



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

GREECE

EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

21 May 2023

**ODIHR Election Assessment Mission
Final Report**



Warsaw
21 November 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II.	INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
III.	BACKGROUND	3
IV.	LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM	4
V.	ELECTION ADMINISTRATION	6
VI.	VOTER REGISTRATION	9
VII.	CANDIDATE REGISTRATION	10
VIII.	ELECTION CAMPAIGN	11
IX.	CAMPAIGN FINANCE	13
	A. CAMPAIGN INCOMES AND EXPENDITURES	13
	B. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS	15
X.	MEDIA	17
	A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT	17
	B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MEDIA	17
	C. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN	19
XI.	ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION	19
XII.	CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION	20
XIII.	ELECTION DAY	20
XIV.	RECOMMENDATIONS	21
	A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS	21
	B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	22
	ANNEX I. FINAL RESULTS	24
	ABOUT ODIHR	1

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and based on the findings and recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission deployed between 1 and 3 March 2023, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 21 May 2023 early parliamentary elections in Greece. The ODIHR EAM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections as well as national legislation. In line with the ODIHR's methodology, the ODIHR EAM did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner but visited a limited number of polling stations on election day.

The elections were held in a competitive and pluralistic environment, and fundamental freedoms were respected. Voters were provided with ample information enabling them to make an informed choice. While some technical aspects could be improved, the election was effectively administered and election management bodies enjoyed a high level of public trust. Issues pertaining to transparency and accountability of political party and campaign financing, candidacy rights, and criminalization of insult and defamation remain to be addressed, as noted in prior ODIHR's recommendations.

National legislation governing elections sets out a comprehensive framework for fundamental civil and political rights and a sound basis for democratic elections. The Constitution was amended in 2019 to introduce, among other changes, voting rights for citizens living abroad. The Election Code has also undergone substantive changes. Notably, amendments were adopted in 2023 to bar parties whose leadership was convicted of serious offences or if the party does not "serve the free functioning of [Greece's] democratic constitution," from competing in elections. The broad wording of the amendments raised concerns about potential arbitrary application in future elections. A number of previous ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to the rights of voters with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of election dispute resolution.

Several institutions share the responsibility for the administration of elections, including the Ministry of Interior, the Supreme and Special Electoral Courts, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The integrity and professionalism of the election administration enjoyed a high level of confidence by all election stakeholders. Several digital tools were used for the first time, including digital platforms for registering voters from abroad and for candidate registration, digital IDs, and transmission of preliminary results from all polling stations with the Secure Results Transmission system.

In line with previous ODIHR recommendations, a new amendment mandates provision of support to voters with mobility issues at the polling station and allows for a companion. However, the election administration did not introduce any special measures to facilitate autonomous participation of voters with disabilities or eliminate physical obstacles at the polling stations.

Voting is compulsory for citizens who turn at least 17 years of age in an election year, although penalties for abstention are not enforced. Citizens found mentally incompetent by a court were deprived of suffrage rights, contravening principles of universal and equal suffrage. Positively, a blanket restriction on voting rights based on any criminal conviction was narrowed to cover final convictions for certain crimes. Voting lists, which are extracted from the electoral register, enjoy public confidence despite the number

¹ The English version of this report is the only official document. Unofficial translation is available in Greek.

of registered voters being notably inflated at 93.6 percent of official residents, affecting the accuracy of the voter turnout.

Citizens who are at least 25 years of age and have the right to vote are eligible to stand as candidates. Contrary to prior ODIHR recommendations and international standards, the legal framework limits the right to be elected for holders of a number of public positions. Out of 48 parties and coalitions and three individuals which requested registration, 35 parties and coalitions, as well as one independent candidate were registered. The newly established *Ellines* party was rejected as a consequence of the recent amendments, because of the conviction of one of its leaders for serious offences. Others were denied registration on various procedural grounds.

Contestants conducted their campaigns freely, and fundamental freedoms of assembly, association and expression were respected. The campaign was competitive, and the wide range of contestants ensured a broad choice of political alternatives. Main campaign topics centered around the economy, growth, employment, living costs, social security, and a potential post-election coalition. Parties mainly relied on small and medium-sized gatherings, face-to-face meetings, social media and television, with large-scale closing campaign events organized in Athens.

Gender equality was a marginal campaign topic, and women candidates were not visibly promoted by political parties. Candidate lists were required to include at least 40 per cent of candidates of each gender per constituency, with no placement requirements on the list. Women remained underrepresented with 18.7 in the outgoing and 24 per cent in the newly elected parliament, raising questions about the effectiveness of the quota alone. No disaggregated data on gender representation in election management bodies is maintained.

Political party and campaign finance legislation was consolidated under a presidential decree in 2022, to update the legal framework which had been in effect since 2002. Amendments in 2022 reduced sanctions for administrative violations, raised the ceiling of expenses paid without bank transfer, and extended time allowed for parties and coalitions to publish annual accounts. While the legal framework establishes important disclosure and reporting requirements, transparency and accountability of political party and campaign financing remain problematic due to neither regular nor timely reporting and legal loopholes.

Freedoms of the press and expression are guaranteed by the Constitution. The media landscape is diverse, but challenges include media ownership concentration, public broadcaster's independence, strategic lawsuits against public participation, and spyware surveillance of media workers. Insult and defamation remain criminal offences. Party coverage in electronic media is based on past election results, giving most exposure to large parties. While the amount and plurality of information allowed voters to make informed choices, tight regulation limited genuine debate.

The legislative framework provides for election dispute resolution for certain decisions and actions during the electoral process, but the remedy is limited and the timeframe for adjudicating most appeals is unregulated. While there were only a few complaints in these elections, the framework undermines availability of effective legal redress, contrary to OSCE commitments and international obligations.

Election day was calm, with voting and counting having proceeded with no serious incidents and preliminary results reported promptly. In the limited number of polling stations visited by the EAM, the work of polling boards was professional and collegial, and procedures were generally followed. Some challenges with the use of new technologies point to the necessity of additional training while the absence of designated citizen members of polling boards increased the workload for those present.

This report offers recommendations to support efforts to bring the electoral process in Greece further in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations relate to regulating the allowed deviation in numbers of voters per constituency, further measures for increasing women's representation and facilitating the effective participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process, as well as enhancing transparency and accountability through improved campaign finance reporting and decriminalizing insult and defamation. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities in improving the electoral process and addressing the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an official invitation to observe the 21 May 2023 early parliamentary elections and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 1 to 3 March 2023, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) from 8 to 25 May.² The ODIHR EAM was led by Douglas Wake and consisted of six experts from five OSCE participating states (three women, and three men). The EAM was based in Athens and visited the municipalities of Agia Paraskevi and Maroussi.

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

The ODIHR EAM wishes to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Supreme Court and other representatives of the judiciary for their co-operation and assistance, as well as to express gratitude to representatives of other state and municipal institutions, election committees, political parties, candidates, media, civil society, academia, and other interlocutors for sharing their views.

III. BACKGROUND

The Constitution defines Greece as a parliamentary democracy. The parliament exercises legislative power together with the president, who is elected by the parliament for a five-year term.

On 22 April, a month and a half before the parliament's term was to expire, the president, upon request by the government, dissolved the parliament and called early elections for 21 May. This left 27 days for election preparations and the campaign. The government explained its request by referring to the need for a solid and stable government to further increase the country's credit rating. Early elections had been expected amid the widespread belief that, under the proportional representation electoral system in place for only one election in 2023, no party would be able to win an outright majority or form a coalition government. Thus, a second parliamentary election was widely expected to take place soon under a different electoral system of enhanced proportionality favouring the leading party.³

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

³ The electoral systems is in place for the first elections in 2023 and any subsequent elections would be held under a different system as a result of legislative changes adopted in prior years; see also *Legal Framework and Electoral System*. Namely, following a parliamentary vote in January 2020, the system of allocating 50 bonus seats to the parties with the most votes above 25 per cent will be introduced for subsequent elections. Given that the 21 May elections, the subject of this report, did not result in the formation of government, new elections were called for 25 June 2023 and were held with the system of allocating bonus seats. Changes of the electoral system had been a subject of political debate with the current ruling party being in favour of enhanced proportionality and the largest opposition party in favour of proportional representation.

As a result of the 7 July 2019 early parliamentary elections, six parties gained representation in parliament with New Democracy (ND) garnering the majority of seats.⁴ In the months leading up to 2023 elections, there was a tragic train accident killing 57 people and the revelation that the Greek Intelligence Service used spyware for surveillance of a number of politicians, journalists and business owners was prominent in political discourse. The accident was followed by weeks of large demonstrations, reflecting intensified discontent and demands for political responsibility from some sections of the electorate including civil servants, some trade unions and university students. Parliamentary debate was shaped by the parties' divergent views on the legal amendments that led to banning the newly founded party *Ellines* from running in these elections because of the conviction of one of its leaders for serious offences.⁵ (See *Legal Framework and Electoral System* and *Candidate Registration*). These elections took place against a backdrop of increases in cost of living but also improved economic indicators, in an atmosphere of political polarization and amid public discussion about a highly likely second election.

Despite some positive developments in the field of gender equality,⁶ women remain underrepresented in most of the national and local governance positions.⁷ President since 2020, Katerina Sakellariopoulou is the first woman to serve in the office. However, women made only 18.7 per cent of the outgoing parliament and 24 per cent of the short-lived parliament after these elections. Among 19 cabinet ministers, two were women as are only 19 of 332 mayors.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The 1975 Constitution and the 2007 Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Election Code) form the legal basis for the parliamentary elections. Combined, they set out a comprehensive framework for fundamental civil and political rights and sound basis for democratic elections. These are supplemented by the 2002 Law on Financing and Audit of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns, the 2019 Law on Voting Abroad and circulars on technical aspects of elections, issued by the Ministry of Interior. Greece is party to major international and regional instruments related to democratic elections.⁸ The Constitution also reaffirms that ratified international conventions form an integral part of domestic Greek law and shall prevail over any contrary provision of the law.

The Constitution was last amended in 2019. Among other changes, the 2019 amendments introduced voting rights for citizens living abroad, modified the voting procedure for the election of the president, introduced the right to popular legislative initiatives and provided new rules concerning immunity for members of parliament. In line with international good practice, the Constitution safeguards electoral rules from frequent alterations by providing that laws changing the electoral system and electoral

⁴ New Democracy (ND, 158), the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA, 86), Movement for Change KINAL (22), the Communist Party of Greece (KKE, 15), Greek Solution (10), MeRA25 (9).

⁵ The *Ellines* party was established by Illias Kasidiaris, former MP, currently serving a 13-year prison sentence over his leading role in the former parliamentary party Golden Dawn, which was declared a criminal organization in 2020. He was convicted of murder, racist violence and money laundering, pending appeal.

⁶ Besides increasing the gender requirement to 40 per cent of candidates per constituency for parliamentary and European elections, in place from the 2019 early parliamentary elections, the [Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence](#) further aims at the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of sexes, gender mainstreaming and enhancing measures for the prevention and elimination of violence against women. The [National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025](#), *inter alia*, mainstreams the gender perspective into sectoral policies.

⁷ At its meeting in Athens in 2009, the OSCE Ministerial Council called on the participating States to “consider providing for specific measures to achieve the goal of gender balance in all legislative, judicial and executive bodies” (MC.DEC/ 7/09).

⁸ Including the [1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), [1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR), [1979 Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW), [2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and [1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#) (ECHR). Greece is a member of [the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law](#) (Venice Commission) and [the Group of States against Corruption](#) (GRECO). Greece has signed (1997) but not ratified [the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#).

boundaries apply to the second election after their adoption, unless the law is adopted by a two-thirds majority in parliament.⁹

The Election Code has undergone substantive changes since the last parliamentary elections in 2019, with the most recent set of amendments adopted in April 2023. Despite these reforms, a number of previous ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including on rights of voters with intellectual disabilities, effectiveness of election dispute resolution, transparency of campaign finance regulations and the decriminalization of defamation.

Amendments adopted in 2019 provide for the modalities of voting abroad, rules on candidate registration, including the introduction of a new online platform for candidate registration, publication of voter turnout information on national and regional levels, as well as accessibility of voters with disabilities on election day. Positively, in 2019, following the revision of the Penal Code, the complete denial of voting rights based on any criminal conviction was abolished. As a result of amendments adopted in 2021, voting rights are restricted only for those convicted of certain crimes. (See *Voter Rights*). These amendments also prohibit a person with a final criminal conviction for certain crimes from leading a party or a coalition.

Amendments adopted in February 2023 disqualify parties led by politicians convicted of serious offences and when a party does not “serve the free functioning of [Greece’s] democratic constitution” from competing in elections.¹⁰ The law was further amended in April 2023 to define the “leadership” of a party.¹¹ It also mandated the Supreme Court to decide on the eligibility of a party to compete in elections, which a number of ODIHR EAM interlocutors criticized as contributing to state pressure on the judiciary.¹² While the prohibition might be in conformity with the specific permissible grounds of limitations as set out in Article 11 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the broad wording of the amendments could open up the risk of arbitrary application in future elections.¹³ In addition, these amendments were adopted in the run up to elections with the support of only two parliamentary parties and thus lacked genuine public consultation and broad

⁹ Section II.2.b. of the Venice Commission’s 2002 [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) recommends that “the fundamental elements of electoral law [...] should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election.” Paragraph 63 of the [Explanatory Report to the Code of Good Practice](#) states that “[s]tability of the law is crucial to credibility of the electoral process, which is itself vital to consolidating democracy.”

¹⁰ These individuals, however, can run independently as long as there is not an irrevocable judgement against them for a serious offence (the final ruling is pending due to an appeal process).

¹¹ The “leader” was defined in Article 32 to include “a person other than the one who formally holds the post of president, secretary general, member of the steering committee or legal representative [...] who appears to be running the party, or to have placed factious leadership, or to have the leadership, or to have the leading political role toward the electorate.”

¹² While the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over the interpretation of constitutionality of legislation, the broad jurisdiction vested with the Supreme Court by the parliament over a matter that is not regulated by the Constitution, may undermine principles of the rule of law which require measures to ensure, among others, adherence to the principles of supremacy of the law, equality before the law and the separation of powers. See the Report of the Secretary-General, [A/66/749](#), para.2. See also [the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary](#), principle 1.

¹³ On a number of occasions, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that the State was entitled to take preventive measures to protect democracy against associations if a sufficiently imminent threat to the rights of others undermined the fundamental values upon which a democratic society rested. See, for example, *Socialist Party and Others v. Turkey*, [no. 21237/93](#), 25 May 1998, *Herri Batasuna and Batasuna v. Spain*, [25803/04 and 25817/04](#). See also [ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Opinion on the draft act to regulate the formation, the inner structures, functioning of political parties and their participation in election of Malta](#).

political consensus.¹⁴ The Vice-President of the Supreme Court criticized this amendment as politically motivated and resigned.¹⁵

These elections were for 300 members of parliament to be elected through a proportional system with mixed open and closed party lists.¹⁶ In total, 285 members were elected in 59 multi-member constituencies through open party lists. The remaining 15 seats were distributed through closed party lists in a countrywide constituency based on the proportion of the total votes that each party received.¹⁷ The number of seats in each constituency is determined by the number of legal residents according to the last census.¹⁸ For these elections, there were 11 constituencies with a deviation of more than 15 per cent, contrary to international good practice.¹⁹ There is no legal provision regulating the possible maximum deviation in the number of voters in each constituency.

To ensure equality of the vote, consideration should be given to regulating the permitted deviation in the number of voters in each constituency, in line with international good practice.

Seats were allocated proportionally to political parties, coalitions or independent candidates securing at least three per cent of votes. A number of ODIHR EAM interlocutors highlighted that threshold for the allocation of seats is too high to realistically permit independent candidates to be successful. There are no international standards on electoral thresholds or any requirement that they are used as a mechanism to balance the representation of views in the parliament. However, lowering the threshold offers the potential benefit of increasing political pluralism and creates better conditions for independent candidates to be elected, as also provided by paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.²⁰

In line with previous ODIHR recommendations, consideration could be given to lowering the threshold for independent candidates in order to effectively ensure the possibility for such candidates to be elected.

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The administration of elections is managed by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Supreme and Special Electoral Courts, as well as regional and municipal administrations and basic courts across 59 constituencies, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) responsible for managing voting abroad.²¹ Overall, the elections

¹⁴ ND and PASOK voted in favour of this provision, while SYRIZA abstained. Other opposition parties (KKE, MeRA25 and Greek Solution) voted against. Substantial elements of the electoral process should be adopted through broad consensus achieved through a process of public consultation. Paragraph 5.8 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides that legislation should be “adopted at the end of a public procedure.” Paragraph 8 of the 1996 United Nations Committee on Human Rights [General Comment 25 to Article 25](#) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that “citizens also take part in the conduct of public affairs by exerting influence through public debate and dialogue with their representatives or through their capacity to organize themselves.”

¹⁵ [The Presidential Decree accepting the resignation of Mr. Tzanerikos](#), was published in the Government Gazette (Government Gazette issue C, issue 1090, of 20 April 2023).

¹⁶ Following a parliamentary vote in January 2020, the system of allocating 50 bonus seats to the parties with the most votes above 25 per cent will be introduced for subsequent elections.

¹⁷ Please see [the distribution of seats](#) in each constituency.

¹⁸ The last census was conducted in 2021, which determined the equivalent of one vote as 36,397 voters per constituency.

¹⁹ According to Section I.2.2.iv of the 2002 Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, “seats must be evenly distributed between the constituencies” and “[t]he 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)”.

²⁰ Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits states to “respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination.” Paragraph 7.6 furthest commits states to respect the “rights of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities”.

²¹ As per the MoI circular Number 3204 of 15 May 2023, 31,242 civil servants were instructed to help with holding elections.

were administered in a professional and efficient manner and these institutions enjoyed a high degree of confidence among election stakeholders.

The MoI is the main body responsible for election preparations and voter registration. It issues regulations, produces materials, supervises the work of the election administration at the regional and municipal level, and announces turnout and preliminary results. Regional Administrations determine the location of polling stations, deliver materials, including ballot papers, and transmit the constituency-based provisional results to the MoI. The municipalities deliver ballot boxes and any needed equipment to Polling Station Committees (PSCs) and transmit the provisional results from polling stations in the municipality to the regional authorities.

The Supreme Court registers political parties and candidate lists for the elections. The Supreme Election Commission, composed of Supreme Court judges and representatives of the MoI, aggregates all results, including the preferential votes for candidates, and announces the final election results. The courts of first instance aggregate the votes in constituencies.

As with every election, an inter-party committee was created to discuss issues related to the electoral process and submit proposals for its correct implementation.²² It was chaired by the Minister of Interior and was composed of representatives of parliamentary parties and parties with candidate lists registered in at least 70 per cent of constituencies.²³ Allowing most parties to participate in discussions increased the transparency and accountability of the election administration. The meetings were closed to the media. While the meetings were not open to observers by law, the Minister of Interior extended an ad hoc invitation to the ODIHR EAM.

In order to further enhance transparency and equality of treatment consideration could be given to opening participation in the inter-party committee to all electoral contestants.

All PSCs consist of a chairperson, four members and their alternates. Chairpersons are selected by lot among judges, lawyers and law students, appointed by the Supreme Court and have broad competencies and decision-making powers. In addition, the courts of first instance appoint four randomly selected registered voters in the constituency as PSC members. The PSC assigns the tasks of secretary to either a public servant, a voter, one of its members or to a municipal employee. Service in PSCs is mandatory, although penalties for failure to appear on election day are not enforced. While chairpersons and secretaries receive some compensation for their work, the remaining members are not remunerated. The Bar Association provides non-mandatory training for all PSC chairpersons, in addition to available manuals. The Supreme Court appoints supervisors to oversee and support the work of chairpersons.

As staff working on the elections are seconded from various institutions and from different locations, no gender disaggregated data on members of the election administration at various levels is collected by the election administration, contrary to international commitments.²⁴

Disaggregated data on gender representation in the election administration at various levels, including at the polling station level, should be gathered in a comprehensive manner.

There was a total of 21,529 polling stations throughout Greece. Out of these, 21,197 were so-called basic polling stations, 270 absentee polling stations, 66 mixed polling stations and 35 polling stations for

²² Article 43, as amended by art. 14 of Law 4954/2022 and entered in force on 9 July 2022.

²³ Seven out of 35 parties did not meet this requirement.

²⁴ Paragraph 40.13 of the 1991 OSCE Moscow Document commits participating States to “ensure the collection and analysis of data to assess adequately, monitor and improve the situation of women”.

detainees.²⁵ The law provides for a maximum of three political party representatives to observe the process in each polling station, chosen in a draw if more than three appear at the opening.

Parties with representatives in the parliament or European Parliament and parties with candidates in at least one-third of constituencies receive free paper for printing the ballots.²⁶ Parties are responsible for printing their own ballots and submitting them to the regional office of the MoI eight days before election day to be included in the materials sent to the polling stations. Some smaller parties complained that the allocated time was short. In addition, parties with candidates in at least two-thirds of the constituencies are entitled to free copies of the electoral rolls in digital form and copies of election publications of the Ministry of Interior.²⁷ These two points are at odds with international good practice, as it does not provide for an equality of opportunity for all contestants.²⁸

Paper for printing ballots, copies of electoral rolls in digital format and copies of election publications of the Ministry of Interior should be made available free of charge to all electoral contestants.

Based on a law passed in 2019, Greeks residing abroad could vote for the first time in national elections.²⁹ The MFA is responsible for facilitating voting abroad by selecting polling stations, seconding diplomatic staff to act as chairpersons and ensuring the movement of election materials. The two main requirements to register online as a voter, available since 2020, are to have lived in Greece, for at least two of the last 35 years, and to have presented a tax declaration to the Greek authorities during the past two years. A total of 22,855 voters registered,³⁰ and 99 polling stations were opened in 82 cities in 35 countries. Voting took place on 20 May, and ballots were transferred to the Central Electoral Committee of Foreign Electors (*KEFEEE*) in Athens where they were counted. In the end, 79.6 per cent of the registered voters abroad participated in the elections. The authorities informed the EAM that a lessons-learned exercise would take place after the elections involving different institutions to explore means to improve the participation of voters from abroad.

Persons with disabilities faced difficulties in exercising their right to vote in relation to voter information on the electoral process via media as well as physical accessibility and autonomous voting on election day (*See also Voter Registration*). In line with recommendations of previous ODIHR missions, a new amendment mandates provision of support to voters with mobility issues at the polling station and allows for them to be accompanied by a person of their choosing.³¹ While this is a positive step, further actions could be taken to facilitate autonomous participation, including the use of assistive tools, such as Braille or tactile ballot guides for persons with visual impairments, eliminating physical obstacles in polling centers and exploring the possibility of using alternative voting methods to be in line with international standards.³² Information on the electoral process by various stakeholders in the media should also be made accessible to persons with disabilities to enhance their participation in public life.

The authorities should undertake efforts, in consultation with disabled persons' organizations, to facilitate the autonomous participation of all voters, including exploring options for alternative voting methods. Further steps should be taken to eliminate physical obstacles at the polling stations.

²⁵ Mixed means voting in the same polling station for candidates from different constituencies.

²⁶ Five out of 35 parties did not meet this requirement.

²⁷ Article 23, as amended by par. 1 article 53 of Law 4648/2019; 6 parties out of 35 did not meet this requirement.

²⁸ Section 2.3 of the 2002 Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that "equality of opportunity must be guaranteed for parties and candidates alike".

²⁹ Since entering the European Union (EU) in 1981, Greeks residing within the EU have been able to vote for the European Parliament elections in diplomatic representations based on the registration in their municipality in Greece.

³⁰ As of January 2023, only 2,500 had registered and the MoI and MFA launched a campaign to increase the number.

³¹ [See details in point 11 Part 3 circular 41373](#) from 10 May 2023.

³² Article 29 of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires states to "ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others".

Digital transformation has led to changes in the elections process since 2019.³³ Online platforms were introduced in 2020 to allow voters living abroad to register and in 2023 for candidate registration. For election day, there was the possibility of using a digital ID as identification. Finally, the transmission of preliminary results from all polling stations with the Secure Results Transmission (SRT) system was used in all polling stations for the first time in these elections.³⁴ The SRT system allows for turnout data and preliminary results to be transmitted via tablets from every polling station to the central level for publication. While EAM interlocutors saw these technological additions as positive steps, some noted that more training for political parties and voters abroad on how to use the platforms and more detailed information to voters and political actors on the digital ID and SRT system would be beneficial. The outsourcing of digital services to a private company should be done under strict supervision of the institutions to increase credibility and ensure consistency in the numbers provided to the public.³⁵

The Ministry of Interior, Supreme Court and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the digital service provider, should elaborate and disseminate training and outreach programs to candidates, voters abroad and the general electorate to familiarize them with online platforms and digital ID, and secure the election results transmission.

VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

Voting is compulsory for citizens who are at least 17 years of age in an election year, although penalties for abstention are not enforced. Citizens who have been found mentally incompetent by a court are deprived of suffrage rights. This restriction contravenes principles of universal and equal suffrage, as provided for in the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, UN treaties, and other international obligations.³⁶ Citizens forfeit their voting rights due to criminal conviction for certain crimes. Positively, the blanket restriction was abolished, narrowing it down to certain types of serious crimes where the punishment is irrevocable.³⁷

The law should be amended to remove restrictions on voting rights on the basis of intellectual or psychosocial disability.

Voter registration is passive. Municipalities provide the MoI with information on citizens 17 years and older, to be included in the electoral register, updating this information every two months in order to take various possible changes into account.³⁸ For a specific election, the electoral register used is updated before the pre-election period starts.³⁹ The electoral register for these elections contained 9,813,595 voters (51.46 per cent women and 48.54 per cent men).⁴⁰ The electoral register included 431,512 young

³³ The MoI outsourced the provision of online platforms for registration of voters living abroad and candidate registration and the system for transmission of turnout data and preliminary results to the company *SingularLogic*.

³⁴ For the 7 July 2019 elections a pilot project was implemented in 30 per cent of the polling stations.

³⁵ Numbers provided on the webpage of preliminary results related to number of registered voters and number of polling stations were different from the official MoI figures.

³⁶ [See Paragraphs 7.3 and 24 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, Articles 12 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#), and also [paragraph 9.4 of the 2013 CRPD Committee Communication No. 4/2011](#). The UN Human Rights Committee previously called upon Greece “to ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life and exercise their right to vote, inter alia, by guaranteeing unhindered physical access to voting, ensuring the secrecy of the ballot and the availability of other voting materials and information in accessible formats in line with general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility.”

³⁷ These crimes are listed under Chapter 1 to 6 of the Penal Code and include attacks on democracy, crimes against other states, crimes against state and political bodies, crimes against the president of the republic, Parliament, government and local government bodies, crimes against public order, high treason, and involvement in criminal organizations and terrorist attacks.

³⁸ Among these are turning 17 years of age, deaths, moving to another municipality, correction of data, naturalization.

³⁹ For these elections, the electoral register used was updated on 28 February 2023.

⁴⁰ See [data from the Ministry of Interior](#).

people, between 17 to 21 years of age, eligible to vote for the first time. There are different electoral rolls used for elections extracted from the electoral register.⁴¹

The number of registered voters represents about 93.6 of the resident population in Greece.⁴² ODIHR EAM interlocutors explained the disproportionately high ratio of registered voters was, in part, because of the number of Greeks living abroad and because not all deceased voters are deleted from the electoral register.⁴³ While there is a high level of trust in the electoral register, the potentially inflated numbers effectively leads the election administration to use a higher number of voters in its planning, and thus more resources, than may be necessary for election preparations. Additionally, the high number of registered voters affects the accuracy of the turnout figures.

The Ministry of Interior could explore ways to maintain the electoral register so that it is more in line with the real number of voters that will participate in elections by improving ways to delete deceased voters and undertake special measures to take into account voters living abroad.

Citizens residing outside their constituency could apply to vote at specially designated absentee polling stations in the municipalities of their residence. Several ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that the requirement to apply several months in advance to change the place of vote makes voting at a place of temporary residence challenging. This could negatively affect the turnout of voters, especially youth, who move for work reasons during the summer season.

VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Citizens who are eligible to vote and have reached the age of 25 can run for parliamentary elections. The legal framework continues to restrict the candidacy rights of certain professions, including all salaried public employees, members of the armed forces, governors and mayors, and chairpersons of boards of public corporations.⁴⁴ Consequently, a person seeking office must resign before submitting their nomination and the majority of these posts are not reinstated in case of unsuccessful candidacy. While these limitations aim at protecting the neutrality of the civil service and the equality of candidatures, as holders of public office may have an unfair advantage over other candidates and were upheld by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR),⁴⁵ ODIHR reiterates its previous recommendation that any limitations on the right to stand for office should be minimal.⁴⁶ In order for a candidate list to be registered, at least 40 percent of the less represented gender must be included and at least 33 per cent on the national party list.⁴⁷ In addition, each party must have at least three diaspora candidates on the national party list, one of which should be placed in the top three positions. Candidates can only run in one constituency, with the exception of the party/coalition leader, who can register in up to three constituencies. In order to be able to present a national list, parties must present candidates in at least three-quarters of constituencies.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Residents voting for a candidate in their constituency, residents voting for candidates in another constituency (absentee), uniformed personnel, prisoners and voters from abroad.

⁴² The resident population in Greece is, according to the 2021 census, 10,482,487. See report by the [Statistical Authority ELSAT](#).

⁴³ Only voters over 116 years of age are removed automatically.

⁴⁴ Paragraph 15 of the General Comment No. 25 to Article 25 of the 1960 ICCPR “states that persons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent, or by reason of political affiliation.

⁴⁵ In *Gitonas and others v. Greece* (nos. 18747/91, 19376/92, 19379/92), ECtHR, 1 July 1997, the ECtHR held that the Supreme Court did not violate Article 3 of protocol No.1 of the ECHR by annulling the election of a candidate on the grounds that he did not resign from his public position in the constitutionally-prescribed timeframe. See also section II.A.4.1 of the [2016 ODIHR/Venice Commission Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources in Election Campaigns](#).

⁴⁶ See [Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) and [Article 25 of the ICCPR](#).

⁴⁷ 72 (24 per cent of the parliament members) women were elected after these elections.

⁴⁸ In 2019 the requirement was half of the constituencies.

Candidates are required to pay a deposit of EUR 150 in order to register. In line with good practice and the freedom of expression, voters can sign in support of the nomination of more than one candidate. For the first time, the registration of candidates was done via an online platform which operated over a period of seven days.⁴⁹ Until these elections the request was done in writing to the court of first instance and during a period of nine days. Some interlocutors complained about the limited time available to familiarize themselves with the platform, the platform not being user-friendly and the long time it took to fill and upload the required information, together with some technical issues.

The candidate registration platform could be made available before registration period, in order to allow potential candidates to familiarize themselves with the use of the platform and to ease the process of registration.

Out of 48 parties and coalitions and three individuals which requested registration, 35 parties and coalitions, as well as a single individual, were registered. The most discussed rejection was of the newly established *Ellines* party because of the conviction of one of its leaders for serious crimes and as a consequence of the recent amendments.⁵⁰ Others were denied registration on various procedural grounds: seven rejections were due to the application not being on time, five for not having enough members, and two for the use of the same name as another party. The Supreme Court announced the list of candidates on 2 May.

In total 5,965 candidates were registered (58.51 per cent men and 41.49 per cent women), and 12 parties also submitted national candidate lists.⁵¹

VIII. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign lasted 27 days. It officially began on 23 April following the dissolution of the parliament and continued until 24 hours before the opening of the polls. Campaigning prior to the candidate registration process is not regulated by law, impacting the effectiveness of equal opportunity safeguards the regulations provide. Municipal councils, in consultation with contestants, determine the allocation of public sites for posting campaign materials and are legally required to monitor compliance with campaign regulations. Parties met by the ODIHR EAM did not voice any complaints about the allocation of public space.

Contestants were able to conduct their campaigns freely, and fundamental freedoms of assembly, association and expression were respected. The campaign was competitive and the wide range of parties and candidates ensured a broad choice of political alternatives.

Parties mainly relied on small and medium-sized gatherings, face-to-face meetings, social media and television, with large-scale closing campaign events organized in Athens.⁵² Due to the open proportional system, a majority of parliamentary parties met by the ODIHR EAM had both, centrally organized campaigns featuring party leaders and campaigns of individual candidates effectively creating intra-party

⁴⁹ Law 5043/2023 which entered in force on 13 April 2023, set the start of the registration of candidates at the start of the pre-election period on 23 April, one day after the elections were called, and finished on 29 April. The MoI was responsible for running the platform with the support from *SingularLogic*, a private company.

⁵⁰ The Supreme Court ruled that prohibiting the participation of such parties represents “a defence mechanism of democracy against parties and persons whose actions sabotage the republic, also in accordance with article 17 ECHR [and it is] by no means jeopardising pluralism and democratic values; to the contrary.”

⁵¹ One candidate from Syriza announced three days before the elections that he would resign from his seat if elected due to disagreements with the party leadership.

⁵² The ODIHR EAM observed five closing campaign events traditionally organized in Athens.

competition. Exceptions were two left-wing parties with centralized or semi-centralized campaign strategies. Several smaller parties complained about unfair treatment in the media.⁵³ (See *Media*).

The campaign tone was moderate, with topics centered around the economy, growth, employment, living costs, social security policies, and a potential post-election coalition. The governing party tailored its campaign regionally, portrayed itself as a guarantor of national and regional stability, emphasized macroeconomic successes and a reduced number of migrants, and invited voters to vote for the future instead of the past when the country was governed by its opponents. Out of five opposition parties from the outgoing parliament, four were left-wing parties that based their campaign on an array of socio-economic policies and demands for accountability of state institutions. Most opposition parties negatively portrayed the governing party as being out of touch with the needs of citizens and demanded that the culprits of the spyware surveillance be punished. Some of the opposition parties tried to appeal to the youngest group of voters accounting for about five per cent of the electorate. Besides well-established parties, several non-parliamentary parties, which some ODIHR EAM interlocutors characterized as populist, featured prominently in the campaign. Several interlocutors met by the ODIHR EAM noted perceived dissatisfaction of parts of the electorate with the main parties and a high number of undecided voters close to the end of the campaign.⁵⁴

Gender equality was a marginal campaign topic, and ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that women candidates were not actively promoted by political parties. Women were rarely visible in the central party campaigns. As candidates, men were generally more promoted by the parties in the media than women. While two of the more prominent non-parliamentary parties were run by women, no parliamentary party had a woman party leader. Positively, three parliamentary parties, ND, KKE and MeRA25, informed the ODIHR EAM that they implement internal gender quotas for party structures. While all parties of the outgoing parliament included policies on supporting mothers in their electoral platforms, only one party proposed gender equality in social and political decision-making positions and two parties included policies on reducing the gender pay gap. The Greek National Commission for Human Rights and the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs conducted gender awareness campaigns promoting women's participation in elections.

Political parties should review their internal policies to promote women's participation as candidates and give them prominence in the party's campaign, including through the use of public funds to support women candidates with training and alleviate the financial burdens of the campaign.

Authorities should consider further measures to incentivize the inclusion and visibility of women in party structures and in campaigns.

Greece does not recognize the minority status of any ethnic or linguistic community, other than the Muslim religious minority in Thrace, which is protected by the terms of the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923.⁵⁵ The country signed but has not ratified the Council of Europe's 1994 Framework Convention for

⁵³ Several smaller parties complained to the ODIHR EAM that they were not invited to appear as often as the main contenders, and their press conferences and advertising slots did not feature during primetime.

⁵⁴ [Mass protests](#) after the train accident expressed dissatisfaction with the political establishment. Eventually, the higher turnout did not translate into more votes for parliamentary parties.

⁵⁵ Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the 2016 CERD Concluding Observations noted that “[n]otwithstanding the explanation provided by the State party that ethnic groups are not considered as minorities, the Committee believes that, in a multi-ethnic society, recognition of ethnic groups of smaller size may help them to protect their existence and their identity. The Committee also notes that the Treaty of Lausanne neither prohibits the consideration of other groups as minorities nor prevents persons belonging to various ethnic groups to exercise their right to self-identification”.

the Protection of National Minorities and does not collect any statistical data on minority populations.⁵⁶

None of the parliamentary parties explicitly mentioned a minority or ethnic communities in their electoral platforms. There were five Muslim minority candidates in Xanthi constituency and six in Rodopi. Most of these contestants conducted their campaigns mainly in the Turkish language. According to the first official results, four Muslim minority candidates were elected, two from SYRIZA and two from PASOK. Three of them were incumbent members of the parliament.

Several EAM interlocutors mentioned that, for the first time, the campaign was extensively fought on social networks. Most parties established Facebook accounts. According to Meta Ad Library data, which excludes expenditures less than EUR 100, during one month of campaigning, ND and its leader spent EUR 218,000 on Facebook advertising while SYRIZA and its leader spent about EUR 98,000. Several ODIHR EAM interlocutors positively assessed the declaration of the former parliamentary party Golden Dawn as a criminal organization in 2020, as having reduced xenophobic and inflammatory language during the campaign. However, they also perceived that intolerant terminology in politics has been mainstreamed through different channels in the society, most notably on social networks.

IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Previously dispersed political party and campaign finance legislation was consolidated under presidential decree in 2022. The 2002 law on political party and campaign funding significantly amended from 2014 to 2022 forms the basis for this consolidation. The most recent amendments from 2022 reduced the sanctions for administrative violations of the law, raised the ceiling of regulated expenses paid to third parties without bank transfer, and extended the time allowed for contestants to publish their annual accounts. The sanctions referred to above are less dissuasive but remain proportionate to the violations.⁵⁷ While the legal framework establishes important disclosure and reporting requirements, the transparency and accountability of political party and campaign financing continues to be problematic due to neither regular nor timely reporting and legal loopholes.

A. CAMPAIGN INCOMES AND EXPENDITURES

Public funding finances about three quarters of routine party activities and campaign activities.⁵⁸ The MoI allots the funding to political parties annually in multiple installments, for which eligibility is based on the results of previous parliamentary and European Parliament elections.⁵⁹ A small portion of public funding is also set aside for research and training activities.⁶⁰ Annual public funds are allocated

⁵⁶ Paragraph 5.20 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits participating States to “consider acceding to the ICCPR, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international instruments, if they have not yet done so.”

⁵⁷ Paragraph 272 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states “Sanctions should be applied

⁵⁸ European Parliament, *Financing of Political Structures in EU Member States*, June 2021.

⁵⁹ Public funding is provided to political parties represented in the Hellenic Parliament or European Parliament (EP), and those which in the last parliamentary elections obtained at least 1.5 per cent of votes in at least 70 per cent of constituencies, or at least 1.5 per cent of votes nationwide in the last EP elections. For 2022, the amount of annual funding allocated to nine eligible parties was EUR 24,453,866.

⁶⁰ In 2022, EUR 4,971,167 was available to eligible parties.

proportionally to the success in national and European parliamentary elections.⁶¹ Supplementary public funding is provided for electoral campaigns of eligible contestants before and after the election,⁶² while routine political party funds can also be used for campaigning. Additionally, parties receive in-kind contributions from state funds.⁶³ Candidates do not receive public funds. Partial or whole payment of public funds may be withheld from a political party due to violations of the law. Such withholdings are proportional to the violation and affect public funding for the current electoral cycle.⁶⁴ Some interlocutors noted that public funds could be used to support typically financially disadvantaged women candidates with training or other means. While proportionality is a common practice, some interlocutors noted that the system for public funding was not fair or equitable, and adversely affected smaller parties and ineligible contestants and that the installments of routine funding are not paid in a timely manner.⁶⁵

Political parties may finance their routine and campaign activities with bank loans. Several parties have in the past acquired large loan debts. The law requires parties to disclose new and amended loan agreements and, since 2018, prohibits securing loans of more than 50 per cent of any current or future public funding. The law remains vague on the restructuring of loans and the rules do not ensure that benefits from advantageous loan terms and written-off loans are treated as financial donations.⁶⁶

The legislation should set explicit terms for loans taken out by political parties and further elaborate acceptable practices for the restructuring of loans. Loans provided on advantageous terms or which are written-off should be regulated and reported as donations.

Individual citizens can donate up to EUR 20,000 per year to a political party and EUR 5,000 to a candidate, including in-kind contributions. Special coupons, which are anonymous for up to EUR 15, may be issued by political parties for receiving donations.⁶⁷ Cash donations cannot exceed EUR 500. Donations of higher amounts must be made by bank transfer. While political parties must open as many as three bank accounts with Greek banks, candidates must each open one designated bank account. Funds in these or any other bank accounts are subject to forfeiture to the state. Donations from non-nationals, legal entities, local government authorities, media owners and their family members are prohibited. Many interlocutors expressed concern about opaque money entering politics, which affects transparency as it is not captured in financial reporting.⁶⁸

The limit of campaign spending for contestants amounts to 20 per cent of the previous year's public funding provided to all eligible parties.⁶⁹ For candidates, campaign spending limits are determined based

⁶¹ Fifty per cent of electoral public funding is allocated to parliamentary parties and 10 per cent to parties represented in the EP before the elections, while 40 per cent is allotted two months after the elections to parties which obtained at least 1.5 per cent of votes in at least 70 per cent of constituencies, and to parties which won at least 1.5 per cent of votes nationwide in the last EP elections. The distribution formula is based on the party's share of valid votes in the respective election. Ahead of these elections, EUR 2.94 million in campaign funding was allocated to seven of eight eligible parties, with ND receiving EUR 1,267,583 and SYRIZA receiving EUR 987,499. Funding to Golden Dawn, listed as an eligible political party due to its election to the EP, has been suspended.

⁶² Campaign funding was reportedly distributed to eligible contestants in early May 2023.

⁶³ Eligible parties receive free space for campaign materials, air time on broadcast media, and paper for ballots.

⁶⁴ Paragraph 274 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states "Such sanctions for violations that are not of such a serious character to lead to prohibition or dissolution of a political party may include: [...] partial or total suspension or loss of public funding and other forms of public support for a set period of time."

⁶⁵ The most recent routine political party funding installment for 2022 was reportedly only paid in May 2023.

⁶⁶ Paragraph 210 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states "[...] depending on the specific case and subject to legislation permitting donations and support from commercial entities, loans that are granted at advantageous conditions or even written-off by the creditor should be treated as a form of in-kind or financial contribution".

⁶⁷ The law sets annual limits of funding through anonymous coupons. For parties entitled to annual public funding this limit is four per cent of the public funding amount from the previous year or EUR 75,000. For other parties the limit is EUR 20,000.

⁶⁸ Article 7.3 of the [2003 UN Convention Against Corruption](#) states "each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures [...] to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties".

⁶⁹ For political parties, this amount was set at EUR 4,890,773 for the 2023 early parliamentary elections.

on the number of seats in their respective electoral constituency.⁷⁰ Paid advertising on traditional media is prohibited and free airtime is determined by the inter-party Committee. Paid advertising on social media and websites is common and unregulated, and according to ODIHR EAM interlocutors is also a potential funnel for opaque money.

B. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS

The campaign finance audit period begins six months prior and ends two months after elections. In the case of early elections, the inter-institutional Audit Committee, the primary oversight body, determines and announces the applicable timeframe. The audit period in these early elections ran from 1 January to 21 July 2023 as it affected political parties and mass media companies.⁷¹ The audit period for candidates was from 2 May to 21 July 2023.

Deliberations of the Audit Committee are confidential and meeting minutes are not publicly available. All contesting political parties, elected candidates, and a specified number of alternates on the candidate lists file campaign finance reports to the Committee within three months of the elections.⁷² These reports must include detailed contributions (with the full names made public of donors to political parties who give more than EUR 5,000 and similar details for donors to candidates in excess of EUR 3,000) and expenses together with supporting documents. While some interlocutors cited the need for privacy in the disclosure donations,⁷³ others noted the need for greater transparency.⁷⁴ Reports cannot be filed electronically. Such electronic reporting is being considered for the future.

Political parties must submit annual and campaign financial reports for which the Audit Committee provides clear and detailed forms. These parties must then publish a special statement that details income and expenses from public and private funds on their websites within the first five months of the year. These statements are not comprehensive, nor searchable and are not easily comparable.⁷⁵ Similarly, the Committee publishes routine political party and summary campaign finance reports with their findings on line. While the Committee published a comprehensive summary annual report for its work in 2022 with comparative data from previous years, detailed political party reports are not published in a timely manner. The most recent published routine political party reports were from 2020. Information on party reports and sanctions on political parties for the past three years could only be accessed through laborious

⁷⁰ For the first seat in each electoral constituency the limit is EUR 15,000, for the second to the seventh seat of each constituency it is EUR 7,500 and for the eighth seat of each electoral constituency onwards it is EUR 1,500 per seat. In the electoral regions of Cyclades and Dodecanese the limit is EUR 7,500.

⁷¹ Currently, headed by the Vice President of the Parliament, the Audit Committee is made up of MPs, senior judges and prosecutors, and directors of anti-corruption bodies in Greece. The Committee's work is supported by a Directorate that formally reports to the President of the Parliament.

⁷² Paragraph 259 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states "Reports on campaign financing should be submitted to the proper authorities after elections in a timely manner, but with a reasonable deadline that allows parties to compile data, invoices, information on reimbursements of loans, etc.". See also paragraph 264.

⁷³ Paragraph 263 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states "[...] While the publication of financial reports is crucial to establishing public confidence in the functions of a party, reporting requirements must also strike a balance between necessary disclosure and exceptionally pressing privacy concerns of individual donors in cases of a reasonable probability of threats, harassment or reprisals, or where disclosure could result in serious political repercussions." See also paragraph 265.

⁷⁴ Paragraph 205 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) refers to "[...] several important guidelines for political finance systems in the development of legislation [including] requirements that increase the transparency of party funding and credibility of reporting". See Article 7.3 [2003 UN Convention Against Corruption](#).

⁷⁵ Paragraph 258 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states "[...] Digitalising information and submitting it to the regulatory body in its digitalised, easily searchable and reusable form can facilitate oversight and therefore minimise the need for paper-based procedures." Further, paragraph 259 states "[...] The law should define the format and contents of the reports to ensure that parties and candidates disclose essential information. This also helps make sure that information received from the different parties is easily searchable and can be compared. In an effort to support transparency and provide civil society and other interested stakeholders with the possibility of reviewing parties' campaign finances, it is good practice for such financial reports to be made available on publicly available resources in a coherent, comprehensive and timely manner over an extended period of time."

freedom of information processes. There are no reporting or disclosure requirements prior to election day, reducing the transparency of campaign financing.⁷⁶

To enhance the transparency of its work, the Audit Committee should publish information of public interest in a timely manner.

To enhance transparency and accountability, all routine and campaign finance contribution and expenditure reports should be made public in a timely, comprehensive, easy-to-understand and comparable manner with interim reporting requirements on campaign finance before election day.

Third parties engaged in campaigning, including those controlled by political parties, face limited regulations.⁷⁷ They are not obliged to file financial reports or disclose sources of funding and expenditures, which undermines the transparency of campaign finance and the effectiveness of spending ceilings.⁷⁸ Expenditures paid to third parties by political parties not made by bank transfer are limited to EUR 40,000 per year and those paid by candidates must not exceed EUR 1,000.

To enhance transparency and accountability, consideration should be given to extending campaign finance regulations, including reporting and disclosure requirements, to third parties.

The Audit Committee appoints external auditors and has five months to conduct the audit. The Committee is required to publish the amounts of electoral expenses and audit conclusions on a website within 90 days after completing the audit. The delay in publishing the only campaign finance data available, until long after the election, reduces transparency and accountability as it does not allow citizens and contestants to review it in a timely manner. The scope of audits includes information provided by the contestants, advertising and public opinion companies, as well as media organizations. The Committee stated that they have adequate resources to fulfill their mandate, which was previously recommended by ODIHR.

The Audit Committee investigates suspected contestant or campaign finance violations with the assistance of an appointed First Instance Court Public Prosecutor. The law provides a range of sanctions, including fines, forfeiture of elected office, and imprisonment, which appear to be effective, proportionate, and dissuasive. Following review by the contestants of the initial report, the Committee submits its final report to the President of the Parliament in the cases of administrative violations of the law or the local competent public prosecutor in the case of criminal offenses. The timeline for the Committee to issue its final report is unclear. The President of the Parliament may then impose sanctions. Administrative sanctions may be appealed to the Council of State, for which judgements cannot be appealed. Where grounds for forfeiture of parliamentary office are determined, the Committee forwards the evidence to the Supreme Special Court.

⁷⁶ See Paragraph 205 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) and Article 7.3 of the [2003 UN Convention Against Corruption](#).

⁷⁷ For example, they may not operate electoral centers to promote parliamentary candidates.

⁷⁸ Paragraph 220 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation states “[...] Third party funding can be used to circumvent financial regulations, which often include contribution and spending limits, as well as disclosure requirements. Setting a ceiling for donations to parties is not likely to be effective if, at the same time, other groups such as interest or support groups, trade unions and associations can spend unlimited amounts of money to support or oppose a particular political party or candidate. In order to avoid the creation of loopholes through which unlimited funding can be channeled and financial transactions can be veiled, laws should set proportionate and reasonable limits to the amount that third parties can spend on promoting candidates or parties, ideally by applying existing ceilings for donations to political parties to these actors, as well.” Further, see Article 6 of [Recommendation Rec\(2003\)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe “On common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns”](#) recommends that “rules concerning donations to political parties should also apply, as appropriate, to all entities which are related directly or indirectly to a political party or are otherwise under the control of a political party.” See also Article 7.3 of the [2003 UN Convention Against Corruption](#).

X. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The number of media outlets in Greece is large and the landscape is diverse.⁷⁹ However, the ownership of major media groups is concentrated among a handful of influential business owners with interests also in other sectors of the economy. There is a broad perception that these structural issues, combined with wage pressure and limited work opportunities for journalists, have led to a significant level of self-censorship. Journalists tend to keep away from stories which would tackle the large advertisers or the owner's business interests, including good relations with the government due to potential participation in state procurement, tax rebates and contracts for state advertising. Smaller, mainly online media outlets fill the gap for investigative journalism. However, their audience is limited and long-term financial viability unclear.

The public broadcaster Hellenic Radio Television (*ERT*) operates four nationwide TV channels, nine national and 19 regional radio stations. State owned Athens - Macedonian news agency (*ANA-MPA*) counts about 240 Greek media organizations among its clients. Shortly after the 2019 election, *ERT* and *ANA-MPA* were placed under direct oversight of the Prime Minister's office.⁸⁰ This institutional setup, along with installing the former ND director of communications upon the government's proposal as the president of *ERT* in 2019, reinforced the already existing perception that the broadcasters are not fully independent.⁸¹

To protect the independence of public broadcasters, adequate safeguards should be introduced in the legislation which would guarantee editorial independence and ensure appointment of a professional, non-politicized management and oversight bodies.

Many EAM interlocutors were of the opinion that the structural problems listed above have resulted in political coverage being predominantly supportive of the government, including during this election campaign. While television is still the most popular source, the perceived interdependence of media and politics has led to low trust in journalism with audiences relying on social networks for news.⁸²

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MEDIA

The freedoms of press and expression are guaranteed by the Constitution. However, insult and defamation, including of officials and state symbols, remain criminal offences, which is at odds with international standards.⁸³ Critical journalism is further stifled by the rising practice of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) where plaintiffs demand deliberately excessive financial penalties often with the effect of discouraging critical journalism.

⁷⁹ Greece has a plethora of media outlets - around 160 national, regional and local TV channels, 1150 private radios, over 80 nationwide newspapers and many online outlets.

⁸⁰ See [statement](#) by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, 11 July 2019.

⁸¹ See the Council of Europe's CM/Rec(1996) on the Guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting, and Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on Public Service Media Governance. See also Paragraph 8.20 of 2008 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Resolution 1636.

⁸² According to the 2022 [Reuters Institute Digital News Report](#), Greece has the lowest share of citizens thinking that the press is free from undue political or business influence among 46 surveyed countries.

⁸³ According to paragraph 47 of the 2011 ICCPR [General Comment No. 34](#) "States parties should consider the decriminalisation of defamation and, in any case, the application of the criminal law should only be countenanced in the most serious of cases and imprisonment is never an appropriate penalty".

Criminal provisions for defamation and insult should be replaced by proportional civil remedies. Measures should be put in place to protect media from strategic lawsuits to deter the abuse of this practice.

The safety of journalists remains an issue.⁸⁴ Positively, the ODIHR EAM was informed about several steps the government has taken to address the situation. These include establishing a task force together with media industry organizations, unions and public broadcasters, repealing the Penal Code article regarding the definition and punishment of “false news”, and the launching of a training centre in Thessaloniki on the safety of journalists and media professionals.

A system for access to public information is in place, although in practice information is not always easily accessible as the process is slow and burdensome. The law requires transparency about media owners, but the implementation of new registers for print and online outlets is still ongoing as the names of ultimate beneficial owners were not yet public during this electoral period.

While the conduct of all broadcasters is tightly regulated, print and online media operate under fewer restrictions and no specific directives regulate social media during elections. The extensive legal framework defines the nature and length of obligatory broadcasts. One-third of news bulletins are devoted to elections during which the law requires broadcasters to allocate party coverage proportionally to the results of the last elections. The free-airtime division benefits bigger parliamentary parties, giving them advantage in terms of both the amount of exposure and time slots.⁸⁵ Paid advertising in broadcasts is not allowed while free airtime is available to each registered party.

Free airtime arrangements allow every contestant to present their views. Both public and private broadcasters are obliged to air 45-minute long press conferences and 10-minute long advertising slots for each registered party. Independent candidates can appear once on national channels, and twice on regional channels. Public broadcasters are also obliged to show 45-minute long interviews with the leader or representative of each registered party and transmit at least two live campaign events for each parliamentary party. Both public and private broadcasters have to organize at least three debates.

While the broadcasters fulfilled their obligations regarding the amount of airtime, smaller parties complained to ODIHR EAM that their appearances were relegated to less popular time slots. Still several interlocutors opined that, due to the strict rules, broadcasters made efforts to achieve fairness during the election campaign. Outside the campaign period, however, coverage is seen to benefit the governing party.⁸⁶

The National Council of Radio and TV (NCRTV) is in charge of monitoring compliance and addressing complaints. It does not monitor broadcasters' output during the campaign, but collects daily data from all-level broadcasters about the political appearances and checks random samples, and publishes the findings in its annual report.

⁸⁴ In February 2023, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) “highlighted the 2018 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on the Safety of Journalists” and “encouraged the authorities to ensure a swift and thorough investigation into the issue of spyware surveillance of media workers”. Several journalists were targeted by the surveillance. The Council of Europe's [platform for journalists' safety](#) received 16 alerts regarding Greece in 2022, including one case of impunity in relation to the murder of journalist Giorgos Karaivazin 2021. Transparency and accountability NGO, [Vouliwatch](#), registered 12 SLAPP cases, one attack on journalist's home, seven instances of targeted police violence in demonstrations and one case of veiled threats by officials between 2020 and 2022.

⁸⁵ [Joint ministerial decision E/307](#) divided free airtime worth EUR 6.25 million for campaign coverage in private and public broadcasters. Airtime worth EUR 2.18 million was awarded to ND, EUR 1.66 million to *Syriza* and the rest of parties falling below the EUR 0.5 million threshold.

⁸⁶ After the 2019 election, the [NRTVC concluded](#) that during the campaign ND was awarded 39.8 per cent and *Syriza* 31.5 per cent of time in news. Other parliamentary parties fell below 10 per cent. Throughout 2020, ND had 61.7 per cent and *Syriza* 16.2 per cent of news coverage, with the rest falling below five per cent.

C. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Overall, the amount and plurality of information in the various media about the contestants' political platforms allowed voters to make informed choices. Extensive coverage demands led to ample amounts of information about contestants' programs. However, the main pre-election discussion with six leaders of parliamentary parties and journalists from national TV channels, for which the contestants, rather than journalists, set the rules, was devoid of genuine debate.⁸⁷

Non-parliamentary parties took part in roundtables which were often shown after midnight. Several smaller parties complained to the ODIHR EAM that they were not invited to appear as often as the main contenders, and their press conferences and advertising slots did not feature during primetime. Private and public broadcasters explained their decisions to the ODIHR EAM as owing to a large number of contestants and amount of free airtime which the law envisages, denying allegations of bias. NCRTV informed the ODIHR EAM that no official complaints were received.

Authorities could revise the legal framework on media coverage of elections to guarantee editorial freedom while respecting the right of all contestants to present their platforms in a fairer manner.

XI. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All courts, irrespective of their position in the judicial hierarchy, can review the constitutionality of legislation and are bound to not apply a law where the content is deemed contrary to the Constitution. The Council of State is the highest instance in such cases. While it has ruled in previous elections, including on the allocation of free airtime for contestations, the allocation of party funding, as well as the prohibition of public employments during the electoral period, there have been no such cases brought for these elections.

The legislative framework provides for electoral dispute resolution for certain decisions and actions during the electoral process. However, the remedy is limited and the timeframe for adjudicating most appeals is unregulated. This undermines the effectiveness of available legal redress and due process, contrary to OSCE commitments and international obligations.⁸⁸ Generally, the level of perceived judicial independence in Greece continues to be average.⁸⁹ ODIHR EAM interlocutors generally expressed trust in the judiciary, however some opined that at times decisions are politicized.

Voters and representatives of political parties can object to the inclusion or exclusion of a person from the voter list. Complaints need to be submitted in writing through the municipality office to the court of first instance and are reviewed in a public hearing within one month. Supreme Court decisions on the registration of party or coalition and candidate lists are final. Parties can only file objections with the Supreme Special Court with respect to non-registration.⁹⁰ Only one party (Green and Purple) filed an objection to their exclusion. The Court issued a decision the same day, rejecting the claim on the ground that the party did not meet the legal deadline to submit an application via the online portal. The party

⁸⁷ Paragraph 1.3 of the [Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec\(2007\)15](#) states that "regulatory frameworks on media coverage of elections should respect the editorial independence of the media".

⁸⁸ Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that "everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity". Section II.3.3.g. of the 2002 Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that "[t]ime-limits for lodging and deciding appeals must be short (three to five days for each at first instance)".

⁸⁹ According to [the 2022 EU Rule of Law Report](#), overall, 53 per cent of the general population and 59 per cent of companies perceive the level of independence of courts and judges to be 'fairly or very good' in 2022.

⁹⁰ The Special Supreme Court comprises 11 members who are presidents and judges of the highest general and administrative courts. The members are selected by drawing a lot with a two-year mandate.

announced that they would seek the redress with the European Court of Human Rights.⁹¹

Complaints with regard to election day violations can be submitted by voters, candidates and candidate representatives in writing to the PSC. Decisions are taken by the PSC immediately after voting and decisions are recorded in the minutes of the PSC. Complaints concerning the validity of the ballot are consulted with the judicial representative, who is assigned to each PSC. The validity of election results may be challenged by unelected candidates to the Special Supreme Court.⁹² There are no deadlines for resolving these cases. There have been no legal challenges in these elections.

It is recommended to further regulate election dispute resolution to ensure the due process. This includes introducing the possibility to appeal decisions of the first instance courts, as well as timely deadlines for filing and adjudicating any election-related appeals.

XII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION

The legislation does not expressly provide for citizen or international observers in Greece. Nevertheless, the ODIHR EAM was accredited and the MoI issued letters addressed to PSC chairpersons to grant ODIHR EAM access to polling stations during voting and counting. In addition, access was granted to observe the operations at the MoI and to the Media Center at *Zappeion Megaron*. Consolidation of results at the Court of First Instance in Athens was also observed. In a positive development from 2019, the ODIHR EAM was granted access to observe meetings of the inter-party committee. The lack of guarantees for citizen and international observation of all stages of the electoral process is at odds with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁹³

The law should be amended to expressly provide for citizen and international observation, in line with OSCE commitments.

XIII. ELECTION DAY

In line with ODIHR methodology for EAMs, the mission did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic and comprehensive manner. Mission members visited a limited number of polling stations on election day in the municipalities of Athens, Agia Paraskevi and Maroussi.

The voting process in the polling stations visited by the EAM was orderly and procedures were largely followed. Voters presented several types of identification documents, including digital IDs.⁹⁴ The new provision regarding the set-up of a dedicated space for people with disabilities was observed in most polling stations visited. However, access by wheelchair was not possible in many polling stations due to the layout of the environment.

Women were well represented in the polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM, most of them as chairperson or secretary. In most of the visited polling stations committees were incomplete. This resulted in heavier workloads for other members in particular related to sorting the packs of ballots handed to voters and some minor mistakes. The ODIHR EAM observed party agents helping with these tasks. The

⁹¹ See the [press release](#) from Green and Purple, 5 May 2023.

⁹² The grounds of such challenges are envisaged by Article 126 of the Election Code and include (1) violations of law during the election and (2) errors in numbering of votes. In both cases it must be specified if such violation would impact election results.

⁹³ See [Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#)

⁹⁴ These were the first elections with digital ID (<https://wallet.gov.gr/>). Technical difficulties observed in some PS did not have any impact on the voting process, as voters presented their physical ID and were allowed to vote.

number of ballot papers available by party varied in a number of polling stations visited by the ODIHR EAM.

In all polling stations visited, some party representatives were present. The number increased during the day, with larger parties more likely to be represented.

In the limited number of polling stations visit, the use of the tablets distributed for the SRT system presented some challenges, particularly in relation to the transmission of turnout figures, potentially due to the absence of the systematic training of the PSC chairpersons. Voluntary training was provided online, but as many chairpersons had already participated in previous elections, they assumed that instructions manual would be sufficient. Support was provided in all cases observed and the tablets were operated correctly later in the day to transmit the turnout and results.⁹⁵

Counting of votes in the limited number of polling stations observed by the ODIHR EAM was conducted in a transparent and collegial manner and procedures were followed. The procedures for transmission of preliminary results using the SRT system were not followed in the polling stations observed, as the polling stations waited to count results for party lists and candidates before transmitting party results, thus delaying the consolidation of results for the parties. Preliminary results were published online immediately. Consolidation of the results based on the protocols at the Court of First Instance for various constituencies in Attika region was done in a professional manner, as observed by the ODIHR EAM.

No party won a large enough majority to form the government. One day after the elections, the former prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis turned down the mandate to form the coalition government and called for a new election to be held as soon as 25 June. Leaders of the second and the third party also handed back the exploratory mandates given to them by the president. On 24 May, the president appointed President of the Hellenic Court of Audit, Ioannis Sarmas, as interim prime minister to prepare the country for new elections. Final results were released by the MoI on 26 May. On 29 May, President Sakellaropoulou dissolved the newly elected parliament and called elections for 25 June.

XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in Greece 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 Greece has yet to address.⁹⁶ ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Greece to further improve the electoral process and address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure equality of the vote, consideration should be given to regulating the permitted deviation in the number of voters in each constituency, in line with international good practice.

⁹⁵ At midnight results for 97.5 per cent of polling stations were in via the SRT system and by 3:00am the results had been checked against information received via phone from the regions. Few differences were resolved by calling back to the regions.

⁹⁶ 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”. The follow-up of prior recommendations is assessed by the ODIHR EAM as follows: recommendations 9, 15 and 18 from the ODIHR [final report on the 2012 early parliamentary elections](#) are fully implemented; recommendations 13, 16 and 20 are mostly implemented; recommendations 1, 3, 8, 10 and 17 are partially implemented. Recommendation 5 from the ODIHR [final report on the 2019 early parliamentary elections](#) is mostly implemented; recommendations 2, 3, 11, 13, and 14 are partially implemented. See also the ODIHR [electoral recommendations database](#).

2. The authorities should undertake efforts, in consultation with disabled persons' organizations, to facilitate the autonomous participation of all voters, including exploring options for alternative voting methods. Further steps should be taken to eliminate physical obstacles at the polling centers.
3. Political parties should review their internal policies to promote women's participation as candidates and give them prominence in the party's campaign, including through the use of public funds to support women candidates with training and alleviate the financial burdens of the campaign.
4. To enhance transparency and accountability, all routine and campaign finance contribution and expenditure reports should be made public in a timely, comprehensive, easy-to-understand and comparable manner with interim reporting requirements on campaign finance before election day.
5. Criminal provisions for defamation and insult should be replaced by proportional civil remedies. Measures should be put in place to protect media from strategic lawsuits to deter the abuse of this practice.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework and Electoral System

6. In line with previous ODIHR recommendations, consideration could be given to lowering the threshold for independent candidates in order to effectively ensure the possibility for such candidates to be elected.

Election Administration

7. In order to further enhance transparency and equality of treatment consideration could be given to opening participation in the inter-party committee to all electoral contestants
8. Disaggregated data on gender representation in the election administration at various levels, including at the polling station level, should be gathered in a comprehensive manner.
9. Paper for printing ballots, copies of electoral rolls in digital format and copies of publications of the Ministry of Interior of electoral content could be made available free of charge to all electoral contestants.
10. The Ministry of Interior, Supreme Court and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the digital service provider, should elaborate and disseminate training and outreach programs to candidates, voters abroad and the general electorate to familiarize them with online platforms and digital ID, and secure the election results transmission.

Voter Registration

11. The law should be amended to remove restrictions on voting rights on the basis of intellectual or psychosocial disability.
12. The Ministry of Interior could explore ways to maintain the electoral register so that it is more in line with the real number of voters that will participate in elections by improving ways to delete deceased voters and undertake special measures to take into account voters living abroad.

Candidate Registration

13. The candidate registration platform could be made available before registration period, in order to allow potential candidates to familiarize themselves with the use of the platform and to ease the process of registration.

Election Campaign

14. Authorities should consider further measures to incentivize the inclusion and visibility of women in party structures.

Campaign Finance

15. The legislation should set explicit terms for loans taken out by political parties and further elaborate acceptable practices for the restructuring of loans. Loans provided on advantageous terms or which are written-off should be regulated and reported as donations.
16. To enhance the transparency of its work, the Audit Committee should publish more information of public interest in a timely manner.
17. To enhance transparency and accountability, consideration should be given to extending campaign finance regulations, including reporting and disclosure requirements, to third parties.

Media

18. To protect the independence of public broadcasters, adequate legal safeguards should be introduced in legislation, which would guarantee editorial independence and ensure appointment of a professional, non-politicized management and oversight bodies.
19. Authorities could revise the legal framework on media coverage of elections to guarantee editorial freedom while respecting the right of all contestants to present their platforms in a fairer manner.

Election Dispute Resolution

20. It is recommended to further regulate election dispute resolution to ensure the due process. This includes a possibility to appeal decisions of the first instance courts, as well as timely deadlines for filing and adjudicating any election-related appeals.

Citizen and International Observation

21. The law should be amended to allow for citizen and international observation, in line with OSCE commitments.

ANNEXE I. FINAL RESULTS

Data⁹⁷	Amount	Percentage
Total number of registered voters	9,946,082	
Total number of votes cast (turnout)	6,061,098	60.94
Total number of valid votes	5,902,850	97.39
Total number of invalid votes	123,488	2.04
Total number of blank votes	34,760	0.57

Distribution of valid votes to the political parties and independent candidates and allocation of seats:

Candidate Lists	Votes	Percentage of votes	Mandates
New Democracy	2,407,860	40.79	146
SYRIZA	1,184,500	20.07	71
PASOK – Movement for Change	676,166	11.46	41
Communist Party of Greece (KKE)	426,741	7.23	26
Greek Solution	262,529	4.45	16
Victory (NIKI)	172,208	2.92	-
Sailing for Freedom	170,298	2.89	-
Day 25 – Alliance for Rupture (MeRA25)	155,085	2.63	-
Coalition for Overthrow	53,296	0.90	-
National Creation	48,087	0.81	-
United Coalition for Freedom	37,319	0.63	-
Ecological Greens – Green Unity	35,174	0.60	-
Movement 21	34,920	0.59	-
Antarsya	31,746	0.54	-
Breath of Democracy	27,578	0.47	-
Centrists Union	22,449	0.38	-
Free Again	20,429	0.35	-
Movement of the Poor	18,470	0.31	-
EAN	15,177	0.26	-
Green Movement	14,652	0.25	-
TOLMA	14,059	0.24	-
Communist Party of Greece Marxist-Leninist (KKE M-L)	12,773	0.22	-
Greek Assembly	12,749	0.22	-
KOTES	11,522	0.20	-
Unity – Truth EN.A	11,412	0.19	-
Political Initiative	6,087	0.10	-
Movement of Values – Liberal Coalition	5,874	0.10	-
Northern League	5,428	0.09	-
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Greece (M-L KKE)	3,926	0.07	-
Organisation of Internationalist Communists of Greece (OKDE)	1,950	0.03	-
Social	1,016	0.02	-
Organization for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party of Greece (OAKKE)	1,011	0.02	-
Stephanos Proitsis	155		-
New Structure (Nea Domi)	73		-
Greek Vision	27		-
Dimostenis Vergis	1		-
TOTAL	5,902,850	100	300

⁹⁷ According to the Ministry of Interior.

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, the 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).