



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

Parliamentary Elections
11 September 2016

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission
Final Report



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**REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
11 SEPTEMBER 2016**

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an official invitation by the authorities of the Republic of Belarus, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the 11 September 2016 parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. For election day, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM joined efforts with delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Each of the institutions involved in this IEOM has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

The 11 September parliamentary elections were efficiently organized, but, despite some first steps by the authorities, a number of long-standing systemic shortcomings remain. The legal framework restricts political rights and fundamental freedoms and was interpreted in an overly restrictive manner. There was an overall increase in the number of candidates, including from the opposition, but the campaign lacked visibility. Media coverage of the campaign did not enable voters to make an informed choice. Following a timely invitation, the authorities exhibited a welcoming approach towards international observers. The composition of election commissions was not pluralistic, which undermined confidence in their independence. Voting, counting and tabulation lack procedural safeguards and were marred by a significant number of irregularities and a lack of transparency.

The constitutional and legal framework does not adequately guarantee the conduct of elections in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards. In February 2016, an Inter-agency Working Group was established to consider prior OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, signalling a willingness to engage in electoral reform. Based on the Group's proposals, the Central Election Commission (CEC) adopted six resolutions addressing a few technical aspects of the process, including publishing information about election commission sessions, decisions on electoral disputes, and election results at district level, as well as enhancing observer rights. Nonetheless, a number of key long-standing OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed, underscoring the need for comprehensive electoral reform as part of the broader democratization process, in co-operation with international partners.

The four-tiered election administration, led by the CEC, made technical preparations and passed decisions within legal deadlines. However, only a negligible number of election commission members were appointed from opposition nominees. In addition, the local executive authorities

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

had a dominant presence in leadership positions within the election administration. These factors limited confidence in the impartiality and independence of the election administration.

All citizens over 18 years of age have the right to vote, except those declared incompetent by a court, those in police custody or pre-trial detention, and those serving prison sentences regardless of the gravity of the crime or length of sentence. These blanket provisions pose disproportionate restrictions on the right to vote that are at odds with international obligations, OSCE commitments and good practice.

The CEC announced a total of 6,990,696 registered voters. Voter lists are updated by Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) based on data provided by local authorities, but are not available for public scrutiny. There is no centralized voter register, which does not enable cross-checking against multiple registrations. In addition, there is an overly permissive system for registering voters prior to and on election day, which does not protect against potential multiple-voting.

Out of 630 nominated candidates, 484 eventually stood for election and no candidate stood unopposed. This represented an increase in the number of candidates, including from the opposition. However, legal provisions for candidate registration allowed for selective implementation and were applied in an overly restrictive manner. Ninety-three prospective candidates were not registered mostly due to inaccuracies in asset and income declarations, failure to submit supporting documentation, and an insufficient number of valid support signatures. Overall, the legal provisions for candidate registration posed disproportionate and unreasonable barriers to candidacy, contrary to OSCE commitments and other international standards and good practice.

Restrictions on fundamental freedoms of association, expression and assembly narrowed the public space and negatively affected the campaign environment. Although most candidates were generally able to campaign freely within the narrow confines of the law, a high number of candidates chose not to actively campaign, contributing to broad voter apathy. On a positive note, the CEC instruction for a more permissive allocation of public venues was followed by many local authorities. However, unequal access to state and public resources for campaigning skewed the playing field for candidates. Several candidates stated that the abolishment of direct public campaign funding in 2013 reduced their outreach capacities. Collectively, these conditions limited the choice available to voters and reduced their ability to make an informed decision.

Media regulations are strict. Criminal offences of defamation, libel, insult and a ban on calls for an election boycott, including for online media, are contrary to international standards and challenge the freedom of expression. During the campaign, news programmes on state-owned media focused largely on the activities of the President and other state officials as well as political statements of the CEC Chairperson. Meanwhile, the coverage of candidates' campaign activities was virtually absent and largely limited to short pre-recorded speeches. Overall, media coverage of the campaign narrowed the opportunity for voters to effectively receive candidate information.

Some 1,600 complaints and appeals were filed with the election commissions, local authorities and courts; most on the work of the election administration, early voting, voting on election day and counting. Most complaints were not reviewed in public sessions and, contrary to the law,

very few decisions were published. Overall, the electoral dispute resolution process, as currently implemented, lacks transparency and does not ensure effective legal redress, contrary to OSCE commitments and other international standards.

Women were well-represented in the election administration. Out of the 114 women candidates standing in these elections, 38 were elected. This is more than twice the amount in the outgoing parliament and represents some 35 per cent of all members of parliament.

In total, 827 international and 32,105 citizen observers were accredited. Most citizen observers represented state-subsidized public associations, which often engaged in active campaigning of pro-government candidates. There are undue legal limitations and a tendency towards a restrictive interpretation of observers' rights by the election administration. Notably, observers were not allowed to observe all activities of election commissions, to inspect voter lists, or to receive certified copies of precinct and district result protocols. Recent CEC resolutions granted observers the right to obtain voter list information, to be placed closer to the counting table and to observe the handover of PEC result protocols. However, compliance of lower-level election commissions with these resolutions was limited.

Overall, early voting, voting, counting and tabulation lack sufficient procedural safeguards, which does not ensure that votes are cast, counted and reported genuinely, at odds with paragraph 7.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. The law provides for five days of early voting whereby voters can vote without any justification. Early voting is administered by only two PEC members and there is insufficient security of ballot boxes, ballots, and voter lists during breaks and overnight. OSCE/ODIHR EOM observers noted that in a significant number of cases, PECs recorded the aggregated voter turnout on daily protocols, contrary to the law, thus potentially inflating the turnout figure.

Election day generally proceeded in an orderly manner and voting was largely assessed positively. However, serious procedural deficiencies, inconsistencies and irregularities were observed. A large number of observers were not allowed to check voter lists, but when they could, a significant number of seemingly identical signatures were observed. There were also indications of ballot box stuffing. The count was assessed negatively in a considerable number of cases and observers were not allowed meaningful observation. The tabulation process was interrupted overnight in more than half of all District Election Commissions and was assessed negatively, primarily due to a lack of transparency and procedural irregularities.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following an official invitation by the authorities of the Republic of Belarus, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 2 August for the 11 September 2016 parliamentary elections. The EOM was headed by Tana de Zulueta and consisted of 11 experts based in Minsk and 38 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. Mission members were drawn from 21 OSCE participating States.

For election day, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM joined efforts with observer delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Europe (PACE) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Kent Härstedt was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission. Ivana Dobešová headed the OSCE PA delegation and Gisela Wurm headed the PACE delegation. In total, there were 389 observers from 38 countries, including 340 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as a 32-member delegation from the OSCE PA and a 17-member delegation from the PACE. Opening was observed in 169 polling stations and voting was observed in 1,539 of the 5,971 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 166 polling stations, and the tabulation in all 110 District Election Commissions (DECs).

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. This final report follows a Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, which was released at a press conference in Minsk on 12 September 2016.²

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM wishes to thank the authorities of Belarus for their invitation to observe the elections, and the Central Election Commission (CEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other authorities for their assistance. It also expresses its appreciation to representatives of political parties, media, civil society and other interlocutors for sharing their views. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM also wishes to express its gratitude to the diplomatic representations of OSCE participating States for their co-operation and support.

III. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

On 6 June, the President called elections for the 110-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament, for 11 September. Over the same period, 56 of the 64 members of the Council of the Republic, the upper chamber, were elected by the legislative councils at regional and Minsk city levels between 25 August and 13 September.³

The political system concentrates most decision-making power in the office of the president, who shares legislative power with the parliament, limiting the effective separation of powers.⁴ The outgoing legislature included no members of the opposition, and only five members represented political parties.⁵ All other members of parliament (MPs) were nominated by labour collectives and initiative groups of voters with 67 of them being members of the *Belaya Rus* public association. Twenty-eight MPs stood for re-election. The outgoing parliament had some 15 per cent of women MPs and 2 of 26 cabinet posts were held by women.

The elections were held in the context of a deteriorating economic situation and a challenging regional security environment. Some domestic and international interlocutors described them as a test for the country's improving relations with its international partners.

² [See all previous OSCE/ODIHR reports on Belarus.](#)

³ The president appoints the remaining eight members.

⁴ The president may adopt binding decrees and initiate laws, veto draft laws or provisions thereof and revoke laws adopted by parliament. The outgoing parliament initiated only 3 of the 417 adopted laws. In 2016 alone, 26 laws were initiated by the government, 6 by the president and none by the parliament.

⁵ Three represented the Communist Party of Belarus (CPB), one the Republican Party of Labour and Justice (RPLJ) and one the Agrarian Party.

IV. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The House of Representatives is elected for a four-year term through a one-round majoritarian system in 110 single-mandate districts. Candidates who obtain the highest number of all votes cast are elected. Candidates standing unopposed need more than 50 per cent of the votes cast to win the election. There is a 50 per cent turnout requirement at the district level for an election to be considered valid. If necessary, repeat elections are called by the CEC at least three months in advance, and the same turnout requirement is applicable.

Consideration could be given to removing the turnout requirement for elections, or at least removing it in the case of repeat elections. This would avoid the possibility of indefinitely repeating elections because of an insufficient turnout.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The primary legislation regulating parliamentary elections consists of the 1994 Constitution and the 2000 Election Code.⁶ Following legal amendments in 2013, the absolute majority electoral system was replaced by relative majority, the requirement for a second round was abolished, and candidates could be nominated in only one district. In February 2016, an Inter-Agency Working Group was established to consider prior OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on improving the electoral process.⁷ It submitted to the CEC seven proposals on a few technical aspects. The CEC adopted six resolutions, addressing some of these proposals, including publishing on the Internet information about sessions of election commissions, decisions on electoral disputes, and election results, as well as enhancing observer rights.⁸ The regulation of some issues by CEC resolutions lacked legally binding status for the executive local authorities and courts.⁹ All of these legal amendments were adopted without public consultation, contrary to paragraph 5.8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.¹⁰

To ensure legal certainty, fundamental aspects of the electoral process should be regulated by law and not by CEC resolution. Legal reform should be undertaken early enough in advance of elections through a transparent and inclusive legislative process with all relevant stakeholders.

⁶ Other applicable legislation includes the Laws on Mass Media, on Mass Events, on Political Parties, on the Applications of Citizens, the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Civil Procedure Code, as well as CEC resolutions.

⁷ The Inter-agency Working Group was established by a CEC resolution and comprised one member from each of the CEC, both chambers of parliament, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and National Centre for Legislation and Legal Research, as well as the secretariats of both chambers of parliament.

⁸ CEC resolutions Nos. 9 and 10 of 17 May 2016 and 18, 20, 21 and 22 of 8 June 2016.

⁹ For instance, CEC resolution No. 18 on the criteria for selection of election commission members was not taken into account by courts and CEC resolution No. 9 on allocation of campaign venues was not binding on local authorities. As an international good practice, see Section II.2.a of [the 2002 Council of Europe Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters \(Code of Good Practice\) which reads that](#) "apart from rules on technical matters and detail – which may be included in regulations of the executive – rules of electoral law must have at least the rank of a statute".

¹⁰ Paragraph 5.8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that the legislation will be adopted at the end of a public procedure.

The legal framework does not adequately guarantee the conduct of elections in line with OSCE commitments and international standards.¹¹ A number of key longstanding OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed, underscoring the need for comprehensive electoral reform as part of the broader democratization process. Key shortcomings include unbalanced election commissions with strong influence of the executive and insufficient transparency; undue restrictions on candidacy rights; lack of procedural safeguards for early voting, voting, counting and tabulation; undue limitations on observer rights; and inadequate electoral dispute resolution. Moreover, there is a tendency for an overly formalistic interpretation of the law, whereby everything that is not explicitly allowed is forbidden.

The legal framework should be comprehensively reviewed to address previous OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, including on the composition of election commissions, candidacy rights, observers' rights, voting, counting and tabulation. The law should be interpreted and implemented to ensure an equal playing field for contestants, genuine competition, the free expression of the will of the voters, and the integrity of the electoral process.

Moreover, the legal framework contains undue restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of association, expression and assembly, as well as other civil and political rights. Restrictions include wide discretionary powers to deny registration or deregister political parties and public associations; criminalization of unregistered activities of human rights organisations; criminal and administrative offences for defamation, libel and insult, as well as calls or acts to disrupt, cancel or postpone elections; a burdensome procedure for holding public assemblies and disproportionate sanctions for unauthorised assemblies.¹²

All relevant laws and decrees should be reviewed and amended to ensure that any restrictions on fundamental freedoms have the character of exception, are imposed only when necessary in a democratic society, are proportionate with a legitimate aim, and are not applied in an arbitrary and overly restrictive manner.

The limitations on freedom of association have resulted in denials of registration of new political parties since 2000, despite numerous applications, thus challenging paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.¹³ Overall, the role of political parties remains weak. There are 15 registered parties, as well as several political party organizing committees and other groupings that function without formal registration.

¹¹ [See previous OSCE/ODIHR election-related reports on Belarus](#) and the [2010 Joint Opinion of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission on the amendments to the Electoral Code of the Republic of Belarus](#).

¹² See the [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 21 April 2016](#); Reports [2015 A/HRC/30/3](#) and [2010 A/HRC/15/16](#) of the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Belarus and the [2012 Joint Opinion of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission on Law on Mass Events](#).

¹³ Paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits participating States to “respect the right 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”. See also paragraph 27 of the 1996 United Nations Human Rights Committee (CCPR) General Comment No. 25 to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Authorities should ensure the right of individuals and groups to establish, without undue restrictions, their own political parties or political organizations, and provide them with the necessary legal guarantees to compete with each other on an equal basis.

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections were administered by a four-tiered structure consisting of the CEC, 6 Oblast and the Minsk City Election Commissions (OECs), 110 DEC and 5,971 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), including 47 PECs at diplomatic missions abroad for out-of-country voting. The results of the out-of-country voting were allocated to DEC No. 95 in Minsk. For the first time, OECs were introduced to supervise the activities of DEC and PEC and review complaints against DEC decisions. Technical arrangements for the elections were administered efficiently and in compliance with legal deadlines. DEC and PEC trainings were conducted as well as various voter education activities. Women were well-represented in the election administration, constituting 71 per cent of PECs, 57 per cent of DEC, and 39 per cent of OECs.¹⁴ Four of the 12 CEC members are women, including the chairperson.

The CEC is a permanent body with a five-year mandate. Six CEC members are appointed by the president and six by the Council of the Republic. This challenges the autonomy of the election administration, since in practice it establishes the domination of the election administration by pro-government forces, which have a decisive majority in all commissions.¹⁵ As a result of this, opposition and civil society representatives expressed a lack of confidence in the impartiality of the election administration.

The mechanism of CEC formation should be reconsidered to provide sufficient safeguards for its independence and impartiality and to enhance public confidence in the election administration.

Since the call of elections, the CEC adopted 18 resolutions, which were published on its website. It held six public sessions open to observers and media representatives. Decisions were generally adopted unanimously and without substantive discussion. The workload was mostly undertaken by the CEC staff and two CEC members, whereas the remaining members were not engaged full-time. The CEC Chairperson made a number of biased public statements that undermined the perception of impartiality of the election administration.¹⁶

Lower-level commissions are temporary bodies appointed for a particular election. OEC, DEC and PEC members are nominated by political parties, public associations, labour collectives and

¹⁴ In 65 per cent of polling stations observed by the IEOM, the PEC chairperson was a woman.

¹⁵ See paragraph 20 of the 1996 CCPR General Comment No. 25 to the ICCPR. See also the [2006 Joint Opinion of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission on the electoral legislation of the Republic of Belarus](#).

¹⁶ For instance, the CEC Chairperson in her interview to *Stalichoye Televidenie* (CTV channel) on 18 August stated: "...because our political parties strive for power, especially the opposition. And they admit anyone. They do not care much if a person is reputable. The main thing is bayonets (people). So, among those bayonets, there are really weird people, not ordinary. Not always adequate". The CEC Chairperson was also quoted by *Interfax Agency* on 15 August, saying that "The opposition is preparing for defeat; this is why it needs to discredit the electoral system".

initiative groups of at least ten voters. According to the law, not more than one third of election commission members can be civil servants, at least one third should be political party and public association nominees, and each nominating body may have only one member in an election commission. Although the formula for the composition of election commissions *de jure* offers the opportunity to political parties and others to nominate members, it does not guarantee their appointment and, hence, a pluralistic composition of commissions.¹⁷

Moreover, the CEC introduced the “professional and political qualifications” of a nominee as criteria of membership to a lower-level election commission. This concept was subject to diverse interpretation by local authorities, which claimed to prioritize selection based on merit rather than achieving broad political representation. Only a negligible number of the appointed commission members were from opposition nominating bodies.¹⁸ Most PEC members were employees from the same workplace, often with their work supervisor serving as the PEC chairperson. Although this is not contrary to the law, such pre-existing hierarchical relationships may compromise the independence of PEC members. Political parties may nominate DEC members with the right of an advisory vote; however, most parties informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that they did not see any value in nominating such members.¹⁹

To enhance the pluralistic representation on election commissions and to promote confidence in the election administration, consideration should be given to ensuring the inclusion of commission members nominated by all contestants. To enhance the independence of election commission members, commissions should not replicate existing hierarchical relationships in public institutions.

DECs held few public sessions and part of their work was largely undertaken by the local executive authorities.²⁰ The separation between executive and electoral authorities was blurred, and there was often a public perception of no separation. Local executive officials or employees were often DEC members, including in leading positions.²¹ Almost all DEC members were located in the premises of local authorities. On several occasions, DEC and PEC trainings were conducted by senior local executive officials, who were also DEC members.²² These practices raise further concerns about the independence of the election administration from the executive.

In view of ensuring the impartiality of the election administration and increasing public trust, local executive officials should not be allowed to simultaneously serve on election commissions or intervene in their activities.

¹⁷ The 2010 Joint Opinion identified this as a “major flaw in legislation”.

¹⁸ Opposition nominees amounted to less than 0.1 per cent of the total 65,856 PEC members. PEC members included only 53 (10.4 per cent) out of the 514 nominees of 4 opposition parties: Belarusian Popular Front (BPF), Party of the Left “Just World”, Belarusian Social-Democratic Party (BSDP) “Hramada” and United Civic Party (UCP). In contrast, 3,356 (96.9 per cent) out of 3,463 nominees of the remaining 5 political parties and 24,082 (94.2 per cent) out of 25,546 nominees by 5 state-subsidized public associations were appointed.

¹⁹ DEC members with the right of advisory vote do not have the right to vote, but may attend DEC sessions, make proposals, ask questions and inspect DEC documents.

²⁰ By law, the local executive authorities are appointed by, and subordinate to the president.

²¹ In 92 DEC members, at least one of the top three positions (chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary) was held by a local authority official.

²² For example, in Homiel and Minsk. The PEC training for DEC members 91, 92 and 93 was conducted by a senior official of Zavodskoi *rayon* administration of Minsk city, who was not a DEC member.

VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens who are 18 years old by election day have the right to vote at the precinct where they reside. Individuals declared incompetent by a court decision are not eligible to vote, at odds with the object and purpose of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.²³ Citizens serving prison terms are barred from voting, regardless of the gravity of the crime or the length of the sentence, challenging the principle of proportionality.²⁴ This was partially addressed by a CEC resolution granting voting rights to citizens under arrest for up to three months. In addition, individuals in police custody or in pre-trial detention are not eligible to vote, contravening the principle of the presumption of innocence.²⁵

The blanket disenfranchisement of citizens serving prison terms regardless of the severity of the crime committed should be reconsidered to ensure proportionality between the limitation imposed and the gravity of the offense. Restrictions on the suffrage rights of those in police custody or pre-trial detention should be removed. Restrictions on the suffrage rights of persons declared mentally incompetent should be removed or decided on a case-by-case basis. The authorities should consider ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Voter registration is passive and is administered locally. There is no centralized voter register, effectively excluding the possibility for cross-checking against multiple registrations. Voter lists are compiled for each precinct by the respective local authority and updated by the PEC. Voter lists are not made available for general public scrutiny on personal data protection grounds. From 26 August, voter lists were available at polling stations for voters to verify their individual records and request changes. Voters can be added to voter lists prior to and on election day, upon presenting a valid passport with proof of residence, without a court decision, which does not safeguard against multiple registration and multiple-voting.²⁶ The total number of registered voters announced by the CEC was 6,990,696, including 4,403 out-of-country voters.

Consideration should be given to developing a centralized, computerized, and publicly available voter register in line with data protection regulations. A legal deadline for voter registration prior to election day could be introduced, with additional entries permitted only in accordance with clearly defined legal requirements subject to judicial control.

²³ Article 29 of the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) requires states to “guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others”. Belarus signed the CPRD on 28 September 2015, but has not ratified it yet. Paragraph 13.2 of the 1989 OSCE Vienna Document commits participating States to “consider acceding to... relevant international instruments”.

²⁴ Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document calls on participating States to “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”, while paragraph 24 provides that restrictions on rights and freedoms must be “strictly proportionate to the aim of the law”. See also Paragraph 14 of CCPR General Comment No. 25 to the ICCPR and Section I.1.1.d.iii of [the 2002 Council of Europe Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters \(Code of Good Practice\)](#).

²⁵ Paragraph 5.19 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states: “everyone will be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law”.

²⁶ Section I.1.1.2.iv. of the Code of Good Practice recommends that “there should be an administrative procedure – subject to judicial control – or a judicial procedure enabling electors not on the register to have their names included... In any event polling stations should not be permitted to register voters on election day itself”.

VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Eligible voters who are 21 years old by election day and have permanent residence in Belarus may stand for election. Individuals with an unexpunged criminal record are ineligible, which constitutes a disproportionate restriction on suffrage rights.²⁷ A candidate may be nominated by a political party, labour collective, an initiative group of at least ten voters with at least 1,000 supporting signatures, or any combination of these means.

To ensure suffrage rights, restrictions on the right to stand of individuals with an unexpunged criminal record should be reviewed. Such restrictions should apply for only the most serious of offences.

Out of 630 nominated candidates, 525 were registered and 484 eventually stood for election with no candidate standing unopposed.²⁸ This represented an increase in the number of registered candidates, including from the opposition. Out of all candidates standing in these elections, 308 were nominated by 9 political parties.²⁹ Most of the candidates nominated by labour collectives and initiative groups were members of the *Belaya Rus* public association.³⁰ Out of 129 registered women candidates, 114 eventually stood for election. There are no special measures in place to increase women's participation, and nominating bodies are under no obligation to nominate women candidates.

The legal provisions for candidate registration, particularly concerning financial statements and collection of support signatures, allowed for selective implementation and arbitrary decisions, contravening paragraphs 7.5 and 24 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and other international standards and good practice.³¹

In total, 93 nominees were denied registration: 38 because of inaccuracies in their financial declarations; 34 because of invalid or an insufficient number of valid signatures; 17 because of a failure to submit all required documentation; 2 because of an unexpunged criminal record; 1 for having received warnings; and 1 for failing to meet the residency requirement. The OECs and the courts overturned 4 of the 34 challenged denied registrations. Later, one candidate was deregistered for not taking leave from work during the campaign and 40 candidates withdrew.³²

²⁷ Section 1.1.d of the Code of Good Practice recommends that the “deprivation of the right to stand for election must be based on a criminal conviction for a serious offence”. See also Paragraph 15 of CCPR General Comment No. 25 to the ICCPR and Paragraph 24 the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

²⁸ Of the 525 registered candidates, 308 were nominated by political parties, 31 by labour collectives, 80 by initiative groups. Eighty-nine were jointly nominated by initiative groups and labour collectives, 21 jointly by initiative groups and political parties, and 12 by all three means. Before registration, 16 candidates withdrew.

²⁹ In addition, candidates affiliated with the public association For Freedom Movement (FFM), the non-registered Tell the Truth! (TT) campaign and the Belarusian Christian-Democracy (BCD) were nominated by initiative groups, political parties or both.

³⁰ Eighty-four candidates were members of *Belaya Rus*, which stated its support of an additional fifteen candidates. A number of candidates were members of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) and other state-subsidized public associations.

³¹ Paragraph 7.5 calls on participating States to “respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination.” Section I.1.1.d.iii. of the Code of Good Practice recommends that the proportionality principle must be observed when depriving an individual of the right to be elected.

³² An LDP candidate in DEC 86 was deregistered for not taking a leave of absence.

DECs are responsible for registering candidates and have wide discretionary powers in this process, which raises concerns about an inconsistent application of the law and unequal treatment of candidates.³³ DECs often applied an overly restrictive interpretation of the law and a formalistic approach to deny registration.³⁴ In addition, DECs did not enable nominees to correct errors in their applications, including on their asset declarations, as prescribed by law.³⁵

To enhance inclusiveness and transparency, the Election Code should provide clear and reasonable criteria and mechanisms for candidate registration. Minor inaccuracies in candidates' financial declarations should not lead to automatic disqualification and candidates should be provided an opportunity to correct minor or technical mistakes in their applications.

A prospective candidate is required to submit at least 1,000 supporting signatures, which exceeds one per cent of the total number of registered voters in a district, at odds with international good practice.³⁶ The rules for signature verification are unclear and allow for arbitrary decisions by DECs, which cannot be challenged.³⁷ DECs were required to check only a sample of the submitted supporting signatures.³⁸ Citizen observers informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that they were not allowed to observe most aspects of candidate registration, including the verification of signatures and financial declarations, thus reducing stakeholder confidence in key aspects of the process. Some potential candidates were issued warnings for distributing materials and other activities during signature collection, which in one case, led to the denial of registration.³⁹ Several interlocutors informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that state-subsidized public associations participated in signature collection for some nominees and that signatures were also collected at state enterprises and public institutions.⁴⁰

³³ According to Article 68.1 of the Election Code, grounds for the mandatory denial of registration include: unexpunged criminal record, missing documentation, use of foreign funds and insufficient number of valid signatures. Grounds for optional denial include: inaccurate income and asset declaration, abuse of office for election purposes, misuse of administrative resources, rewarding or coercing voters during signature collection and repeated warnings received by a candidate or an initiative group.

³⁴ DECs 15, 19, 55 and 96 denied registration to four candidates for not submitting all their supporting documents simultaneously. In two cases, the documents were submitted in two separate deliveries. Other candidates were denied for submitting non-certified documents, although there is no legal requirement for certification, for grammatical mistakes in their applications, or for failing to submit a copy of the nominating party's charter.

³⁵ Article 66 of the Election Code allows candidates to make corrections to income and asset declarations, but DECs are not obliged to notify candidates about inaccuracies and did not do so.

³⁶ See Section I.1.3.ii. of the Code of Good Practice.

³⁷ DECs verify 20 per cent of the required minimum number of signatures (200 of 1,000). If more than 30 signatures (15 per cent) are invalid, DECs examine an additional 150 (15 per cent of the 1,000). If the total number of invalid signatures exceeds 53 (15 per cent of the 350 verified), registration is denied, even if the candidate still has over 1,000 valid signatures. Three candidates were denied for submitting 999 signatures, often signatures were considered invalid because the date was in different handwriting, the district names or first names were not written in full or not in all entries.

³⁸ Section I.1.3.iv. of the Code of Good Practice recommends that the checking of signatures should be governed by clear rules, it must cover all signatures and once it has been established that the requisite number of signatures has been verified, the remaining signatures need not be checked. See also the [European Court of Human Rights judgment *Tahirov v. Azerbaijan*, Final judgment 11/09/2015.](#)

³⁹ For instance, one candidate in district No. 101 was issued two warnings, one for holding a concert and the other for distributing business cards and newspapers during the collection of signatures.

⁴⁰ Reported in Babrujsk, Brest, Dzyarzhynsk, Haradok, Homiel, Krychaw, Mahilioŭ, Mazyr, Minsk, Polack, Sienica, Škłoŭ, Slutsk, Viciebsk.

Consideration should be given to reducing the requisite number of supporting signatures for registration, introducing clear and reasonable criteria for verification, and ensuring equal conditions for signature collection. Consideration could also be given to introducing an alternative requirement, such as a reasonable financial deposit that is refunded if the candidate obtains a certain amount of votes.

VIII. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The campaign started after the registration of candidates, which was completed on 11 August, and ended at midnight on 10 September. It took place in a highly regulated environment, with restrictions on fundamental freedoms of association, expression and assembly narrowing the public space and having an adverse effect on the campaign environment. While candidates and their proxies were able to hold public assemblies after submitting notification to the appropriate local authorities, other electoral actors required permission to organize events.⁴¹ Local authorities designated locations for campaign events, as well as space for the display of candidates' printed materials.⁴² On a positive note, the CEC's non-binding instruction for a more permissive allocation of public venues was followed by many local authorities. However, some candidates claimed that their competitors pre-booked campaign venues for extended periods of time, while several others deemed the designated locations unsuitable for campaigning.⁴³

In order to ensure the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, the notification procedure for staging events should be applied equally to all stakeholders and be widened to include pre- and post- election activities.

DECs compile data and publish candidate information posters, which are distributed to voters and displayed inside polling stations and in designated locations. Several candidates criticized the standardization of biographic data without the candidates' ability to edit content.⁴⁴ For the first time, candidates' criminal records were included on joint information posters: a practice with a potential to stigmatize candidates. A number of printing houses refused to print candidates' campaign materials or deferred printing to authorisation from the DEC.⁴⁵

To ensure effective exercise of the freedom of expression and to enable voters to make an informed choice, all candidates should be free to craft their campaign messages to the electorate within the limits of the law. Information about candidates or their programmes should not be subject to review by election commissions or any other body.

⁴¹ Paragraph 9.2 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document provides that "everyone will have the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration... any restrictions will be prescribed by law and consistent with international standards". Article 21 of the ICCPR guarantees the right of peaceful assembly without undue restrictions.

⁴² In addition, candidates may use their own campaign funds to rent premises for meetings, but in practice few did.

⁴³ The former was reported in Minsk and Orša, the latter in Viciebsk and Orša.

⁴⁴ A candidate in Orša, leader of the Belarusian Party of the Left 'Fair World', filed a complaint with the DEC on the deletion of parts of his biography on the DEC information poster. Similar cases were reported in Homiel, Hrodna, Mahilioŭ, Mazyr, Minsk and Pinsk and Viciebsk.

⁴⁵ Observed in Mahilioŭ and Minsk.

Prevalent instances of the misuse of administrative resources, noted by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, resulted in unequal opportunities for candidates. Some candidates enjoyed privileged access to state enterprises and institutions for campaign events, with some cases of employees being pressured to attend.⁴⁶ Representatives and members of state-subsidized public associations actively campaigned for some candidates.⁴⁷ Many DEC and PEC members acted as moderators for campaign events, and some displayed bias towards select candidates during such meetings.⁴⁸ Several outgoing MPs who sought re-election used the parliament's website for campaign purposes. These practices contravene Article 73 of the Election Code and paragraphs 5.4 and 7.6 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁴⁹

Authorities should ensure a clear separation of the State and candidates, as well as guarantee equal treatment of contestants before the law. Campaigning should take place without abuse of official position, pressured involvement of employees, or support from state-owned enterprises or state-subsidized associations.

Some candidates' campaigns faced impediments that raised concerns about voters' ability to cast their vote "free of fear of retribution" as required by paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁵⁰ Some OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors indicated that the recent arrest of an alleged participant in election-related protests in December 2010, as well as the filming by the authorities of signature collection and campaign events, as observed by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, served to intimidate candidates and voters.⁵¹ A number of candidates and supporters were subject to administrative fines and warnings for participating in unauthorized campaign events and failing to include required data on campaign materials.⁵² On 12 September, several activists were detained on their way to a post-election protest rally in Minsk.

Authorities should ensure that candidates and voters are able to exercise their right to assemble and express or receive information without fear of retribution, administrative action or intimidation.

⁴⁶ Observed in Babrujsk, Baranavičy, Brest, Homiel, Mazyr, Mahilioŭ, Minsk, Orša, Pinsk and Sluck.

⁴⁷ Observed in Baranavičy, Brest, Homiel, Hrodna, Mazyr, Minsk and Viciebsk.

⁴⁸ Observed in Babrujsk, Baranavičy Mahilioŭ, Minsk, Mozyr and Viciebsk.

⁴⁹ Paragraph 5.4 requires "a clear separation between the State and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State". Paragraph 7.6 commits participating States to "respect the right 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". See also [the 2016 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes](#).

⁵⁰ Paragraph 7.7 commits participating States to "ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution".

⁵¹ Reported in Homiel, Minsk, Pinsk and Viciebsk. In June, another alleged participant in the December 2010 protests was arrested and charged with rioting.

⁵² For instance, a UCP candidate in Minsk received three fines during signature collection. In addition, three other candidates were charged with participation in an unsanctioned event during signature collection. Charges were later dropped, but the investigation was again reopened a week before the elections.

The low-level of campaign visibility and an apparent public disinterest in the elections raised concerns about voters' ability to make an informed choice. Turnout was notably low at many of the 39 observed campaign events, although higher attendance was recorded at most events for candidates who were members of the *Belaya Rus* public association. Many candidates did not campaign, which led some OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors to question their genuineness.⁵³ Where observed, campaign methods included holding small meetings with voters, displaying posters in shop windows, and door-to-door distribution of campaign flyers. A small number of billboards appeared in the last two weeks before election day. Publishing opinion polls is prohibited in the last five days before election day.⁵⁴

Although the law allows for free and full discussion of campaign programmes, the CEC Chairperson warned candidates against campaigning on political party platforms rather than constituency topics.⁵⁵ Some contestants expressed a lack of confidence in the integrity of the electoral process and stated that their participation was intended only to make use of outreach opportunities that are otherwise unavailable outside of the campaign period. The opposition 'Centre Right Coalition' representing the UCP, FFM and the non-registered BCD issued a statement signed by over 80 candidates denouncing the conduct of the elections, the limited role of the parliament, and the ongoing suppression of freedoms of assembly, association and expression.⁵⁶ Several candidates who withdrew cited similar concerns as reasons for their withdrawals.

IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

These were the first parliamentary elections with no direct public campaign funding available to candidates and several OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors cited the lack of adequate funding as a serious impediment to their ability to campaign.⁵⁷ However, the law provides for indirect public financing to candidates on an equal basis in the form of free access to premises for campaign events, campaign materials and access to media.

Candidates were permitted to fund campaigns from their own resources as well as through private donations of up to BYN 105 by an individual and BYN 210 by a legal entity.⁵⁸ The total expenditure ceiling for a candidate was BYN 21,000. All financial transactions had to be conducted through dedicated campaign accounts. Prospective candidates were not allowed to open campaign funds early in order to finance signature collection and fundraise for the campaign, which impeded their outreach capacities. Direct or indirect funding of the campaign by foreign, anonymous, state sources and foreign-funded organizations is prohibited. DEC's may deregister a candidate for exceeding the spending limit by more than 20 per cent, for using funds outside the campaign account, or for using foreign funds or material assistance. Whereas

⁵³ Reported in Brest, Homiel, Mahilioŭ, Minsk, Pinsk and Viciebsk.

⁵⁴ The independent polling firm IISEPS, operating in Lithuania since its deregistration in Belarus in 2005, ceased all activities in early August 2016, after *BTVI* claimed the organization manufactured poll results.

⁵⁵ See the statement by the CEC Chairperson on tut.by on 19 August 2016.

⁵⁶ See [the statement by the opposition 'Centre Right Coalition.'](#)

⁵⁷ See paragraph 176 of [the Joint 2011 OSCE/ODIHR Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) related to public campaign funding, which notes the potential of public funding to strengthen political pluralism.

⁵⁸ EUR 1 equals approximately 2.18 Belarusian Rubles (BYN).

charities, religious and state-funded organizations are not allowed to donate, several state-subsidized public associations campaigned for some candidates.⁵⁹

Consideration could be given to re-introducing direct public campaign financing as a means to level the playing field among candidates. Prospective candidates should be allowed to open campaign funds before registration to be able to finance activities related to signature collection and fundraise for their campaigns.

OECs, DECAs and financial authorities were responsible to oversee compliance with campaign finance regulations. Banks were obliged to report to DECAs on a weekly basis on campaign fund transactions, but this information was not always published, as required by law. Most candidates submitted their first financial reports to the DECAs ten days prior to the elections and their second reports five days after the elections, as required by law. However, the law does not require these reports to be made public or to be audited, which limits the overall transparency and accountability of campaign finances and falls short of international obligations and good practice.⁶⁰

To enhance transparency, campaign finance reports, including all income and expenditure, should be published in a timely manner. An independent, impartial and professional body should audit campaign finance reports on the basis of fair and objective criteria.

X. MEDIA

A. OVERVIEW

Some 723 newspapers, 174 radio, 100 television stations, 9 news agencies and a number of online news portals are available in Belarus.⁶¹ Television is the primary source of information and the state-owned *Beltele Radio Company* (BTRC) is the largest media company, which dominates the broadcast media landscape. Newspapers are distributed mainly through state networks that favour state-owned publications and have gradually excluded independent print media from the market. Private media outlets have a limited impact and are frequently subject to pressure from the authorities.⁶² In the absence of independent broadcast media, online media increasingly serve as an alternative source of political and election-related information.

Journalists require accreditation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work for foreign media and Belarusian media based abroad, while those working for national media cannot simultaneously work for foreign media.⁶³ Freelancers are not considered journalists and cannot

⁵⁹ Reported in Homiel, Mahilioŭ, Minsk, Pinsk, Polack and Sluck.

⁶⁰ Article 7.3 of the 2003 UN Convention against Corruption obliges states to “consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures... to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office”. See also paragraph 201 of the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation.

⁶¹ Registered as of August 2016.

⁶² Administrative methods include selective tax inspections, overly cumbersome licensing and registration requirements, refusal of accreditations, fines, limited access to online media and warnings. See also [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 21 April 2016](#).

⁶³ Article 35 of the Mass Media Law and Article 5 of the Regulation for accreditation of foreign journalists.

obtain accreditation. If they report from within the country, they face fines and pressure and may be charged with illegal production and distribution of mass media products.⁶⁴ The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) has called on the authorities to facilitate the work of journalists, to not obstruct their activities and intimidate them, and to cease imposing restrictive measures on freelance journalists.⁶⁵

The accreditation of journalists should be reconsidered in view of improving their working conditions rather than functioning as a work permit. Freelance and online journalists should enjoy the same status of other journalists without discrimination.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The media environment is characterized by a restrictive legal framework challenging the freedoms of expression and the press. The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, prohibits censorship and establishes the right to receive, store and disseminate information. However, contrary to international standards and previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, the Criminal Code still contains broad provisions on defamation, libel, insult and a ban on calls for an election boycott.⁶⁶ Mass media and Internet outlets may be sanctioned for publishing or broadcasting calls for an election boycott, including candidates' campaign programmes and speeches with such content. Since 2014, online media outlets have the same obligations and are subject to the same restrictions as traditional media, except for the requirement of registration. Moreover, the Ministry of Information has wide discretionary powers to limit access to websites without a court decision. The OSCE RFoM criticized the new regulations for undermining free speech on the Internet.⁶⁷

The legal framework for media should be reformed to ensure full protection of the principle of freedom of speech and the press, both for offline and online media. Defamation should be decriminalized.

State media are obliged to provide equal opportunity to all candidates from the time of their registration. Candidates were entitled to a single free five-minute speech on state radio and state television between 15 August till 2 September and they could participate in television debates with other candidates from the same district.⁶⁸ They also had the right to have their campaign programmes published free-of-charge by nationwide and regional state-owned newspapers and to purchase time and space in traditional and online media outlets.

The Media Supervisory Board (MSB) was established to oversee the media coverage of the campaign and to review media-related disputes.⁶⁹ It was chaired by the Deputy Minister of

⁶⁴ Article 1 of the Mass Media Law defines a journalist as an individual regularly contracted by a registered media outlet.

⁶⁵ See OSCE RFoM statements from [22 December 2014](#), [3 January 2015](#) and [27 January 2016](#).

⁶⁶ Paragraph 47 of the 2011 CCPR General Comment No. 34 to Article 19 of the ICCPR states that "defamation laws must be crafted with care to ensure that they do not serve, in practice, to stifle freedom of expression... States parties should consider the decriminalization 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".

⁶⁷ See OSCE RFoM statement from [17 June 2014](#).

⁶⁸ CEC resolution No. 32 as of 28 June 2016.

⁶⁹ CEC resolution No. 33 as of 28 June 2016.

Information and comprised seven additional members, including six state-owned media representatives and, for the first time, one from the Belarusian Association of Journalists. The MSB does not conduct systematic media monitoring and it may issue non-binding recommendations to the CEC and media outlets. It held three sessions conducted by the CEC Chairperson, who is not a member of the Board. It reviewed four media-related complaints concerning candidates' campaign programmes. Of them, two were dismissed and two were addressed by recommendations.⁷⁰ The composition of the MSB does not ensure impartiality and the lack of systematic media monitoring does not ensure its effectiveness.

Consideration should be given to ensuring a more balanced MSB membership by including private media professionals and additional civil society representatives. The MSB should be mandated and sufficiently resourced to conduct comprehensive media monitoring during the election campaign so as to more effectively fulfil its role.

C. MEDIA MONITORING RESULTS



From 11 August to 11 September, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM conducted a quantitative and qualitative media monitoring of 11 media outlets and 10 online news portals.⁷¹ Overall, the monitored state media provided very limited coverage of the election campaign and failed to enable voters to make an informed choice, at odds with international standards.⁷² Except for free airtime slots, broadcast coverage of candidates' campaign activities was virtually absent from news and political programmes. Monitored state TV channels dedicated 82 per cent of their coverage to the President and government officials and 17 per cent to the CEC Chairperson, whereas candidates altogether received 1 per cent of the primetime political coverage and were only mentioned collectively with no reference to individuals. A similar tendency was noted on the state-owned *Radio 1* channel. In contrast, the monitored private media, including main online media, provided comprehensive and diverse information on campaign activities and election contestants.⁷³ Although permitted in both private and state media outlets, only a few candidates purchased paid political advertising.

State-owned media should provide impartial and balanced coverage in their news and political programmes to all contestants and should provide voters with sufficient information to make an informed choice. To achieve this, the competent authorities could develop policy guidance and training for electoral periods.

⁷⁰ Both recommendations were addressed to the editor of *Hrodzenskaya Prawda* newspaper for publishing campaign material before the candidates' registration.

⁷¹ TV channels: *Belarus 1*, *Belarus 3*, *ONT*, *CTV*; Radio channels: *Radio 1*, *Euroradio* and Newspapers: *Zvyazda*, *Narodnaya Volya*, *Sovetskaya Belorussia (SB. Belarus Segodnya)*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and *Biel Hazieta*. Online media outlets: *news.tut.by*, *belta.by*, *charter97.org*, *Interfax.by*, *nn.by*, *euroradio.fm*, *sputnik.by*, *belaruspartisan.org*, *svaboda.org*, *naviny.by*.

⁷² Paragraph 7.8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document calls on participating States to "provide that no legal or administrative obstacle stands in the way of unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process.". See also Paragraphs 16 and 20 of the 2011 CCPR General Comment No. 34 to Article 19 of the ICCPR. See also [Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation No \(99\)15 on Measures concerning Media coverage of elections campaign](#) and [UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression reports](#) (1999-2009).

⁷³ Notably, *Euroradio*, *Narodnaya Volya*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *tut.by*, *naviny.by*, *Interfax.by*.

A total of 109 candidates did not make use of their free airtime and 257 did not participate in debates, whereas some were denied broadcasting.⁷⁴ The schedules of candidates' airtime addresses and debates were made available by the majority of state broadcasters. Candidate access to online media is not regulated by law. For this reason, candidates' free airtime addresses were not streamed or uploaded on state broadcasters' websites.⁷⁵ On 9 September, the Minister of Information announced that measures would be taken against some online media that "exhibited destructive behaviours" during the campaign. On election day, three websites were unavailable for a few hours.⁷⁶ Moreover, two journalists were expelled from polling stations during counting.⁷⁷

XI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Election Code does not provide for a clear complaints and appeals procedure with a single hierarchical structure. Subsequently, there was often confusion among stakeholders about the adjudicating body and several complaints were filed with non-competent bodies.⁷⁸ Actions and decisions of election commissions may be challenged at higher commissions and some types of decisions may be appealed to the courts.⁷⁹ The Supreme Court has jurisdiction over CEC decisions, whereas Oblast courts have jurisdiction over decisions of corresponding OECs. Irregularities in voter lists and PEC composition fall under the purview of regional (*rayon*) and town (*gorodskoy*) courts. Not all decisions and actions of election commissions may be challenged, including on aspects of candidate registration and election results, which impairs the effectiveness of legal redress.

Consideration should be given to revising the Election Code to provide a dedicated section on to complaints and appeals that ensures a systematic and simple framework of all mechanisms for legal redress in one hierarchical and clear structure. Amendments should ensure that all acts, omissions and decisions of election commissions are subject to judicial appeal.

Complaints are filed and reviewed within three days. Complaints requiring additional verification are reviewed within ten days whereas complaints received on election day should be reviewed immediately. The three-day deadline for filing complaints was effectively reduced due to a restrictive interpretation.⁸⁰ By law candidates, proxies, voters, public associations, political parties and observers have the right to lodge complaints and appeals. However, in practice, the right to file complaints is limited to those whose personal electoral rights are directly impacted.

⁷⁴ Belarus 3 denied broadcasting to two UCP candidates. In addition, some 15 print media outlets refused to publish or edited the electoral programmes of a number of candidates.

⁷⁵ In addition, on 18 August, the political message of a candidate was blocked on *YouTube.com*, following a BTRC copyright infringement complaint.

⁷⁶ Namely, *udf.by*, *Belaruspartisan.org* and *Charter97.org*. The last two are not registered in Belarus.

⁷⁷ Namely, two *Nasha Niva* and *EuroRadio* journalists. The latter was readmitted after contacting the CEC.

⁷⁸ For instance, whereas a request for a recount is filed to the OEC, a request for results invalidation is filed to the DEC. On voter lists, there is overlapping jurisdiction between the courts and election commissions.

⁷⁹ For the first time, warnings issued to candidates could be challenged in court.

⁸⁰ At least six complaints were dismissed on the grounds that the three-day deadline starts on the day of the decision. Upon an appeal filed by a candidate, the Supreme Court ruled that the three-day deadline for lodging an appeal starts immediately when the decision is issued. This is contrary to Article 150 of the Civil Proceedings Code, which prescribes that the deadline starts on the first working day after the decision.

For instance, only candidates may request recounts and invalidation of the election results in their district.⁸¹ This leaves other election stakeholders without the opportunity to challenge the validity of the results and is not in line with OSCE commitments and international good practice.⁸²

Every voter, candidate, and political party should have the right to lodge a complaint on every aspect of the electoral process. The deadlines for filing complaints should be suited to the pace and context of an electoral process so as to ensure ensure the right to effective remedy.

Prior to early voting and election day, 545 election-related applications, complaints and appeals were filed with election commissions, local authorities and courts. Of these, 38 complaints and 21 appeals were filed against denials of candidate registration, and 4 denials were overturned by the court. An additional 24 complaints were filed against the refusal of nominees to election commissions and all were rejected without substantial review.⁸³ A further 191 complaints were filed on the activities of election commissions, 108 on campaign irregularities and 32 on the accreditation and activities of observers; most were dismissed or rejected.

Complaints and appeals filed to the CEC were not discussed in public sessions and were dealt with by the CEC staff, which did not provide transparency and undermined the mandate of the CEC. OECs and DECc did not always review complaints in public sessions, whereas court hearings took place with formal observance of due process. However, in many cases, the review of complaints was marked by a formalistic application of law.⁸⁴ The CEC used wide discretionary powers to interpret the law at times in an inconsistent manner.⁸⁵ The CEC published statistics on complaints, but not on decisions, contrary to its resolution on the matter.⁸⁶ A few OEC and DEC decisions on complaints were published. Overall, the dispute resolution mechanisms, as currently implemented, lack transparency and do not ensure effective legal redress, at odds with paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and Article 2.1 of the ICCPR.⁸⁷

⁸¹ The CEC decision invalidating results can be appealed at the Supreme Court, while the decision validating election results cannot be challenged.

⁸² Paragraph 18.2 of the 1991 OSCE Moscow Document states that “everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”. Paragraph II.3.3.f of the Code of Good Practice recommends that “all candidates and all voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal. A reasonable quorum may be imposed for appeals by voters on the results of elections”.

⁸³ The courts only assessed whether the local executive authorities followed the procedural rules for appointing PEC members. They did not assess whether the criteria for appointment were met.

⁸⁴ For instance, the Court dismissed as inadmissible a complaint filed by the deputy chair of a political party instead of the chair.

⁸⁵ In one case (Ushakov), the CEC stated that the inaccurate biographical information for the joint information posters is not a violation whereas in another case (Kuzmin), the CEC stated the opposite.

⁸⁶ CEC resolution No. 22 as of 8 June 2016. Article 14.1 of the ICCPR stipulates that “any judgement rendered in a suit at law shall be made public”.

⁸⁷ Paragraph 5.10 commits participating States to provide everyone with “effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”. Article 2.1 of the ICCPR reads that “to ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy”. See also Section II.3.3 of the Code of Good Practice.

In view of enhancing the transparency of dispute resolution, complaints and appeals should be reviewed by election commissions and courts in the presence of the concerned parties and decisions should be published in a timely manner. All judicial proceedings should be public.

XII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION

Citizen observers may be nominated by political parties, public associations, labour collectives and initiative groups of at least ten voters. Candidates may not nominate observers, but their proxies may be present.⁸⁸ International observer organizations may not be accredited without a prior invitation by the authorities.

The rights of observers prescribed by the Election Code are often subject to an overly restrictive interpretation by the election administration at odds with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and international good practice.⁸⁹ Unlike international observers, citizen observers are entitled to observe only at the election commission to which they are accredited. Observers are not allowed to observe all activities of commissions, to inspect the voter lists, or to receive certified copies of PEC and DEC protocols.⁹⁰ Recent CEC resolutions granted observers the right to obtain voter list information, to be placed closer to the counting table and to observe the handover of PEC result protocols. However, PECs often did not comply with these resolutions (See *Early Voting and Election Day*).

Measures should be taken to ensure unrestricted access of observers to all aspects of the electoral process. Observers should be able to observe the entire working process of election commissions, including verification of signatures and other documents for candidate registration, inspect voter lists, and receive certified copies of election commission protocols.

A total of 827 international and 32,105 citizen observers were accredited.⁹¹ Of them, 24,000 represented state-subsidized public associations, which often were also engaged in campaigning for pro-government candidates. During early voting and election day, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM received numerous statements from observers nominated by public associations asserting that the elections were conducted in line with the Election Code.

The Right to Choose and the Human Rights Defenders for Fair Elections (HRDFE) were the most active non-governmental organizations with about 3,000 observers in total. These groups carried out long-term observation and published periodic reports on their findings. During early

⁸⁸ A candidate may have up to 15 proxies; an inadequate number to observe all PECs in his/her district. For example, the largest district (DEC 39) includes 121 polling stations and the smallest (DEC 102) has 26.

⁸⁹ Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states provides that “the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place”. See also the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

⁹⁰ On several occasions, citizen observers were not able to attend the entire process of candidate registration, including verification of signatures and financial declarations, and MSB sessions.

⁹¹ Namely, the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) registered 6,170 observers, the Belarusian Federation of Professional Unions of Belarus – 5,040, Belaya Rus – 4,261, Belarusian Women’s Union – 2,473, Belarusian Association of Veterans – 3,070, Belarusian Helsinki Committee – 53. The remaining observers were nominated by political parties, public associations, labour collectives and initiative groups.

voting and election day, 35 citizen observers were expelled from polling stations or had their accreditation revoked, and one observer was detained by police.⁹²

XIII. EARLY VOTING AND ELECTION DAY

A. EARLY VOTING

The law provides for five days of early voting prior to election day, whereby all voters can vote without any justification.⁹³ Some regulations to promote the integrity of early voting are in place, including the completion and posting of daily protocols, sealing of ballot boxes, and overnight storage of ballot boxes in a safe or metal box.⁹⁴ However, these are not comprehensive. For example, early voting is administered only by two PEC members (as opposed to two-thirds of PEC members on election day) and the sealing of ballot boxes during breaks and overnight is inadequate. Moreover, campaign materials and activities are not prohibited in polling stations during early voting.

The IEOM observed the last day of early voting in a systematic manner. On average, two observers from public associations were present in PECs observed, whereas observers from non-governmental organizations were present in 10 per cent of PECs.

Key regulations for early voting were not always followed. In almost half of the PECs, observers reported that the ballot box was not secured in a safe or metal box during breaks, as required by law. In addition, shortcomings were noted with the completion of the daily protocols. Contrary to the law, 16 per cent of the observed PECs recorded the aggregated rather than the daily turnout figure in the daily protocols, potentially resulting in an inflated voter turnout. In cases where observers were allowed to inspect the voter lists, the number of signatures was significantly lower than the turnout reported by the PECs. Contrary to the law, in 17 per cent of cases, the daily protocols were not publicly displayed and in some 7 per cent of PECs, observers were not allowed to take photos of the protocols. The law does not require that the daily protocols remain in public display until closing, which does not guarantee the accountability of the process. At the close of early voting, the CEC announced voter turnout at 31 per cent. Turnout was significantly higher in PECs assigned to voters in state enterprises and public institutions, including student dormitories, where there were credible allegations and observations of voters being coerced to vote.

Early voting should be conducted with the same safeguards as election day, including a PEC quorum and without breaks. Daily protocols should include the number of voters registered on the voter list, those added and those who voted. They should remain publicly posted until after the end of counting and until the deadline for filing complaints.

⁹² This includes 31 observers from the Right to Choose and 4 from the HRDFE. A Right to Choose observer was detained for three days for video recording at PEC 626 in Minsk.

⁹³ Early voting takes place from the Tuesday to Saturday before election day, from 10.00-14.00 and 16.00-19.00.

⁹⁴ The law requires that only the number of received ballots and the number of voters who have received a ballot are recorded on the daily PEC protocol for early voting.

B. OPENING AND VOTING

Election day generally proceeded in an efficient manner. Almost all observed PECs opened on time. Overall, the opening and voting processes were generally assessed positively in 94 per cent of observations. However, the integrity of the process was not always guaranteed. PEC members were mostly employees of the same public institution, with the PEC Chair usually their supervisor, compromising their independence. Whereas numerous observers from state-subsidized public associations were present in all polling stations observed, observers from non-governmental organizations were present only in 10 per cent. In some six per cent of cases, IEOM observers did not have a clear view of the voting process and PECs did not co-operate fully. The presence of local officials in polling stations is not prohibited by law, but it has a potential to intimidate PEC members and voters. In addition, the presence of unauthorized officials was noted in five per cent of observations. More than half of polling stations observed were not accessible for voters with disabilities, despite the CEC resolution on creating sufficient conditions for voters with disabilities.

Serious procedural errors, inconsistencies and irregularities were noted by IEOM observers. In 18 per cent of polling stations observed, unused ballots were not placed in clear view of PEC members and observers. Other observed irregularities included campaign materials or activity in polling stations (10 per cent), group voting (3 per cent), and indications of voters coerced to vote at multiple polling stations. There is no standardized ballot box and no secure sealing, which does not guarantee that ballot boxes remain sealed or that they are not replaced. In some cases, the ballot boxes from early voting were not properly sealed and the final early voting protocols were not displayed. In 22 per cent of PECs, observers were not allowed to inspect the voter lists. When they were able to do so, the number of signatures was significantly lower than the turnout figures provided by PECs. Some PECs added voters to the main voter list, contrary to the law which provides that they be added to a supplementary list.

To enhance the integrity of the voting process, authorities should consider more robust security measures such as numbered ballot box seals, uniform translucent ballot boxes, ballots with safety features and unique PEC stamps. In view of preventing undue influence on voters and PEC members, the presence of local officials in polling stations should be prohibited.

C. COUNTING

Counting was assessed negatively in 24 per cent of polling stations observed, which indicates serious problems. Despite a CEC resolution, in 27 per cent of the PECs observed, observers were not allowed close to the counting table and they were not allowed meaningful observation. PECs often failed to follow the reconciliation procedures that would ensure the accountability of counting and had problems reconciling the results. For example, in 21 per cent of cases, the number of registered voters was not established and announced, and in most cases, the signatures on the voter lists were not counted before the opening of ballot boxes, which does not ensure the accuracy of the reported turnout.

Observers often reported that the count was hasty and lacked transparency. In a quarter of cases, observers could not follow the procedures and see the voters' marks on the ballots, ballots were counted by each PEC member separately rather than collectively, and votes per candidate were not announced. In around a one fifth of counts, the validity of ballots was not determined in a

consistent and reasonable manner and the spoiled ballots were not packed and sealed. A significant number of indications of ballot box stuffing were observed in ballot boxes (13 per cent), mobile boxes (8 per cent) and early voting ballot boxes (8 per cent). Legal provisions for the count, as well as their implementation, meant that an honest count could not be guaranteed, as provided for in paragraph 7.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

In regards to PEC protocols, observers reported that PEC protocols were pre-signed (10 per cent), the three official copies were not signed by all PEC members (10 per cent), the announced figures were not recorded accurately (10 per cent), evidence of deliberate falsification of voter lists entries and results (7 per cent) and other significant procedural errors or omissions (16 per cent). Contrary to the law, in eight per cent of cases, observers were not allowed to take photographs of PEC protocols.

The vote count should be held in a transparent manner, whereby all PEC members, observers and candidate proxies would be able to verify the outcome of the process. As a means to build public confidence, consideration should be given to announcing and showing the selection on each ballot to those present, as well as announcing all the figures entered into PEC protocols.

D. TABULATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

The IEOM observed the handover and results tabulation process in all 110 DEC and tabulation was assessed negatively in about a quarter of the observations, which is significant. In 12 per cent of the PECs observed, there was a delay in transporting PEC protocols to the DEC, which does not ensure the integrity of protocols and safety of materials. Often, PEC members were transported by buses collectively to the DEC.

In some two thirds of cases, not all DEC members were present during the handover of PEC protocols and tabulation. More than half of the DEC interrupted the tabulation and postponed the summarization of results until the following afternoon, which detracts from the integrity and accountability of the process.⁹⁵ The tabulation process lacked transparency overall. In a quarter of DEC, IEOM observers had no clear view of handover procedures and, in more than half of the DEC, they were not allowed close enough to see the data entry of summarized tables. In some cases, the procedures were conducted in separate rooms. A number of significant procedural errors were noted by observers. In 16 per cent of DEC, the data from PEC protocols were not entered in electronic summarized tables and in the majority of DEC, entries into the summarized tables were not made in pen. Contrary to a CEC resolution, in 22 observations, DEC did not apply the control equations of data on PEC protocols, and in 15 observations, PEC protocol data were not entered into the summary table.

To enhance the transparency of tabulation and instil public confidence in the accuracy of the results, DEC should conduct uninterrupted tabulation from the handover of PEC protocols until the completion of DEC result protocols in the presence of PEC members and observers.

On 11 September, the CEC reported voter turnout at 74.7 per cent. On 12 September, the CEC announced the preliminary results and published the names of the elected MPs before all DEC had completed the tabulation. Moreover, it did not publish results disaggregated by polling

⁹⁵ DEC in Brest, Hrodno, Minsk City, Minsk Oblast, and Viciebsk.

station, which does not ensure the accountability of the tabulation process. On 16 September, the CEC announced the final election results. A total of 38 women MPs were elected to the new parliament, which represents an increase from 15 per cent to 35 per cent.

To enhance transparency and accountability, results should be published disaggregated by polling station and separately for each candidate and include votes cast against all candidates and the number of valid, invalid and spoiled ballots.

E. ELECTION DAY COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

A total of 1,066 applications and complaints were filed on early voting and election day irregularities. Of these, 222 were on early voting, 367 on voting and counting, 157 on the work of election commissions, 37 on observers' rights, 33 on requests for recount, 82 on requests for invalidation of PEC results, and 131 on other issues. Most complaints alleged a lack of transparency and falsification during counting, falsification of the early voting protocols, election day protocols and turnout figures, irregularities during mobile voting, manipulations in the voters lists, inadequate ballot box security, as well as false tabulation of results. In addition, some 60 complaints alleging criminal offences were filed with regional prosecutors, who did not review them, but referred them to election commissions or local executive authorities.

Election commissions dismissed or rejected almost all complaints and appeals. Not all complaints were reviewed in public sessions with the presence of the complainants and the decisions often lacked substantive reasoning. Notably, all requests by observers for a recount and invalidation of results were dismissed as unauthorized.⁹⁶ Similar requests by candidates were also rejected on the grounds that the alleged procedural irregularities had no effect on the election results in the district.⁹⁷ A complaint on multiple-voting was rejected by the CEC on the grounds that voter registration is conducted according to the law and therefore multiple-voting is impossible.⁹⁸ A number of similar cases were treated in an inconsistent manner.⁹⁹ PECs, DECes and OECs ceased functioning immediately after completing tabulation, but before the three-day deadline for filing complaints. The CEC announced the final elections results before the expiry of deadlines for complaints. On 29 September, the CEC held a session to review two complaints requesting the invalidation of election results in two DECes, which were rejected.¹⁰⁰ Overall, the handling of election day complaints fell short of providing effective remedy and left possible infringements without sanctions.

⁹⁶ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM is aware of at least 15 DEC decisions stating that the visual count of turnout and ballots by observers are not prescribed by law and therefore bear no legal significance.

⁹⁷ For instance, complaints on the untimely display of early voting protocol (complainant Kuzmin), false data on the early voting protocol (Gousha) and failure to allow meaningful observation (Shestak and Guzovsky) were considered procedural irregularities with no impact on the district results.

⁹⁸ CEC decision No. 01-11/R-354 of 11 September.

⁹⁹ The CEC reviewed two complaints on turnout discrepancies during early voting, whereas it referred all other such cases to DECes.

¹⁰⁰ Two candidates of the Belarusian Party of the Left 'Fair World' requested invalidation of results in DECes 25 and 49, after the rejection of their requests by the corresponding DECes and OECs. Alleged irregularities pertained PEC formation, joint information posters, undue restrictions in campaigning; failure to guarantee the safety of ballot boxes during early voting; hampering the work of observers, inflating turnout.

XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to enhance the conduct of elections in Belarus 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 recommendations contained in the 2010, 2012 and 2015 OSCE/ODIHR EOM final reports, as well as the 2010 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Opinion. The OSCE/ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Belarus to further improve the electoral process.¹⁰¹

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The legal framework should be comprehensively reviewed to address previous OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, including on the composition of election commissions, candidacy rights, observers' rights, voting, counting and tabulation. The law should be interpreted and implemented to ensure an equal playing field for contestants, genuine competition, the free expression of the will of the voters and the integrity of the electoral process.
2. All relevant laws and decrees should be reviewed and amended to ensure that any restrictions on fundamental freedoms have the character of exception, are imposed only when necessary in a democratic society, are proportionate with a legitimate aim, and are not applied in an arbitrary and overly restrictive manner.
3. Authorities should ensure the right of individuals and groups to establish, without undue restrictions, their own political parties or political organizations, and provide them with the necessary legal guarantees to compete with each other on an equal basis.
4. To ensure legal certainty, fundamental aspects of the electoral process should be regulated by law and not by CEC resolutions. Legal reform should be undertaken early enough in advance of elections through a transparent and inclusive legislative process with all relevant stakeholders.
5. Authorities should ensure that candidates and voters are able to exercise their right to assemble and express or receive information without fear of retribution, administrative action or intimidation.
6. To enhance transparency and accountability, results should be published disaggregated by polling station and separately for each candidate and include votes cast against all candidates and the number of valid, invalid and spoiled ballots.
7. Measures should be taken to ensure unrestricted access of observers to all aspects of the electoral process. Observers should be able to observe the entire working process of election commissions, including verification of signatures and other documents for

¹⁰¹ 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".

candidate registration, and inspect voter lists and receive certified copies of election commission protocols.

8. Early voting should be conducted with the same safeguards as election day, including a PEC quorum and without breaks. Daily protocols should include the number of voters registered on the voter list, those added and those who voted. They should remain publicly posted until after the end of counting and until the deadline for filing complaints.
9. The vote count should be held in a transparent manner, whereby all PEC members, observers and candidate proxies would be able to verify the outcome of the process. As a means to build public confidence, consideration should be given to announcing and showing the selection on each ballot to those present as well as announcing all the figures entered into PEC protocols.
10. To enhance the transparency of tabulation and instil public confidence in the accuracy of the results, DEC's should conduct uninterrupted tabulation from the handover of PEC protocols until the completion of DEC result protocols in the presence of PEC members and observers.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework

11. Consideration could be given to removing the turnout requirement for elections, or at least removing it in the case of repeat elections. This would avoid the possibility of indefinitely repeating elections because of an insufficient turnout.

Voter Registration

12. The blanket disenfranchisement of citizens serving prison terms regardless of the severity of the crime committed should be reconsidered to ensure proportionality between the limitation imposed and the severity of the offense. Restrictions on the suffrage rights of those in police custody or pre-trial detention should be removed. Restrictions on the suffrage rights of persons declared mentally incompetent should be decided on a case-by-case basis. The authorities should consider ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
13. Consideration should be given to developing a centralized, computerized, and publicly available voter register in line with data protection regulations. A legal deadline for voter registration prior to election day could be introduced, with additional entries permitted only in accordance with clearly defined legal requirements subject to judicial control.

Election Administration

14. The mechanism of CEC formation should be reconsidered to provide sufficient safeguards for its independence and impartiality and to enhance public confidence in the election administration.

15. In view of ensuring the impartiality of the election administration and increasing public trust, local executive officials should not be allowed to simultaneously serve on election commissions or interfere in their activities.
16. To enhance the pluralistic representation on election commissions and to promote confidence in the election administration, consideration should be given to ensuring the inclusion of commission members nominated by all contestants. To enhance the independence of election commission members, commissions should not replicate existing hierarchical relationships in public institutions.

Candidate Registration

17. To ensure suffrage rights, restrictions on the right to stand of individuals with an unexpunged criminal record should be reviewed. Such restrictions should apply for only the most serious of offences.
18. To enhance inclusiveness and transparency, the Election Code should provide clear and reasonable criteria and mechanisms for candidate registration. Minor inaccuracies in candidates' financial declarations should not lead to automatic disqualification and candidates should be provided an opportunity to correct minor or technical mistakes in their applications.
19. Consideration could be given to reducing the requisite number of supporting signatures for registration, introducing clear and reasonable criteria for verification, and ensuring equal conditions for signature collection. Consideration could also be given to introducing an alternative requirement, such as a reasonable financial deposit that is refunded if the candidate obtains a certain amount of votes.

Campaign Environment

20. Authorities should ensure a clear separation of the State and candidate as well as guarantee equal treatment of contestants before the law. Campaigning should take place without abuse of official position, pressured involvement of employees, or support from state-owned enterprises or state-subsidized associations.
21. To ensure effective exercise of the freedom of expression and to enable voters to make an informed choice, all candidates should be free to craft their campaign messages to the electorate within the limits of the law. Information about candidates or their programmes should not be subject to review by election commissions or any other body.
22. In order to ensure the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, the notification procedure for staging events should be applied equally to all stakeholders and be widened to include pre- and post- election activities.

Campaign Finance

23. Consideration could be given to re-introducing direct public campaign financing as a means to level the playing field among candidates. Prospective candidates should be

allowed to open campaign funds before registration to be able to finance activities related to signature collection and fundraise for their campaigns.

24. To enhance transparency, campaign finance reports, including all income and expenditure, should be published in a timely manner. An independent, impartial and professional body should audit campaign finance reports on the basis of fair and objective criteria.

Media

25. The legal framework for media should be reformed to ensure full protection of the principle of freedom of speech and the press, both offline and online. Defamation should be decriminalized.
26. The accreditation of journalists should be reconsidered in view of improving their working conditions rather than functioning as a work permit. Freelance and online journalists should enjoy the same status of other journalists without discrimination.
27. Consideration should be given to ensuring a more balanced MSB membership by including private media professionals and additional civil society representatives. The MSB should be mandated and sufficiently resourced to conduct comprehensive media monitoring during the election campaign so as to more effectively fulfil its role.
28. State-owned media should provide impartial and balanced coverage in their news and political programmes to all contestants and should provide voters with sufficient information to make an informed choice. To achieve this, the competent authorities could develop policy guidance and training for electoral periods.

Complaints and Appeals

29. Consideration should be given to revising the Election Code to provide a dedicated section on complaints and appeals that ensures a systematic and simple framework of all mechanisms for legal redress in one hierarchical and clear structure. Amendments should ensure that all acts, omissions and decisions of election commissions are subject to judicial appeal.
30. Every voter, candidate, and political party should have the right to lodge a complaint on every aspect of the electoral process. The deadlines for filing complaints should be suited to the pace and context of an electoral process so as to ensure the right to effective remedy.
31. In view of enhancing the transparency of dispute resolution, complaints and appeals should be reviewed by election commissions and courts in the presence of the concerned parties and decisions should be published in a timely manner. All judicial proceedings should be public.

Election Day

32. To enhance the integrity of the voting process, authorities should consider more robust security measures such as numbered ballot box seals, uniform translucent ballot boxes, ballots with safety features and unique PEC stamps. In view of preventing undue influence on voters and PEC members, the presence of local officials in polling stations should be prohibited.

ANNEX I: FINAL RESULTS

DEC	Total number of voters	Added on E-day	Ballots issued	Turnout %	Early voting	Mobile voting	Voting on E-day in PS	Against all	Invalid votes
1	69,563	465	46,613	67.0	19,314	2,137	25,148	4,932	776
2	60,143	338	41,470	68.9	19,926	1,702	19,835	5,478	558
3	59,845	210	34,843	58.2	11,960	1,042	21,806	3,939	461
4	61,855	189	45,330	73.3	20,963	3,101	21,259	5,068	627
5	66,514	-	48,641	73.1	21,398	2,259	24,983	5,937	803
6	61,687	265	49,151	79.7	22,821	1,493	24,835	3,856	525
7	62,645	211	56,354	90.0	21,889	7,197	27,268	4,434	844
8	62,455	-	53,715	86.0	18,726	7,527	27,454	5,350	705
9	59,343	-	47,698	80.3	16,607	5,927	25,130	8,013	961
10	60,121	112	52,003	86.5	20,044	5,947	26,012	4,438	834
11	64,051	6	52,081	81.3	17,545	5,700	28,830	4,908	825
12	62,024	100	48,498	78.2	18,448	6,934	23,114	4,801	1,085
13	59,964	118	50,383	84.0	18,987	2,333	29,055	2,508	643
14	61,199	89	46,199	75.5	13,226	1,519	31,452	5,877	816
15	66,741	-	57,076	85.5	17,644	2,873	36,559	4,546	808
16	54,578	42	44,491	81.5	18,957	1,699	23,833	1,962	771
17	64,364	306	46,399	72.1	20,627	4,750	21,019	2,835	550
18	66,993	120	40,297	60.1	13,134	3,715	23,431	2,501	599
19	64,385	204	56,108	87.1	24,846	6,241	25,016	3,201	433
20	62,510	247	52,662	84.2	28,320	3,882	20,419	3,207	651
21	64,449	32	56,345	87.4	23,142	10,681	22,522	6,267	824
22	57,654	-	51,050	88.5	19,549	11,034	20,467	1,770	476
23	64,435	258	55,957	86.8	24,249	8,010	23,692	3,620	652
24	70,801	198	53,596	75.7	18,866	2,160	32,569	5,824	793
25	60,601	20	43,920	72.5	19,874	7,293	16,748	2,624	407
26	58,712	31	45,564	77.6	18,949	7,372	19,240	4,748	811
27	59,365	25	46,789	78.8	20,623	7,583	18,580	4,151	719
28	59,223	53	49,856	84.2	21,955	11,917	15,981	4,673	730
29	60,359	-	48,410	80.2	20,222	8,366	19,818	5,194	762
30	60,289	174	52,195	86.6	20,967	11,577	19,651	5,153	817
31	69,161	-	46,830	67.7	22,642	1,580	22,584	4,770	854
32	68,718	-	46,483	67.6	20,963	1,542	23,953	5,044	1,286
33	69,523	-	42,826	61.6	19,808	1,279	21,732	4,982	609
34	65,343	-	41,547	63.5	19,299	2,357	19,848	2,511	122
35	63,149	-	45,709	72.3	17,391	2,986	25,287	4,575	149
36	69,797	152	48,165	68.9	20,846	1,854	25,421	4,319	507
37	67,750	-	55,972	82.6	28,480	2,852	24,631	5,404	1,302
38	67,154	-	56,814	84.6	28,762	3,195	24,850	6,583	500
39	57,446	15	50,137	87.3	22,629	2,935	24,564	4,972	626
40	69,511	154	51,565	74.2	26,191	2,070	23,302	6,329	665
41	57,240	2	47,779	83.4	19,680	4,096	23,985	4,310	367
42	65,862	32	48,623	73.8	25,714	635	22,244	2,025	494

43	66,241	35	54,192	81.8	27,742	2,817	23,629	2,697	411
44	57,671	330	42,808	74.2	18,116	5,180	19,505	3,304	497
45	61,591	-	50,344	81.7	21,764	5,114	23,441	5,306	671
46	66,443	134	47,568	71.6	21,151	2,573	23,837	2,758	508
47	58,171	25	52,462	90.2	26,401	5,503	20,545	6,827	1,150
48	55,582	17	44,251	79.6	20,277	3,949	20,025	3,250	641
49	58,358	115	40,881	70.1	18,747	1,811	20,323	2,233	442
50	47,450	97	40,687	70.8	18,991	369	21,314	3,161	405
51	57,350	141	31,459	54.8	13,634	3,035	14,777	4,810	552
52	57,629	102	40,447	70.2	18,247	1,178	21,019	4,952	475
53	66,388	7	59,813	90.1	21,312	8,706	29,795	6,610	742
54	66,263	82	57,235	86.4	25,320	7,429	24,486	3,602	783
55	65,632	60	45,942	70.0	20,904	1,672	23,351	5,639	753
56	56,889	50	48,679	85.6	20,111	6,008	22,560	3,264	559
57	57,145	73	49,259	86.2	18,917	10,987	19,355	5,049	708
58	63,539	5	46,638	73.4	18,371	7,727	20,540	4,269	481
59	57,404	112	41,411	72.1	15,851	6,339	19,217	5,522	854
60	55,931	3	47,924	85.7	22,086	8,545	17,288	6,992	1,002
61	63,244	25	51,970	82.2	22,545	9,180	20,245	5,107	524
62	69,016	-	45,688	66.2	19,325	2,404	23,959	3,945	536
63	61,371	-	46,273	75.4	19,521	4,436	22,316	4,264	991
64	65,867	86	44,670	67.8	20,403	2,671	21,596	4,421	290
65	68,296	-	56,653	82.9	25,268	6,922	24,461	4,986	711
66	58,102	9	50,667	87.2	21,224	8,364	21,078	4,422	700
67	60,256	12	44,589	74.0	16,720	3,640	24,217	5,257	886
68	68,091	207	44,968	66.0	19,628	706	24,623	3,667	628
69	67,203	419	56,664	84.3	22,058	6,680	27,925	6,502	1,007
70	62,210	48	47,130	75.8	19,188	7,193	20,746	6,321	711
71	69,112	32	52,175	75.5	22,584	10,442	19,144	5,351	727
72	67,315	515	46,023	68.4	20,121	1,969	23,928	5,184	703
73	67,523	247	54,540	80.8	20,569	10,245	23,724	3,121	639
74	59,046	146	48,420	82.0	19,943	10,058	18,417	4,166	911
75	70,174	54	56,019	79.8	20,871	8,368	26,780	5,562	510
76	71,775	108	43,369	60.4	14,221	13,216	15,921	8,417	1,051
77	71,083	194	54,299	76.4	20,193	3,235	30,871	4,903	261
78	62,625	89	45,677	72.9	14,037	7,035	24,604	3,860	571
79	71,278	129	52,861	74.1	22,844	3,036	26,937	3,402	399
80	60,110	27	49,896	83.0	20,251	6,382	23,258	2,029	436
81	58,946	111	55,066	93.4	25,614	5,640	23,796	1,976	975
82	54,933	41	49,467	90.0	21,184	8,430	19,840	1,738	451
83	64,658	79	59,380	91.8	25,724	5,695	27,905	1,766	581
84	66,104	48	49,831	75.3	23,652	3,844	22,270	3,100	418
85	62,422	15	44,053	70.5	15,658	7,959	20,377	3,558	346
86	67,772	91	51,570	76.1	20,462	1,814	29,279	2,587	794
87	64,255	107	46,954	73.0	19,250	1,997	25,679	1,955	482
88	65,050	62	53,410	82.1	20,727	8,305	24,373	10,509	727
89	59,789	293	50,659	84.7	22,988	7,727	19,932	5,264	965

90	60,922	92	55,749	91.5	21,750	7,546	26,451	2,311	477
91	63,425	115	39,686	62.6	15,824	779	23,083	3,443	423
92	63,937	324	36,912	57.7	15,068	1,842	20,002	3,422	385
93	56,557	223	36,582	64.7	16,448	982	19,150	3,497	338
94	67,833	20	40,290	59.0	17,105	551	22,394	3,602	352
95	65,416	5	41,939	63.7	16,776	1,172	23,727	5,148	518
96	61,999	84	37,078	59.7	15,227	806	21,002	6,942	141
97	60,803	122	36,319	59.7	14,098	598	21,588	8,800	151
98	64,422	442	40,585	63.0	16,463	507	23,598	7,077	309
99	67,199	943	42,335	63.0	15,838	1,140	25,354	4,320	95
100	68,445	224	43,640	63.7	16,253	412	26,962	5,820	166
101	67,597	340	41,742	60.9	17,218	577	23,369	6,876	541
102	57,245	390	38,701	67.3	13,899	382	24,255	4,396	349
103	67,539	780	42,473	62.4	16,875	989	24,259	4,516	211
104	63,035	160	41,598	65.7	15,598	835	24,996	3,308	284
105	66,062	60	42,015	63.5	17,770	1,266	22,930	6,262	514
106	63,195	370	39,902	62.8	19,125	1,765	18,771	2,713	181
107	68,507	40	40,682	59.0	20,775	3,244	16,417	3,233	310
108	70,092	-	41,030	58.5	16,344	647	23,984	3,667	86
109	70,131	-	45,613	65.0	20,349	651	24,570	3,646	54
110	63,304	129	39,403	62.2	17,410	2,177	19,808	3,763	454

DEC	Elected Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage of votes	Nomination
1	Aliaksandr Brych	27,347	58.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective, Belarusian Patriotic Party
2	Valiantsin Milasheuski	25,923	62.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
3	Anatol Dashko	21,716	62.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
4	Uladzimir Bazanau	29,527	65.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
5	Volha Palituka	34,942	71.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
6	Tatsiana Yakubovich	38,138	77.6	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
7	Leanid Tsupryk	42,701	75.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
8	Zhanna Statsivka	35,470	66.0	Republican Party of Labour and Justice, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
9	Leanid Kachina	27,629	58.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
10	Yury Daragupets	36,539	70.3	Initiative Group
11	Anatol Tkachuk	34,802	66.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
12	Vasili Dzemidovich	30,034	61.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
13	Ihar Nevar	38,513	76.5	Initiative Group
14	Ihar Kolb	32,850	71.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
15	Ivan Rabkavets	44,029	77.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
16	Aliaksandr Babalobich	28,568	64.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
17	Tatsiana Starynskaya	33,995	73.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
18	Siarhei Zanko	31,966	79.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
19	Vasili Chekan	43,722	77.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
20	Uladzimir Tsetsokha	40,446	76.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
21	Viktar Mirash	35,714	63.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
22	Uladzimir Andreichanka	44,316	86.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
23	Ihar Martynau	41,309	73.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
24	Vadzim Dzeviatouski	32,069	59.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
25	Liudmila Dabrynina	33,595	76.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
26	Vitaly Chudovich	32,530	71.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
27	Natallia Guivik	30,390	65.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
28	Andrei Yunitsyn	33,477	67.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
29	Siarhei Ziamchonak	35,885	74.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
30	Anatol Lukashou	38,610	74.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
31	Ivan Korzh	32,363	69.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
32	Vitali Shylau	31,176	67.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
33	Aleh Levshunau	25,520	59.6	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
34	Pavel Zhdanovich	22,052	53.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
35	Dzmitry Hurski	31,117	68.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
36	Alena Astapiuk	31,141	64.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
37	Alla Navumchyk	43,250	77.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
38	Mikalai Vasilkou	44,486	78.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
39	Iryna Kravovich	38,203	76.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
40	Viachaslau Dziachenka	34,764	67.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
41	Yauheni Adamenka	35,080	73.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective

42	Mikalai Rassokha	36,448	75.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
43	Leanid Piasanik	40,329	74.4	Communist Party of Belarus Initiative Group, Labour Collective
44	Baliaslau Pirshtuk	31,585	73.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
45	Uladzislau Shchepau	28,051	55.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
46	Halina Filipovich	31,244	65.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
47	Sviatlana Chekan	36,034	68.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
48	Aliaksandr Siahodnik	27,206	61.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
49	Siarhei Patsevich	29,301	71.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
50	Viktar Rusak	28,809	70.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
51	Lilia Kiriak	16,972	54.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
52	Tamara Dauhashei	27,842	68.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
53	Siarhei Litvin	44,773	74.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
54	Aliaksandr Markevich	44,650	78.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
55	Andrei Naumovich	24,413	53.2	Initiative Group
56	Valiantsin Mikhnevich	34,218	70.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
57	Volha Papko	37,424	76.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
58	Alla Sopikava	29,510	63.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
59	Adam Kavalko	25,902	62.6	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
60	Valery Sauko	33,899	70.7	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group
61	Piotr Atroshchanka	40,485	77.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
62	Vasili Baranik	27,856	61.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
63	Tamara Krasouskaya	35,762	77.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
64	Dzmitry Zablotki	28,995	64.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
65	Valery Haidukevich	39,874	70.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
66	Liudmila Nizhevich	40,668	80.3	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
67	Valiantsina Razhanets	30,838	69.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
68	Andrei Rybak	29,006	64.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
69	Yulia Muryna	37,697	66.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
70	Alena Anisim	19,097	40.5	Initiative Group
71	Yury Lobach	35,020	67.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
72	Liudmila Kananovich	34,583	75.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
73	Ivan Markevich	42,376	77.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
74	Natallia Zhibul	34,155	70.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
75	Piotr Vabishevich	44,079	78.7	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
76	Mikalai Ulakhovich	24,565	56.7	Belarus Patriotic Party, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
77	Valiantsina Kursevich	41,558	76.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
78	Iryna Raneiskaya	28,550	62.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
79	Vitali Vlasevich	31,094	58.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
80	Ihar Kananchuk	37,606	75.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
81	Tatsiana Kananchuk	34,569	62.8	Initiative Group
82	Alena Kaliasniova	30,155	61.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
83	Tatsiana Marachkava	44,385	74.8	Communist Party of Belarus,

				Initiative Group, Labour Collective
84	Ihar Marzliuk	24,462	49.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
85	Aliaksandr Staravoitau	25,167	57.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
86	Volha Petrashova	28,599	55.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
87	Piotr Salaiou	31,509	67.1	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
88	Anatol Khischanka	31,576	59.1	Liberal Democratic Party, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
89	Aliaksandr Bahdanovich	35,463	70.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
90	Dzmitry Hobarau	46,080	82.7	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
91	Axana Niakhaichyk	23,381	58.9	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
92	Valery Kursevich	21,132	57.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
93	Valery Baradzenia	21,129	57.8	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
94	Valery Varanetski	16,281	40.7	Labour Collective
95	Tatsiana Saihanava	21,454	51.5	Belarus Patriotic Party, Initiative Group
96	Natallia Klimovich	19,625	53.0	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group
97	Hanna Kanapatskaya	8,603	23.7	United Civic Party
98	Ihar Kamarouski	19,893	49.0	Republican Party of Labour and Justice, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
99	Liudmila Makaryna- Kibak	21,763	51.4	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
100	Axana Haiduk	20,847	47.8	Republican Party of Labour and Justice Initiative Group
101	Anna Staravoitava	22,303	54.2	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
102	Liudmila Kubrakova	23,145	60.1	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
103	Vitali Misiavets	19,252	45.7	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group, Labour Collective
104	Mikhail Milavanau	22,790	55.0	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
105	Iryna Darafeeva	16,497	39.3	Initiative Group
106	Dzmitry Shautsou	24,771	62.5	Initiative Group, Labour Collective
107	Aliaksei Sokal	22,301	55.2	Communist Party of Belarus, Initiative Group
108	Maxim Misjko	18,027	44.0	Initiative Group
109	Siarhei Bobrykau	30,535	67.0	Initiative Group
110	Volha Mychko	17,072	43.3	Initiative Group

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

SHORT-TERM OBSERVERS

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Kent	HARSTEDT	Sweden	Special Co-ordinator
Ivana	DOBESOVA	Czech Republic	Head of Delegation
Orest	DEYCHAKIWSKY	America	MP
Scott	RAULAND	America	MP
Nikolaus	BERLAKOVICH	Austria	MP
Heidelinde	REITER	Austria	MP
Eric	MASSIN	Belgium	MP
Brecht	VERMEULEN	Belgium	MP
Zuzka	BEBAROVA RUJBROVA	Czech Republic	MP
Jan	HORNIK	Czech Republic	MP
Katerina	KOSARIKOVA	Czech Republic	MP
Mika	RAATIKAINEN	Finland	MP
Egon	JUETTNER	Germany	MP
Andreas	NOTHELLE	Germany	MP
Georgios	CHAMPOURIS	Greece	MP
Anastasia	GKARA	Greece	MP
Georgios	VAREMENOS	Greece	MP
Georgiy	KIM	Kazakhstan	MP
Piotr	APEL	Poland	MP
Susana	AMADOR	Portugal	MP
Paulo Miguel	SANTOS	Portugal	MP
Olga	ALIMOVA	Russian Federation	MP
Sergey	KARSEKA	Russian Federation	MP
Ilya	KOSTUNOV	Russian Federation	MP
Margareta	CEDERFELT	Sweden	MP
Arhe	HAMEDNACA	Sweden	MP
Anna	WALLEN	Sweden	MP
Simon	MCGUIGAN BURNS	United Kingdom	MP
Marc	CARILLET	France	Secretariat
Loic	POULAIN	France	Secretariat
Anna	DI DOMENICO	Germany	Secretariat
Veronika	KRUPOVA	Czech Republic	Staff of Delegation
Fredrik	SVENSSON	Sweden	Staff of Delegation

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Gisela	WURM	Austria	Head of Delegation
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Beatrice	FRESKO-ROLFO	Monaco	MP
Aleksander	POCIEJ	Poland	MP
Paolo	CORSINI	Italy	MP
Titus	CORLATEAN	Romania	MP
Bernard	PASQUIER	Monaco	MP
Ingebjorg	GODSKESEN	Norway	MP
Suat	ONAL	Turkey	MP
Sona	MARKOVA	Czech Republic	MP
Andrea	RIGONI	Italy	MP
Manuel	GONZALEZ OROPEZA	Mexico	Venice Commission
Alberto	GUEVARA CASTRO	Mexico	Venice Commission
Amaya	UBEDA DE TORRES	Spain	Venice Commission
Chemavon	CHAHBAZIAN	France	Secretariat
Anne	GODFREY	United Kingdom	Secretariat

OSCE/ODIHR EOM Short-Term Observers

Gert Michael	BINDER	Austria
Werner	ROHRACHER	Austria
Andreas	STADLER	Austria
Denise Doris	WAPPEL	Austria
Jean Pierre	BIEBUYCK	Belgium
Maxime	DIDAT	Belgium
Jerome Jan Maurice	JOOS	Belgium
Michel Joseph A.	VAN DEN STOCK	Belgium
Jan	BLAZEK	Czech Republic
Ales	FOJTIK	Czech Republic
Radomir	KARLIK	Czech Republic
Petra	KRATOCHVILOVA	Czech Republic
Marie	KUCEROVA	Czech Republic
Martina	NIKODEMOVA	Czech Republic
Petr	PIRUNCIK	Czech Republic
Josef	REHOR	Czech Republic
Jiri	SYKORA	Czech Republic
Patrik	TAUFAR	Czech Republic
Inge	CHRISTENSEN	Denmark
Pia	CHRISTMAS-MØLLER	Denmark
Anna Gurzhiy	HOUGAARD	Denmark
Jorgen	HOXER	Denmark
Helle	IBSEN	Denmark
Torsten	JUUL	Denmark
Kirsten	LIND	Denmark

Jytte Vagner	PETERSEN	Denmark
Jasmina Johansson	PLESS	Denmark
Jan Philip	SCHUNCK	Denmark
Michael Vallentin	STRAND	Denmark
Peder	VENTEGODT	Denmark
Eda	AHI	Estonia
Herol	MARJAK	Estonia
Anna-Kristiina	KÄÄRIÄINEN	Finland
Pekka Kalevi	MONONEN	Finland
Sami Juhani	SAARINEN	Finland
Kristiina Annikki	SILVAN	Finland
Julien	ARNOULT	France
Ekaterina	BURDINA	France
Roman	KWIATKOWSKI	France
Pascale	ROGNO TRIMBACH	France
Judith Christina	ABDEL-MASSIH-THIEMANN	Germany
Hans-Wulf Peter	BARTELS	Germany
Ulrike Elisabeth	DAESSLER	Germany
Hans Thomas	DOEHNE	Germany
Matthias	DORNFELDT	Germany
Torsten Alexander	FIX	Germany
Ino David	FLEISCHMANN	Germany
Joachim Heinrich	FRANKE	Germany
Jochen August Max	FREDE	Germany
Mendel	GOLDSTEIN	Germany
Gabriele	HABASHI	Germany
Johannes	HEILER	Germany
Mechthild Adelheid	HENNEKE	Germany
Brigitte Franziska	HEUER	Germany
Arno Gregor	HUEBNER	Germany
Dorothee Elisabeth	HUTTER	Germany
Timo	KNAUTE	Germany
Rainer Hubertus	LINGENTHAL	Germany
Elena Andrea	LOPEZ WERNER	Germany
Edith Maria	MUELLER	Germany
Dirk Daniel	NEUMEISTER	Germany
Jana Sophia	NOLLE	Germany
Karl Josef	PAMMER	Germany
Horst Edlef	PROETEL	Germany
Regine Luise	REIM	Germany
Anne Elisabeth	SCHARRENBROICH	Germany
Gesa	SCHOENEBERG	Germany

Gudrun Elisabeth	STEINACKER	Germany
Frank Adolf Alfred	STEINHOFF	Germany
Antonia	TILLY	Germany
Pavel	UTITZ	Germany
Volker Alfred Heinz	WEYEL	Germany
Peter Szilveszter	FODOR	Hungary
Zsolt Istvánné	HEJCSER	Hungary
Iván	KOVÁCS	Hungary
Elza	SHCOENSTEIN	Hungary
Andrea Dora	SZUCS	Hungary
Daniel	VERBA	Hungary
Leila Jane	BLACKING	Ireland
Anne Martina	DONNELLAN	Ireland
Brian	FAGAN	Ireland
Thomas John	KELLY	Ireland
Tom	KITT	Ireland
Paul Gerrard	TIGHE	Ireland
Giovanni	CAPELLINO	Italy
Cesira	DAMIANI	Italy
Federica	SUSTERSIC	Italy
Takao	ASAMURA	Japan
Yasushi	TOMOSHIGE	Japan
Anna	STEPANOVA	Latvia
Birute	ABRAITIENE	Lithuania
Sarune	KUBILIUTE	Lithuania
Irena	PAUKSTYTE	Lithuania
Lea Theadora	BOUWMEESTER	Netherlands
Margaretha	PRINS	Netherlands
Margriet Josephine	TEUNISSEN	Netherlands
Maria Cornelia Jacoba	VAN DER WILK	Netherlands
Reidun	GJENGEDAL	Norway
Jorun	LUNESTAD	Norway
Narve	RIO	Norway
Sylvia Rani	ROGNVIK	Norway
Mateusz	BAJEK	Poland
Adam Tomasz	BEDKOWSKI	Poland
Wojciech Piotr	BEDNAREK	Poland
Jakub Andrzej	BIERNAT	Poland
Tomasz Mieczyslaw	BLADYNIEC	Poland
Jan Pawel	BRODOWSKI	Poland
Sylwia	BYLINIAK	Poland
Paulina	CZARNECKA	Poland

Radzislawa Urszula	GORTAT	Poland
Jan Tomasz	HOFMOKL	Poland
Elzbieta	HOROSZKO	Poland
Michal	JASIULEWICZ	Poland
Marta	KAZMIERCZAK	Poland
Ewelina Anna	KOCHOWSKA	Poland
Anna	MACZUGA	Poland
Maria	MUZAROWSKA	Poland
Pawel	OLEJNIK	Poland
Agnieszka Anna	OSTROWSKA	Poland
Bartosz	PIECHOWICZ	Poland
Michal	ROMANOWSKI	Poland
Magdalena Anna	SIDOROWICZ	Poland
Anna Berenika	SIWIRSKA	Poland
Katarzyna Anna	SOBIERAJ	Poland
Marta	STEFANOWICZ	Poland
Justyna Anna	SZYMANSKA	Poland
Bartlomiej Michal	TOMALIK	Poland
Marta Maria	TOMASZKIEWICZ	Poland
Krzysztof Janusz	TOMCZYNSKI	Poland
Adam	WASILUK	Poland
Danuta Maria	WENCEL-MIERZWA	Poland
Atanase-Daniel	BALA	Romania
Angela	BALANEANU	Romania
Simona-Daniela	BARBULESCU	Romania
Romulus-Andrei	BENA	Romania
Octavian-Alin	GREBLA	Romania
William Anton	KORBL	Romania
George-Adrian	LIXANDRU	Romania
Cristian	MIHAILESCU	Romania
Liviu Lucian	RADUCAN	Romania
Cristina	ROMILA	Romania
Bogdan	STEFAN	Romania
Julia Cristina	VANGHELE	Romania
Vladimir	ALESHKIN	Russian Federation
Anton	ANDREEV	Russian Federation
Maria	ANTIPOVA	Russian Federation
Pavel	ARTAMONOV	Russian Federation
Sergey	BABURKIN	Russian Federation
Elena	BADIYAN	Russian Federation
Dmitry	BAGDULIN	Russian Federation
Elena	BALANDINA	Russian Federation

Artur	BALAOV	Russian Federation
Alexander	BELOSHEEV	Russian Federation
Denis	BORODICH	Russian Federation
Aslan	BOTASHEV	Russian Federation
Natalia	BRONNIKOVA	Russian Federation
Igor	CHAMOV	Russian Federation
Sergei	CHERKALIN	Russian Federation
Nikita	DOLGOV	Russian Federation
Sergei	ERMAKOV	Russian Federation
Aleksei	FILIPPOV	Russian Federation
Rafael	GEVORKYAN	Russian Federation
Ivan	GUBANOV	Russian Federation
Yulia	KISELEVA	Russian Federation
Alexander	KOBRINSKIY	Russian Federation
Oleg	KOMAROV	Russian Federation
Vasily	KORCHMAR	Russian Federation
Alexander	KORMACHEV	Russian Federation
Kim	KOSHEV	Russian Federation
Anton	KOVSHOV	Russian Federation
Dmitrii	KULIKOV	Russian Federation
Evgeny	LOGINOV	Russian Federation
Svetlana	LYAPUSTINA	Russian Federation
Aleksei	MALENKO	Russian Federation
Pavel	MALTSEV	Russian Federation
Igor	MEDNIKOV	Russian Federation
Maria	NIKIFOROVA	Russian Federation
Vladimir	NUZHIN	Russian Federation
Anatoly	ODINTSOV	Russian Federation
Andrei	OSMAKOV	Russian Federation
Inna	PANKINA	Russian Federation
Mariia	PLAKHOTNIUK	Russian Federation
Maria	POMERANTSEVA	Russian Federation
Vladimir	POPOV	Russian Federation
Aleksandr	PRUSOV	Russian Federation
Stanislav	RUZHINSKIY	Russian Federation
Roman	SAIKO	Russian Federation
Igor	SHAKTAR-OOL	Russian Federation
Ekaterina	SHAUMIAN	Russian Federation
Veronika	SHMELEVA	Russian Federation
Natalia	SHMELEVA	Russian Federation
Sergei	SHULGA	Russian Federation
Vilyam	SMIRNOV	Russian Federation

Dmitrii	STEPANOV	Russian Federation
Ilia	SUBBOTIN	Russian Federation
Kirill	TARASOV	Russian Federation
Svyatoslav	TERENTYEV	Russian Federation
Aleksei	TOPOLSKII	Russian Federation
Dmitrii	ULITIN	Russian Federation
Ksenia	VERKHOLANTSEVA	Russian Federation
Olga	VORONTSOVA	Russian Federation
Petr	YAKHMENEV	Russian Federation
Mariia	ZOTS	Russian Federation
Miroslav	MOJZITA	Slovakia
MONICA MARIA	ARNAIZ HERNANZ	Spain
BORJA	DE LA MADRID MASI	Spain
Pilar	GALVEZ GARCIA	Spain
Estefania	GUALLAR ARINO	Spain
Rolf Olof Andreas	BERGLOF	Sweden
Linda Sabina Helen	CEDERBLAD	Sweden
Mats Ingvar Holger	EKHOLM	Sweden
Evy Birgitta	JANSSON	Sweden
Hans Birger	NARESKOG	Sweden
Haakan Per-Olov	NYMAN	Sweden
Paer Olof Daniel	OLSSON	Sweden
Anna	ROGALSKA HEDLUND	Sweden
Lilian	SKOGLUND	Sweden
Zackie Birgitta Madeleine	STRÖJE WILKENS	Sweden
Inga Kerstin	SUNDBERG	Sweden
Fabrice Gerard Michel	BOULÉ	Switzerland
Loïc Alexis	DEGEN	Switzerland
Francine	JOHN	Switzerland
Christian	MIESCH	Switzerland
Carlo Luca Maria	SOMMARUGA	Switzerland
Mesut Hakki	CASIN	Turkey
Kemal	KAYGISIZ	Turkey
Kazi Abdul Kalam Muhammed	ALI	United Kingdom
Leslie Thomas	BARNFIELD	United Kingdom
Helen Claire	BRODRICK	United Kingdom
Andrew Frew	CALDWELL	United Kingdom
Derek John	CHAPPELL	United Kingdom
Anthony Campbell	CROMBIE	United Kingdom
Christopher James	CUNINGHAME	United Kingdom
Teresa	ETIM-GORST	United Kingdom
Brian Stanley	GIFFORD	United Kingdom

Oliver	GREEN	United Kingdom
Dominic Rupert David	HOWELL	United Kingdom
Oliver	JOSEPH	United Kingdom
Ailsa Marion	PLAIN	United Kingdom
Paul Michael	SIMON	United Kingdom
Valerie Louisa Diana	SOLOMON	United Kingdom
Anthony Michael Ernest	TALBOT	United Kingdom
Alison Mary	WILMSHURST	United Kingdom
Jaroslav	ANDERS	United States
Shaun Richard	BARCAVAGE	United States
Charles Earl	BARNETT	United States
Daria	FANE	United States
Anslem Bullin	GENTLE	United States
Andrew B	GRIDINSKY	United States
James Montgomery	HEILMAN	United States
Elizabeth Leigh	HOWARD	United States
Lesley Lowe	ISRAEL	United States
Darryl Leo	KEMPF	United States
David Alan	LEVINE	United States
Laura Sue	LOCKARD	United States
Melinda Marie	LORD	United States
Richard Newman	LYONS II	United States
James A	MARTIN	United States
Darnelle Cheri	MASON	United States
Karen Linnea	MCKENNEY	United States
Aubrey Frances	MENARD	United States
Garrett Carmine	MONTI	United States
Ronald Dean	MORAVEC	United States
Sherry Suzanne	MURPHY	United States
Tara Bree	O'CONNOR	United States
Dwight Richard	PELZ	United States
Octavius Nairobi	PINKARD	United States
Raleigh	QUESENBERRY	United States
Ann	RANDALL	United States
Irene Kerekes	RATNER	United States
Minerva Cynthia	REISER	United States
Philip Clements	RICHTER	United States
Emily Ann	ROME	United States
Steven Douglas	ROPER	United States
Steven Boyd	SAUM	United States
John Benton	SHEPHERD	United States
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Mary Ann	STEGMAIER	United States
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Gligor Arthur	TASHKOVICH	United States
Jason Ben-Doon	TOY	United States
Bobby Thomas	WATTS	United States
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Elissavet	KARAGIANNIDOU	Greece	Deputy Head of Mission
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Damir	MALBAŠIĆ	Croatia	
Francesca	BOGGERI	Italy	
Jurga	LUKSAITE-ROEHLING	Lithuania	
Angela	GHILASCU	Moldova	
Stefan	SZWED	Poland	
Yury	OZEROV	Russian Federation	
Sasa	POKRAJAC	Serbia	
Anders	ERIKSSON	Sweden	
Zeliha	AYDIN	Turkey	
Oleksandr	STETSENKO	Ukraine	

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Petr	POJMAN	Czech Republic
Conny	JENSEN	Denmark
Kirsten	JOERGENSEN	Denmark
Matti Tapio	HEINONEN	Finland
Laura Sofia	LAKSO	Finland
Mathilde Jeanne	HENRY	France
Helmut Julius	GOESER	Germany
Michael Alexander	ICKES	Germany
Carola	KASBURG	Germany
Jens Wilhelm	KREIBAUM	Germany
Jochen Michael	RINCK	Germany
Hildegard	ROGLER-MOCHEL	Germany
John Ignatius	BURKE	Ireland
Nurul	RAKHIMBEKOV	Kazakhstan
Lena Francina	HEMMINK	Netherlands

Oddvin	FORBORD	Norway
Oeyvind	SEIM	Norway
Zbigniew	CIERPINSKI	Poland
Elzbieta Ewa	CIESIELSKA	Poland
Jakub	HEROLD	Poland
Anna	MATEUSIAK	Poland
Alexander	BEDRITSKIY	Russian Federation
Kristina	BOGDANOVA	Russian Federation
Andrei	BORODIN	Russian Federation
Alena	GUDKOVA	Russian Federation
Dzhalil	KIEKBAEV	Russian Federation
Sergei	KOVALEVSKII	Russian Federation
Lars	LAGERGREN	Sweden
Diana Franca	FERRARI	Switzerland
Thomas	HOLZER	Switzerland
Anthony	ROBINSON	United Kingdom
Joseph Lloyd	WORRALL	United Kingdom
Max Eldon	GOUGH	United States
Hans	OPSAHL	United States
Constance Ann	PHLIPOT	United States
Linda Ann	SUMNER	United States

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) is the 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.

The OSCE/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 130 staff.

The OSCE/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 OSCE/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. The OSCE/ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programs annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

The OSCE/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 persons, 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**, the OSCE/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. The OSCE/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.

The OSCE/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).