata-Meken</i>	45,568	3.56	
10	Social Democrats	40,280	3.14	
11	<i>Uluttar Birimdigi</i>	31,382	2.42	
12	<i>Mekenchil El</i>	20,522	1.60	
13	<i>Bagyt</i>	12,634	0.99	
14	Patriotic party of Unity of Kyrgyzstan	12,279	0.96	
15	<i>Uhuu Jurt</i>	9,376	0.73	
16	<i>Kuchtuu Region</i>	8,212	0.64	
17	Legalize	7,943	0.62	
18	<i>Aruuzat El Kutu</i>	5,869	0.46	
19	<i>Ordo</i>	5,934	0.46	
20	<i>Jashasyn Kyrgyzstan</i>	5,615	0.44	
21	Green party	5,266	0.41	
	Against all	27,739	2.16	

¹³⁷ Source: [CEC website](#).

**ANNEX II: LIST OF OBSERVERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION
 OBSERVATION MISSION**

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Peter	Juel-Jensen	Special Co-ordinator	Denmark
Farahnaz	Karimi	Head of Delegation	Netherlands
Hannes	Amesbauer	MP	Austria
Ewa	Ernst-Dziedzic	MP	Austria
Andreas	Minnich	MP	Austria
Harald Josef	Troch	MP	Austria
Soetkin	Hoessen	MP	Belgium
Malik	Ben Achour	MP	Croatia
Davor	Bernardic	MP	Croatia
Jan	Horník	MP	Czech Republic
Jan	Žaloudík	MP	Czech Republic
Heljo	Pikhof	MP	Estonia
Sven	Sester	MP	Estonia
Vilhelm	Junnila	MP	Finland
Pia Liisa	Kauma	MP	Finland
Valérie Jeanne	Boyer	MP	France
Zoltán	Fenyvesi	MP	Hungary
Luigi	Augussori	MP	Italy
Paolo	Grimoldi	MP	Italy
Vito	Vattuone	MP	Italy
Gustave	Graas	MP	Luxembourg
Claude	Haagen	MP	Luxembourg
Marie Josee	Lorsche	MP	Luxembourg
Charles	Margue	MP	Luxembourg
Slaven	Radunović	MP	Montenegro
Radosław	Fogiel	MP	Poland
Kazimierz	Kleina	MP	Poland
Robert	Kwiatkowski	MP	Poland
Piotr	Polak	MP	Poland
Agnieszka	Pomaska	MP	Poland
Dariusz	Rosati	MP	Poland
Agnieszka	Soin	MP	Poland
Jacek	Włosowicz	MP	Poland
Alexandra	Tavares De Moura	MP	Portugal
Radu-Mihai	Mihail	MP	Romania
Peter	Osusky	MP	Slovakia
Ahmet	Arslan	MP	Turkey
Tekin	Bingöl	MP	Turkey
Pavlo	Frolov	MP	Ukraine
Rupa	Huq	MP	United Kingdom
Olgica	Tolic	Staff of Delegation	Croatia
Radek	Merkl	Staff of Delegation	Czech Republic
Eva	Esmarch	Staff of Delegation	Denmark
Jean-Luc	Blouet	Staff of Delegation	France
Jantijn Johannes	Anema	Staff of Delegation	Netherlands
Marcin	Mykietyński	Staff of Delegation	Poland

Anca Maria	Constantin	Staff of Delegation	Romania
Ecem	Danik Gökçe	Staff of Delegation	Turkey
Andreas	Baker	OSCE PA Secretariat	Denmark
Stéphanie	Koltchanov	OSCE PA Secretariat	France
Dimitrije	Todoric	OSCE PA Secretariat	Serbia
Emomali	Mirzoev	OSCE PA Secretariat	Tajikistan
Manuchekhr	Salokhudinov	OSCE PA Secretariat	Tajikistan
Nathaniel	Parry	OSCE PA Secretariat	United States of America

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Marina	Berlinghieri	Head of Delegation	Italy
Père	Lopes Agras	MP	Andorra
Alberto	Ribolla	MP	Italy
Kestutis	Masiulis	MP	Lithuania
Luís	Leite Ramos	MP	Portugal
Krzysztof	Truskolaski	MP	Poland
Cristian-Augustin	Niculescu-Țagarlaș	MP	Romania
Diana	Stoica	MP	Romania
Antón	Gomez-Reino	MP	Spain
Nicolae	Esanu	Venice Commission	Moldova
Serguei	Kouznetsov	Venice Commission	Russian Federation
Ivi-Triin	Odrats	PACE Secretariat	Estonia
Anne	Godfrey	PACE Secretariat	United Kingdom

ODIHR EOM Short-term Observers

Luiza	Avetisyan	Armenia
Karen	Gasparyan	Armenia
Tamara	Hovnanyan	Armenia
Nare	Khandamiryan	Armenia
Dzhoni	Melikyan	Armenia
Arsen	Mikayelyan	Armenia
Fakhri	Karimli	Azerbaijan
Ramin	Nuraliyev	Azerbaijan
Chloe	Gorgemans	Belgium
Guillaume	Choquet	Belgium
Laura	Strens	Belgium
Bernard	Leloup	Belgium
Tom	De Munck	Belgium
Laetitia Antonia	De Radiguès de Chennevière	Belgium
Axel	Vandeputte	Belgium
Isabel	Verraest	Belgium
Radovan	Bouska	Czech Republic
Petr	Chalupecky	Czech Republic
Sylva	Horakova	Czech Republic
Zdenka	Kerlicka	Czech Republic
Karel	Kovanda	Czech Republic
Matěj	Prášil	Czech Republic
Jan	Schroth	Czech Republic
Pia	Christmas-Møller	Denmark
Ib Kok	Hansen	Denmark

Henrik	Karlsen	Denmark
Finn	Nielsen	Denmark
Birte Torp	Pedersen	Denmark
Ingrid	Poulsen	Denmark
Niels	Rasmussen	Denmark
Grete	Skov	Denmark
Marko	Koplimaa	Estonia
Leena	Avonius	Finland
Christoffer	Bonn	Finland
Juho	Kääriäinen	Finland
Christian	Barthlen	France
Benoit	Bouyssou	France
Olivier	Buchbinder	France
Maeve	Daly	France
Jonathan	Sapène	France
Alexandra	Toussaint	France
Fanta	Traore	France
Tamar	Bartaia	Georgia
Elene	Bobokhidze	Georgia
Christiane	Buck	Germany
Ingo	Buettner	Germany
Eva	Creydt	Germany
Johannes	Dopffel	Germany
Frank	Fischer	Germany
Maximilian	Fritschen	Germany
Katharina	Hammann	Germany
Sophie	Haring	Germany
Michael	Haußmann	Germany
Maja	Hinrichs	Germany
Dagmar	Hofmann	Germany
Lena	Hornetz	Germany
Christiane	Jaenicke	Germany
Elisabeth	Jenschke	Germany
Björn	Krichels	Germany
Tina	Mede-Karpenstein	Germany
Katja	Mischke	Germany
Christina	Mueschen	Germany
Kirsten	Müller	Germany
Simon	Preker	Germany
Janina	Rühl	Germany
Tobias	Raffel	Germany
Ulrich	Seel	Germany
Claudia	Schäfer	Germany
Benjamin	Smale	Germany
Rolf	Thienemann	Germany
Markus	Vogel	Germany
Michael	Wahlen	Germany
Roderich	Wesemann	Germany
Beata	Fal	Hungary
Péter Sándor	Merényi-Metzger	Hungary

Elza	Schönstein	Hungary
Gyorgy	Szabo	Hungary
Beatrix	Tölgyesi	Hungary
Sandra	Conway	Ireland
Emer	Costello	Ireland
Maria	Kiernan	Ireland
Mark	McGinty	Ireland
Geraldine	O'Mahony	Ireland
Geraldine	O'Neill	Ireland
Kieran	O'Reilly	Ireland
Brendan	O'Shea	Ireland
Richard	Wright	Ireland
Luca	Moneta	Italy
Alessia	Pappalardo	Italy
Chiara	Steindler	Italy
Yan	Fedotov	Kazakhstan
Antra Margarita	Tumane	Latvia
Irina	Hohlov	Moldova
Milivoje	Krivokapic	Montenegro
Bosko	Milovic	Montenegro
Jean	Van der Hoeven	Netherlands
Annemieke	Van der Ploeg	Netherlands
Leendert	Van der Zwan	Netherlands
Tjitske	Zwerver	Netherlands
Gunnar	Baustad	Norway
Gunn	Benjaminsen	Norway
Anette	Froyland	Norway
Erlend	Hvoslef	Norway
Lisa Karina	Jacobsen	Norway
Oda	Leikvoll	Norway
Magdalena	Golonka	Poland
Regina	Jurkowska	Poland
Zofia	Lutkiewicz	Poland
Barbara	Mrowka-Jasiecka	Poland
Jacek	Multanowski	Poland
Michal	Ostasz	Poland
Slawomir	Szyszka	Poland
Laura	Trebel-Gniazdowska	Poland
Pedro Miguel	Alves Cunha da Silva	Portugal
Inês Leonor	Lopes Horta Pinto	Portugal
Maxim	Abramov	Russian Federation
Diana	Ainetdinova	Russian Federation
Maksim	Ananin	Russian Federation
Elena	Arkipova	Russian Federation
Egor	Baburin	Russian Federation
Sergey	Baburkin	Russian Federation
Elena	Balandina	Russian Federation
Aleksandr	Belosheev	Russian Federation
Elizaveta	Borisova	Russian Federation
Aleksei	Budarev	Russian Federation

Boris	Diakonov	Russian Federation
Kamilia	Dzhabbarova	Russian Federation
Luka	Ezerskii	Russian Federation
Arif	Gadzhiev	Russian Federation
Sofiia	Galchina	Russian Federation
Igor	Gladkikh	Russian Federation
Anna	Gozhina	Russian Federation
Alena	Gudkova	Russian Federation
Yulia	Ilicheva	Russian Federation
Olga	Karsanova	Russian Federation
Alesya	Khalyapina	Russian Federation
Daria	Kim	Russian Federation
Alexander	Kobrinskiy	Russian Federation
Aleksandr	Kolesnik	Russian Federation
Aleksei	Koshelev	Russian Federation
Vasily	Kozhenkov	Russian Federation
Dmitry	Larionov	Russian Federation
Evgeny	Loginov	Russian Federation
Kamil	Magomedov	Russian Federation
Anna	Makarenkova	Russian Federation
Dmitry	Makarov	Russian Federation
Aleksandr	Musienko	Russian Federation
Evgeniia	Nefedova	Russian Federation
Vladislav	Novikov	Russian Federation
Tatiana	Ostashkova	Russian Federation
Andrey	Ostvald	Russian Federation
Sergey	Overchenko	Russian Federation
Daria	Pakhomova	Russian Federation
Vsevolod	Perevozchikov	Russian Federation
Vladimir	Ponomarev	Russian Federation
Stanislav	Pritchkin	Russian Federation
Maksim	Saulin	Russian Federation
Iurii	Shapovalov	Russian Federation
Sviatoslav	Terentev	Russian Federation
Maxim	Vladimirov	Russian Federation
Alexander	Vladychenko	Russian Federation
Pavel	Volchikhin	Russian Federation
Sergei	Zenkov	Russian Federation
Maja	Balant Slobodjanac	Slovenia
Ksenija	Škrilec	Slovenia
Alvaro	Gómez del Valle	Spain
Elisa Mikele	Martinez Nuñez	Spain
Tomás	Pascual Ruiz	Spain
Rocío	Vicente Senra	Spain
Linda	Cederblad	Sweden
Linda	Eriksson Baca	Sweden
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Corinne	Johnson	Sweden
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Theo	Tindall	United Kingdom
Julie	Barker	United States of America
Kelly	Beadle	United States of America
Paul	Binkley	United States of America
Christopher	Blair	United States of America
Rebecca	Bloomfield	United States of America
Gilman	Cuda	United States of America
Miles	Dudley	United States of America
Blanche	Fawell	United States of America
Timothy	Garille	United States of America
Dinka	Gyurova	United States of America
Chris	Hershey	United States of America
Ernest	Jones	United States of America
Nicholas	La Strada	United States of America
Joseph	Matveyenko	United States of America
Paddy	McGuire	United States of America
Garrett	Monti	United States of America
April	Neubauer	United States of America
Ruby	Norfolk	United States of America
Anne	Peskoe	United States of America
Sarah	Pilchick	United States of America
Kevin	Rejent	United States of America
Bradley	Reynolds	United States of America
Kimberly	Schneider	United States of America
Genevieve	Shea	United States of America
Lauren	Skompinski	United States of America
Jordan	Smellie	United States of America
Haris	Sofradzija	United States of America
Patrick	Spatz	United States of America
James	Stockstill	United States of America
Rokey	Suleman II	United States of America

Gregory	Townsend	United States of America
Brandon	Urness	United States of America
Jennifer	Walston Minshe	United States of America
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Gayrat	Mashkurov	Uzbekistan
Tolibjon	Umarov	Uzbekistan

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Mišo	Imamović		Bosnia and Herzegovina
Anton	Thomsen		Denmark
Giovanni	Gabassi		Italy
Carlo	Pappalardo Fischer		Italy
Rokas	Stabingis		Lithuania
Joanna	Porczyńska		Poland
Magdalena	Zgrzymska		Poland
Svetlana	Chetaikina		Russian Federation
Ruslan	Ovezdurdyev		Russia Federation
Ivan	Godársky		Slovakia
Anders	Eriksson		Sweden
Andreas	Roth		Sweden
Oleksandr	Stetsenko		Ukraine
Evgeniya	Zamrii		Ukraine
Polyna	Lemos		United Kingdom
Auset	Mitchell		United States of America

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Vafa	Fati-zada	Azerbaijan
Ivana	Kratka	Czech Republic
Jan	Udržal	Czech Republic
Egbertus	Bom	Denmark
Poul	Lauritsen	Denmark
Matti	Heinonen	Finland
Petteri	Londen	Finland
Rodolphe	Oberle	France
Olivier	Pohler	France
Chkadua	Malkhaz	Georgia
Maxim	Menschenin	Germany
Ralph-Michael	Peters	Germany
Susanne	Rosemarie Greiter	Germany
Francesca	Calvi Giancristofaro	Italy
Gent	Ramadani	Norway
Maria	Warsinska-Varsi	Norway
Alexander	Bedritskiy	Russian Federation
Kristina	Bogdanova	Russian Federation
Andrei	Volkov	Russian Federation
Mario	Barfus	Switzerland

Daniele	D'Esposito	Switzerland
Martin	Brooks	United Kingdom
Sandra	Gale	United Kingdom
Robert	Mangham	United Kingdom
Sherry	Murphy	United States of America
Cara	Stern	United States of America

ABOUT 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 co-ordinates 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).