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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION Georgia – Parliamentary Elections, Second Round, 30 October 2016

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### STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

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The 30 October run-offs were competitive and administered in a manner that respected the rights of candidates and voters, despite the lack of a legal framework for the second round. In the period between the rounds, contestation of the first round results dominated political discourse. Further, the principle of transparency and the right to effective redress were often not respected in the investigation and adjudication of election disputes by election commissions and courts. All this weakened confidence in the election administration. In the short and subdued campaign, media coverage was more balanced than for the first round. Election day procedures were conducted in a smooth and professional manner and assessed positively by observers, as election commissions were better prepared and adherence to procedures improved.

The 8 October first round of elections resulted in the election of 100 of the 150 members of parliament. Procedures for correcting protocols and deciding on recounts and annulments of results at the district level are insufficiently regulated. This led to the inconsistent application of the law and diminished stakeholders' confidence in the election administration. District Election Commission (DEC) results were generally finalized by 19 October, while in some districts court appeals were pending.

In the period following the first round election day, DECs received over 1,100 complaints mainly regarding the counting process in polling stations. Weaknesses were noted in the adjudication of complaints by DECs. Complainants were not always notified about the time and place for consideration or provided with copies of decisions and, in a number of cases, thorough investigations were not conducted, contrary to OSCE commitments on the right to effective redress and the principle of transparency. In open hearings, courts questioned their own authority to overrule election administration decisions even while acknowledging irregularities.

Repeat elections on 22 October, following a few annulments due to disruptions on the 8 October election day, were well administered, but overcrowding and, in one case, interference by party representatives, observers and media negatively impacted the atmosphere.

The Election Code does not regulate the second round. Aiming to address a few procedural gaps, the Central Election Commission (CEC) issued decrees that were, however, adopted late in the process, interpreted the law in a contentious manner, and, at times, contradicted the Election Code.

Preparations for the second round included replacing Precinct Election Commission (PEC) members who resigned or were recalled by the nominating political party and conducting refresher training for PEC leadership. Training sessions observed were well conducted and focused on addressing a number of procedural errors noted during the first round, including those by international observers. Voter lists were updated to remove recently deceased and add those who turned 18, no other corrections or changes were introduced.

The official election campaign for the second round began on 19 October following the announcement of the second round date. The campaign was more subdued with candidates putting a focus on direct

contact with voters. Electoral contestants were able to campaign freely and without restrictions or incidents. A few reported physical altercations are being investigated by law enforcement.

Election contestants must abide by the same campaign finance regulations for the second round. The post-election day deadline for reporting, however, limited the effectiveness of campaign finance oversight.

Election Code provisions regulating the media applied only during the official election campaign period. OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring showed that parties took some advantage of free airtime and none of the contestants purchased paid advertising. News coverage of the main political parties by monitored broadcasters was more balanced than during the first round. Editorial programmes were dominated by discussions about the possibility of having one party with a constitutional majority rather than the contestants' electoral platforms.

Election day procedures were generally conducted in a smooth and professional manner. The overall assessment of the process by IEOM observers was positive, as PEC members were better prepared and adherence to procedures improved, particularly during the counting. However, overcrowding inside polling stations, the presence of unauthorized persons and them interfering in the work of PECs again had a negative effect. Large crowds were gathered outside many polling stations, with observers noting possible intimidation in a few cases. More than 140 complaints were filed regarding irregularities and procedural errors as well as the expulsion of party representatives from polling stations.

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## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

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### **Background and Post-Election Developments**

On 8 October, elections were held under a mixed electoral system and contested by 25 parties and blocs as well as 816 majoritarian candidates, including 53 independent. Out of a total 150 members of parliament, 77 were elected in a single-round proportional contest. Georgian Dream (GD) with 48.68 per cent, United National Movement (UNM) with 27.11 per cent and Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (APG) with 5.01 per cent of votes passed the threshold and qualified for the proportional seat allocation. These parties/blocs obtained 44, 27 and six seats respectively.

Preliminary results of the first round of elections were accepted by the majority of contestants. Despite previous calls to boycott, UNM agreed to participate in the second round of elections and enter parliament. UNM, Nino Burjanadze – Democratic Movement (DM) and Paata Burchuladze - State for People (SP) voiced concerns about 8 October election day violations and challenged results from hundreds of polling stations across the country.

The remaining 73 single-mandate constituencies are elected in a two-round majoritarian system. In the first round, 23 candidates received the required 50 plus 1 majority of valid votes and were elected. All 23 elected deputies represent GD.

Run-offs were held on 30 October in 50 single-mandate constituencies, of which 18 were within the city of Tbilisi.<sup>1</sup> The run-offs were contested by four parties/blocs and three independent candidates.<sup>2</sup> The two main party contenders faced each other in most of the races, GD contested 49 single-mandate

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<sup>1</sup> Repeated voting for the first round was held on 22 October for single-mandate constituencies in one polling station in Marneuli and three in Zugdidi.

<sup>2</sup> Out of 100 candidates that competed in the second round, only 8 were women.

constituencies, while UNM 45. One out of the two candidates from Free Democrats (FD) and one candidate from UNM announced their desire to withdraw from the race.<sup>3</sup>

### **Tabulation of the First Round Results and Repeat Elections**

Tabulation of the first round results by the District Election Commissions (DECs) on 8 October and the following day was assessed by International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) observers more positively than the counting process. However, the issues raised in complaints from political parties and observers and the review of the complaints by the election administration and courts raised concerns regarding the administration of the process and indicated diminished confidence in the election commissions (See *Complaints and Appeals* section).

Procedures allow for correction of mistakes in the Precinct Election Commission (PEC) protocols identified by the DECs solely on the basis of an explanatory note from one PEC member describing the reasons for the mistake. A number of corrections were required because of unclear instructions on how to count voter signatures in the special voter lists (those only voting for the proportional contest) when filling the protocols for the majoritarian results. Corrections to result protocols on the basis of complaints further required a DEC decision. In many cases, DECs superficially investigated the alleged mistakes, accepted basic explanatory notes from individual PEC members contacted at a later stage and made corrections based on these explanations.

Out of 325 requests for annulment of PEC results 10 were granted. In four PECs where the annulments could have impacted the results, repeat elections for the majoritarian contests were held on 22 October.<sup>4</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed the voting and counting process in these four locations which was generally smooth and well administered, however, overcrowding with observers, party representatives and the media negatively impacted the atmosphere in these PECs.<sup>5</sup>

On 19 October, after receiving DEC results protocols, the CEC announced 30 October to be the date for the second round of elections.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

Following the 8 October election day, DECs received 1,168 complaints, mainly in regards to PEC result protocols and the way they were completed. Many complaints were of a general nature and did not provide concrete facts or evidence about the alleged violations. Those that were more grounded were mainly based on PEC results protocols not being reconciled and the way they were corrected, as well as other procedural irregularities during the counting process. The main complainants were the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (306 complaints), the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (266), DM (235) and UNM (224). Of the complaints, 297 were satisfied, 155 partially

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<sup>3</sup> On 10 October, the FD chairman and candidate in Gori, Irakli Alasania, announced his withdrawal from the race. On 23 October, an UNM candidate, Sandra Roeloffs, announced she will not continue participating in the election. However, according to the CEC interpretation withdrawals are only allowed 10 days before the first round and if a candidate makes such an application after this time his/her name will be still on the ballot and the run-offs will proceed accordingly and votes counted for the candidate.

<sup>4</sup> Repeat voting was held in two precincts of the village Jikhashkari and one precinct of the village Ganmukhuri in the Zugdidi municipality (PECs 66.67.38, 66.67.79 and 66.67.108) and one precinct of the village Kizilajlo, Marneuli municipality (PEC 36.22.48).

<sup>5</sup> Overcrowding was especially problematic in PEC 36.22.48 in Kyzylajilo, Marneuli where interference in the voting and counting process by party representatives and observers was noted. While the counting and tabulation processes were positively assessed by in Zugdidi, procedural mistakes such as failure to manage the voter list and count the votes from the mobile ballot box marred the process in Marneuli. In total eight complaints were submitted to the DEC in Marneuli, and one in Zugdidi in relation to the irregularities.

satisfied and 481 were not satisfied.<sup>6</sup> Most of the complaints contained several requests.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM was informed of 307 requests for recounts and 325 to annul PEC results. The Election Code lacks criteria for when recounts and annulments of polling results should be ordered. In the five cases where requests for recounts were granted and the 10 cases where results were annulled, these decisions were taken by DEC's in an inconsistent manner.<sup>7</sup>

In review of many cases, the DEC's did not find that the facts of violations were established but still partially satisfied the complaints by taking disciplinary action against PEC members.<sup>8</sup> The DEC's had no unified practice in applying disciplinary sanctions. Further, partially as a result of the short time given for the review of complaints and the number of complaints received by DEC's, a lack of thorough investigation was observed.<sup>9</sup> As a result most decisions were not properly reasoned, contrary to paragraph 5.11 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to legal requirements and international good practice, and in contrast with the pre-election period, not all complainants were informed about time and place for consideration of the complaints and not all DEC's provided complainants with copies of the decisions.<sup>11</sup> Taking into account that there is no obligation for DEC's to upload their decisions on the CEC register, these factors may have posed a barrier to the right to appeal, which contravenes paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.<sup>12</sup>

Thirty-two cases were appealed to district/city courts. All were rejected on substance and just five were satisfied, in part, by imposing disciplinary sanctions. Sixteen district/city court decisions were appealed to the Tbilisi and Kutaisi Courts of Appeal. A similar lack of investigation was noted at the court level. Decisions were based on the documents presented and the OSCE/ODIHR EOM did not observe any witnesses being called or any additional documentary evidence requested. In some instances, courts acknowledged during hearings that serious violations had occurred, but questioned their own authority to overrule the election administration's decisions on results and were not willing to take this responsibility.

DEC's finalized their results while some complaints were still pending review by the Court of Appeals. There are contradictory provisions in the Election Code on this matter: some articles require the DEC's to wait for final court decisions before finalizing results, while other articles allow DEC's to proceed while appeals of district and city court decisions are still pending.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In addition, 212 were left without consideration, 8 were withdrawn and 15 complaints in relation to alleged administrative offences are under review.

<sup>7</sup> DEC's need a 2/3 vote to decide on an annulment or recount. When inquiring about criteria for making these determinations, the CEC referred the OSCE/ODIHR EOM to this requirement only.

<sup>8</sup> A total of 758 requests to take disciplinary actions against PEC members were made, mainly as an additional request in the majority of complaints.

<sup>9</sup> For example, in Case #3/7552-16 from 16 October - The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association against DEC 2 (Vake), the Tbilisi City Court while upholding the DEC decision stated there was a lack of investigation by the DEC on one of the complainant's requests and obliged the DEC to pay the court fees.

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 5.11 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides "administrative decisions against a person must be fully justifiable."

<sup>11</sup> [The 2002 Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law \(Venice Commission\) Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) states that the right of both parties to participate in hearings must be protected.

<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 5.10 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides "everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity."

<sup>13</sup> See Articles 21 and 75 that contradict Article 124.

One complaint from UNM and nine from DM were submitted challenging DEC final protocols. The CEC left these complaints without consideration finding that they were submitted by unauthorized subjects.<sup>14</sup> On 23 October, the CEC published the results protocols for the proportional contest. These results were unsuccessfully appealed to Tbilisi City Court by the Labour Party, DM and APG. The Labour Party complained alleging electoral violations in the campaign period, such as the misuse of state resources, pressure on voters from the State Security Service and unlawful campaigning. The DM contested final results referring to election day irregularities and the APG questioned the outcome of the mandate allocation.<sup>15</sup>

## **Legal Framework for the Second Round**

The Election Code does not regulate procedures for the second round; it only prescribes that the second round should be conducted no later than 25 days after election day between the two candidates with the best results. The lack of regulations for the second round was noted as an issue by many stakeholders including the CEC, and gave room for subjective interpretations and inconsistencies in the application of the law.<sup>16</sup>

In light of insufficient regulation by the law, on 17 October, the CEC adopted a decree to regulate a few aspects of the election process for the second round and repeat elections. The decree determined how the voter lists would be updated, prolonged the authority of the current PECs, terminated the authority of the representatives of parties and blocs that are not running in the second round and extended the accreditation of observers. In some instances, the CEC interpreted the law while setting procedures in the decree. For example, while not explicit in the law, the decree only gives parties, blocs or candidates running in the second round the right to have PEC and DEC representatives. This interpretation was unsuccessfully appealed to the Tbilisi City Court and further to the Court of Appeals by DM.<sup>17</sup> The decree also prescribes shorter deadlines for several election procedures in contradiction to the Election Code which sets deadlines in general and not specific to just the first or the second round.<sup>18</sup>

## **Second Round Election Administration**

The late decision on regulations for the second round impacted the inclusiveness of the election administration process and the possibility for the CEC to address, in advance, issues such as PEC staffing, the timely updating of election day procedures and the holding of adequate training sessions. Still, in the limited time left when election preparations resumed, they were well managed and the deadlines were generally respected.

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<sup>14</sup> The UNM complaint was submitted by the UNM representative to the Marneuli DEC and DM's complaints were submitted by the party's representative in the CEC, the law requires that complaints be submitted by the party itself.

<sup>15</sup> On 17 October the APG submitted a complaint to the Constitutional Court claiming contradiction between the Election Code and the Constitution on procedure of the mandate allocation. The complaint was admitted. The law provides nine months for Constitutional Court to consider complaints.

<sup>16</sup> The understanding of term 'elections' used in Election Code was in some cases interpreted by the CEC as the whole process and in other instances only as the first round.

<sup>17</sup> At issue was the legality of terminating of the authority of party/bloc representatives that are not running for second round; the complaint argued that the election is a process that is only complete after the second round.

<sup>18</sup> Article 32 of the Election Code prescribes that special voter lists of electoral administration officers shall be completed no later than the fifth day before election day, but Decree #69/2016 sets a three-day deadline. Article 29 defines 15 days before election day as the last day for a PEC member to withdraw while the decree allows withdraws up to four days before the second round and three days for repeat election (the repeat election were called only three days before they were held). Article 40 paragraph 6 and 7 gives international observer organisations up to two days before election day to submit their lists of observers and five days for citizen observers while the decree allows up to three days before election day.

The CEC decree determined that the PECs established for the first round of elections shall continue to function for the repeat voting and the second round. Most of the PEC members employed for the first round of elections worked for the second round also, however, some DECAs had to reopen recruitment to fill positions that became vacant. Political parties were given the opportunity to replace their PEC members up to four days before election day. Two political parties, the DM and FD, withdrew their PEC members without replacing them.<sup>19</sup> The DECAs filled these vacant positions with non-party PEC members through an open competition.

On 23 October, only seven days before the elections, the CEC adopted a second decree to address some gaps and contradictions in the procedures for the second round election day.

The CEC training centre organized additional training for PEC members on second round election day procedures. The training sessions, observed by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, were well conducted and emphasized how to address some of the procedural shortcomings noted during the first round, including those noted by international observers.

For the second round, the Public Service Development Agency only updated the voter lists to reflect recently deceased voters and voters who turned 18. Voters were given the opportunity to check their data on the voter list on the CEC website, but there was no opportunity to request changes.

## **Campaign Environment**

The official election campaign for the second round started on 19 October, once the CEC decree establishing the date of run-offs was published. The law does not explicitly regulate the second round campaign. According to the CEC, contestants were verbally informed that the official campaign began with the call for the second round.

In the period between the two rounds, political discourse was dominated by the contestation of the first round results by the UNM and DM. In addition, the majority of stakeholders were discussing the consequences of the possible concentration of power resulting from one party having a constitutional majority in parliament. A call for support of the opposition in the second round was endorsed by two political parties.<sup>20</sup>

Electoral contestants were able to campaign freely and without restrictions. The campaign for the second round was more subdued. A few reported physical altercations are being investigated by law enforcement.<sup>21</sup> Allegations of pressure on party supporters were made but no official complaints filed. Campaign activities were mainly conducted through door-to-door canvassing, community meetings and group gatherings, aiming for more direct contact with voters. The majority of candidates increased the use of social media and the Internet in this period. New billboards and posters were placed later, only a few days prior to election day.

## **Campaign Finance**

The same campaign finance regulations apply for the second round. The State Audit Office (SAO)

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<sup>19</sup> The FD withdrew their PEC members in 21 constituencies.

<sup>20</sup> The call came from individuals, including some civil society representatives and was supported by the New Georgia and the New Political Center – Girchi parties.

<sup>21</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR EOM confirmed that police investigations are on-going regarding two incidents: on 27 October, in Akhaltsikhe and on 28 October, in Gori. Citizen observers reported police investigations are open in two additional incidents from 10 October in Kharagauli and 11 October in Tbilisi.

informed contestants that financial reports are due by 2 November. This deadline was insufficient for the proper oversight of campaign finances and made it impossible to verify and publish the reports before election day. In addition, the law does not set deadlines for the SAO to scrutinize financial reports and to publish the oversight conclusions contrary to international good practice.<sup>22</sup> For the second round, from 8 to 21 October, only two parties/blocs received donations totaling GEL 1,083,270 (approximately EUR 420,000) from 33 donors.<sup>23</sup> As of 28 October, the SAO had not received complaints related to the run-offs.

## Media

Election Code provisions regulating the media applied only during the official election campaign period.<sup>24</sup> From 9 to 18 October, media covered political developments without specific election related regulations. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring showed that throughout this period most of the political news coverage and editorial programs were devoted to the publication of and commentary on the elections results, political party reactions and restructuring, and discussions of the consequence of possibly having one party with a constitutional majority.<sup>25</sup> Among monitored broadcasters, *Rustavi 2* devoted more coverage to election-related incidents and complaints.

The Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC), the regulatory body overseeing media compliance with the law, continued to monitor broadcast media and local government funded print media between the two rounds. However, findings for this period will be published only after the second round. On 20 October, the GNCC published its fifth media monitoring report covering the period from 23 September to 8 October. Most of the detected violations were related to compliance with disclosure rules in the publication of opinion polls. In this regard, the GNCC's decisions were inconsistent, taking administrative action against *Rustavi 2* and not *Imedi* for a similar violation.<sup>26</sup>

OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring during the official campaign period showed that parties took some advantage of free airtime and none of the contestants purchased paid advertising.<sup>27</sup> While the Georgian Public Broadcaster did not conduct election debates for the second rounds, several other broadcasters tried to organize debates but found candidates were not interested in participating. Candidates and party representatives rarely presented their electoral programmes, instead discussions continued to be dominated by the topic of one party possibly having a constitutional majority. News coverage of the main political parties by monitored broadcasters was more balanced than during the first round, while there was a general decrease of coverage devoted to the Prime Minister by all TV channels.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See paragraph 200 of the [Joint OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#).

<sup>23</sup> In the reporting period, the GD received GEL 1,066,770; UNM – GEL 16,500. Of the 33 donors there was only one legal entity.

<sup>24</sup> On the two polling days: 22 and 30 October, broadcasters were not allowed to provide free airtime nor paid political advertising and had to refrain from publishing opinion polls starting from 48 hours before each polling day.

<sup>25</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR EOM continued quantitative and qualitative media monitoring of primetime coverage (18.00-24.00) of six broadcasters (*GPB-1*, *Rustavi 2*, *Imedi*, *Maestro*, *GDS* and *TV Pirveli*) between the two rounds.

<sup>26</sup> The *Rustavi 2* TV channel published an opinion poll on 1<sup>st</sup> October, while *Imedi* published two opinion polls, on 29 September and 5 October. Neither *Rustavi 2* nor *Imedi* TV complied with all requirements on the publication of opinion polls prescribed by the Election Code.

<sup>27</sup> Four political parties participated as qualified contestants for the second round: GD, UNM, FD and Topadze-Industrials, Our Homeland.

<sup>28</sup> See *Media* section of the [Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions](#) issued on the first round of the elections.



## Election Day

In a calm environment, election day procedures were conducted in a smooth and professional manner. The overall assessment of the process by the IEOM observers was positive, as PEC members were better prepared and adherence to procedures improved.

Opening was assessed positively in all but two out of 63 polling stations observed. There were noticeably fewer delays in opening. Procedures were mainly followed, but some errors, such as PECs not properly recording the number of voters in two and ballots in four instances and not assigning party representatives to observe the registration of complaints in 11 polling stations, were still observed. A wide presence of citizen observers was noted. In five cases, they and party representatives interfered in the process.

Voting was evaluated as good or very good in 97 per cent of the observed polling stations, however, overcrowding inside polling stations (five per cent), an increased presence of unauthorized persons and interference in the work of PEC members (six per cent) mainly by citizen observers (four per cent) again had a negative effect. Large numbers of people gathered outside was reported from 38 per cent of polling stations observed, and, in three per cent of observed polling stations, signs of voter intimidation were noted. A few serious irregularities were reported, such as attempts to influence voters and group voting in 10 and 8 instances respectively and indications of ballot box stuffing in one polling station. Adherence to procedures and voters' understanding of the process had significantly improved.

One party complained, submitting two official complaints to the DEC, that its representatives were expelled from more than 15 polling stations in Marneuli. While observing at a number of polling stations in question, IEOM observers only saw one person being expelled and gave overall positive assessments for these stations.

As on 8 October, IEOM observers noted a large presence of representatives of the online news portal, *Allmedia.ge*. With over 3,400 accredited representatives, *Allmedia.ge* registered by far the largest number of representatives among all observer organizations and media. *Allmedia.ge* informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that the majority of its representatives were volunteers recruited to observe and record violations on video. Granting media accreditation to *Allmedia.ge* representatives that were acting as observers raises concerns about the adequacy of the media accreditation process to prevent misuse. IEOM observers also noted clear indications of party affiliations of some citizen observers.

The counting was evaluated positively in 49 of the 53 polling stations observed. However, in three cases interference in the counting process by citizen observers and party representatives was noted. Procedural errors were observed in the recording of the number of voters (eight cases), the invalidation of unused ballots before counting (seven cases), the packing of unused and spoiled ballots (four cases). In 14 cases, the signed protocol was not posted or available for public display. An improvement was noted in the procedures for determining valid and invalid ballots, as these were consistently applied in all but two counts observed. Overall, the counting has improved as compared to the first round.

According to the CEC, more than 140 complaints were submitted to DEC's on election day. Most were filed in the Marneuli district, followed by Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Batumi. Most complaints were about mobile ballot box irregularities, the presence of unauthorized persons at PECs, campaigning in the polling stations, violation of procedures, refusal to register complaints and the expelling of observers and media representatives.



The tabulation process was assessed positively in all but one observation. In four instances, unauthorized persons were present but did not interfere in the process. The CEC posted the PEC results protocols on its website starting from 22:00 and released the first aggregated preliminary results at 9:00 on 31 October.

*The English version of this report is the only official document.  
An unofficial translation is available in Georgian.*

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#### MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Tbilisi, 31 October 2016 – This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is the result of a common endeavour involving the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the European Parliament (EP) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The assessment was made to determine whether the elections complied with OSCE commitments, Council of Europe standards, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation.

Ignacio Sanchez Amor was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and Leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. Ana Gomes headed the EP delegation. Emanuelis Zingeris headed the PACE delegation. Ambassador Alexandre Keltchewsky is the Head of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, deployed from 30 August.

Each of the institutions involved in this International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the electoral process. The final assessment of the elections will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the electoral process, including the count, tabulation and announcement of results, and the handling of possible post-election day complaints or appeals. The OSCE/ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some eight weeks after the completion of the electoral process. The OSCE PA will present its report at its Standing Committee meeting in Vienna on 23 February 2017. The EP will present its report on 7 November at the debriefing with the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs in Brussels. PACE will present its report at its Standing Committee meeting in Nicosia on 26 November.

For the second round, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM includes 14 experts in the capital and 14 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. On election day, 156 observers from 27 countries were deployed, including 112 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as an eight-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 12 member delegation from EP and seven-member delegation from PACE. Opening was observed in 60 polling stations and voting was observed in 548 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 53 polling stations, and the tabulation in 30 DECs.

The observers wish to thank the authorities for their invitation to observe the elections, and the Central Election Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the assistance. They also express their appreciation to other state institutions, political parties and civil society organizations and the international community representatives for their co-operation.

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