



REPORT FROM THE OSCE  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY DELEGATION  
TO THE

FIRST ROUND OF  
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These were the first multi-party parliamentary elections held in Armenia since independence. A lack of democratic experience was evident in the conduct of the pre-election and campaign periods, but election day procedures were generally carried out with a minimum of problems or objections.

A referendum on the adoption of a new constitution was also held in conjunction with the parliamentary elections.

***a) A six-month ban on the activities of an entire political party (as opposed to individuals accused of crimes) resulted in the removal of a major opposition voice from the elections.***

***b) A significant number of accusations of violence and intimidation against independent candidates (to encourage their withdrawal from the election) were heard by the Delegation from a sufficient number of sources to raise reasonable speculation that such instances occurred.***

***c) The system provided in the election law and Constitution to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely manner was insufficient to address the large number of appeals that were made. This potentially precluded some candidates from participating in the elections.***

***d) A lack of standardized procedures and training of local polling workers resulted in disparities in conditions between polling sites. Although this may not have been intentional on the part of authorities, it belied the fact that little effort was made to educate officials on correct procedures.***

***e) Voter lists appeared to be outdated and included substantial numbers of voters who no longer resided in the given districts.***

***f) Although technical problems and a scarcity of media outlets exist in Armenia, insufficient press coverage resulted in significantly large numbers of voters being ill-informed regarding candidates, platforms and referendum issues.***

***g) The heavy involvement of the executive branch of government, through the broadcasting and distribution of biased information to voters and displayed at polling sites, greatly overshadowed opposition points of view regarding the referendum and the campaign.***

Although some procedural and technical violations were witnessed in some polling stations, the Delegation believes that a variety of choices between candidates and points of view were offered, and that the elections were conducted in a generally free manner. However, pre-election flaws marred the overall fairness of the elections and referendum. The Delegation's statement was published on July 6 [Annex 3].

## 2. DELEGATION

The Delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE monitored the elections in Armenia at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly had appointed the following Delegation:

Annette JUST . . . . .	Denmark, Head of Delegation
Vaclav CUNDRLE . . . . .	Czech Republic
Jan DECKER . . . . .	Czech Republic
Jaromir KALUS . . . . .	Czech Republic
Tomás STERBA . . . . .	Czech Republic
Tõnu KAUBA . . . . .	Estonia
Liisa HYSSÄLÄ . . . . .	Finland
Christos K. VIZOVITIS . . . . .	Greece
V. BRAKATSOULAS . . . . .	Greece
A. APOSTOLOU . . . . .	Netherlands
Varujan VOSGANIAN . . . . .	Romania
Victor I. PICA . . . . .	Romania
Tone TINGSGÅRD . . . . .	Sweden

The Delegation was accompanied by the following four members of the International Secretariat:

Eric RUDENSHIOLD . . . . .	Programme Director
Abigail CARTER . . . . .	Programme Administrator
Gustavo PALLARÉS . . . . .	Assistant
Stig KJELDEN . . . . .	Assistant

## 3. PROGRAMME

The observer programme for the OSCE Delegation of parliamentarians was prepared together with the Armenian Parliament and the Armenian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly [Annex 2]. When arranging the programme the Secretariat also cooperated with field representatives of the National Democratic Institute For International Affairs and the OSCE ODIHR. The Delegation attended some briefings jointly with the Delegation of the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

## 4. PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT AND OBSERVATIONS

These were the first, multi-party, post-communist elections held in Armenia after the country gained independence on 21 September 1991. Since then, Armenia has purportedly been engaged in the construction of a state "based on the principles of freedom and democratic institutions." Despite a lack of democratic traditions which has apparently hindered the process, some successes have been achieved.

Armenia exhibits many active political parties. An apparently vigorous and generally peaceful election campaign was conducted. Opposition party ideas and concerns were adopted into the political process resulting in increased safeguards during voter registration, and the inclusion of numerous election monitors and party proxies. The pre-election period was, however, marred by the Government's suspension of one of the largest opposition parties--the *Dashnak* party (Armenian Revolutionary Federation--ARF)--suspended by a decree of President Levon Ter-Petrosian on 29 December 1994. The decree accused the opposition party of organizing a terrorist group, of committing political murders and of drug trafficking. The Armenian Supreme Court confirmed the presidential decree and, on 13 January 1995, suspended the *Dashnak* party for a period of six months. This decision resulted in precluding the opposition party from running in the July 5 parliamentary elections. Apart from the Dashnaks, another four parties and a total of over 500 candidates were also reportedly excluded from the elections, because the Central Election Commission (CEC) considered their applications invalid.<sup>1</sup>

***The standards used to examine party and candidate registration forms appear to have been uneven, with opposition representatives subjected to closer scrutiny than ruling party candidates.*** The vast majority of disqualified candidates were either independent or affiliated with opposition parties. The opposition in general accused the government of interfering in the election process to gain influence on election and referendum results. On June 16, some 15,000 people attended a demonstration in Yerevan organized by 10 opposition groups to protest candidate registration irregularities, and to call for the resignation of the President.

### The Electoral System

The new National Assembly will consist of 190 deputies. Of this total, 150 are elected through a majoritarian system--with one deputy coming from each of the 150 voting districts. The other 40 deputies are elected from party/bloc lists through a proportional representation system. In the proportional system the country is not divided into districts.

### Nomination and Registration of Candidates

According to the new electoral law, the candidates under the proportional system are required to secure between 10,000 and 12,000 voter signatures in support of the list. Candidates for the majoritarian system need between 500 and 700 voters from the given electoral district to sign in support of each candidacy.

Several opposition party representatives complained about interference and improper practices by electoral authorities during the registration process. The Delegation heard reports of some CEC officials carrying weapons when going door to door to check voter signatures on candidate petitions. Several parties and candidates were denied registration on the charge of presenting invalid or false

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<sup>1</sup> Armenian Assembly of America.

signatures. Delegation members received several different answers from top government officials regarding how many false or unverifiable signatures would be necessary to deny the registration of a candidate. **A lack of uniformity in the application of the election law, in its interpretation, in its application, and a lack of specificity in the law's procedures and provisions appear to have caused some serious problems during the pre-election period. Some parties and candidates may have gained an unfair advantage or may have been eliminated from the election, due to inequitable treatment.** More than 700 complaints were reportedly presented to the CEC.

A number of independent candidates withdrew their names during the campaign period. **Reports of violence and threats against independent candidates were heard by the Delegation from a sufficient number of different sources to credibly believe some intimidation did take place.**

#### Resolution of Complaints and Disputes

**The grievances and appeals procedure for registration and campaign issues was slow and incapable of dealing with the vast numbers of candidates and complaints.** Although one court official admitted that the system had difficulties in resolving each case within three days, he also stated that so many candidates had not been anticipated. A discrepancy between the old and new laws was apparently a further hinderance, by requiring all appeals to be channelled through one court, thus slowing the process down further. Some cases were not scheduled to be heard until after the election had been contested. **It appeared to the Delegation that some candidates may have been unfairly prohibited from the election process and denied due process of an appellate resolution.**

#### Defining Constituencies and Voter Registration

The republic was divided into 150 electoral districts which were then divided into electoral precincts of between 100 and 3,000 voters. **Voter lists were to have been updated by local election commission officials, however, this did not appear to have been done uniformly.** Although voter lists were computerized, some election commission officials disclosed to observers that as many as 15% of the names listed no longer lived within the given precinct. Estimates of nearly 25% of the Armenian population have left the country in the last five to seven years, which corresponds with door-to-door election surveys conducted by opposition parties indicating a 25% vacancy rate in Armenian dwellings. However, some voter registration lists were even said to have increased in size (by as much as eight percent), due to an influx of Azeri refugees. This despite a CEC ruling precluded refugees from participating in the elections. **The Delegation was troubled by an apparent lack of proper voter registration procedures or compilation of timely voter lists on the one hand, while on the other denials of candidate registration were based upon the same, old registration lists.**

### Campaigning and the Role of the Media

Provisions in the election law guaranteed candidates the right to use state-owned media within the limits of the united elections fund, and the right to pay for additional space/time. **According to several sources, there may have been some irregularity in the implementation of these provisions and the ability of opposition candidates to use the media** [see Media section 5.2]. No campaigning was legally allowed on election day.

### The Referendum on the Constitution

A new Armenian Constitution was adopted by the Supreme Council (April 1995), but ratification was required through a public referendum, also slated for the same day as the Parliamentary elections. The new basic law would give the President of the Republic increased powers, including the ability to dissolve Parliament, to appoint the Prime Minister and Supreme Court Justices, and ultimate power over military matters. The referendum question asked voters to decide on the adoption of the Constitution passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia. Voters were requested to cross out the option they did not agree with.

The observers noted several anomalies in the Armenian referendum process. Of greatest concern was **an intense, pre-referendum campaign conducted by the government in order to pass the Constitution which greatly overshadowed opposition points of view**. Hundreds of thousands of copies of the basic law--including a sample ballot calling for an affirmative vote--were distributed before the referendum and also displayed at some polling stations. Media coverage, posters and leaflets blanketed the country promoting a "yes" vote. The same posters and banners had also been placed in many of the polling sites visited by observers on election day. A simple majority of votes was needed for the new Constitution to be adopted.

### Voting Procedures

The polling stations were originally required to be open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm local time. On election day the closing time was extended to 10:00 pm. The electoral law allows for polling stations to change hours or venue in "exceptional cases." Polling stations were required to be equipped with secret ballot booths or rooms, ballot distribution points and ballot boxes. The ballot boxes were to be placed in a location visible for the majority of those entitled to be present at the polling stations. Mobile ballot boxes for the elderly or hospitalized were provided by law only for the referendum and not for the Parliamentary elections.

Ballots were to be issued only upon the basis of the "certificate of the right to vote." A voter received this upon registration at the polling station. In order to register, the voter had to be listed on the electoral (voter) lists, and had to present a passport or other proof of identity.

International observers and domestic monitors representing candidates or political parties/blocks were allowed to be present at the polling stations (no more than two representatives per candidate or party/block could be present at any one polling

site). Two weeks prior to the election, the Supreme Court ruled that domestic monitors not affiliated with parties and candidates would also be allowed at the polling stations.

Three ballots were to be presented to each voter on the day of election: one for the referendum, and one for each of the majoritarian and proportional systems to select the Supreme Council. Ballots for the majoritarian system were required to be printed in alphabetical order by last name. Proportional system ballots were printed in alphabetical order by name of the registered political organization or political block. The voter was required to cross out all names of candidates and parties/blocks, except for the name of the candidate and party/block preferred. Any question regarding the validity of a ballot was to be voted on by the electoral committee.

While some international observers were concerned about the process of marking out all unwanted names on the ballot, this was the standard practice throughout the Soviet era and well known to Armenian voters. ***However, the complexity of the ballots themselves, a lack of voter education, and the large number of choices may have caused the many instances of voter confusion observed by the Delegation, as well as the large number of invalid ballots.***

#### Validity of Elections and the Election of Deputies

There is no minimum threshold of voters required in the Armenian election law for a constituency to be declared legally valid. Candidates for the majoritarian system needed to receive a simple majority, although no fewer than 25% of the total number of valid votes in the first round. The proportional system required that a block or party receive 5% of all valid votes in order to be seated. If, in a district with more than two candidates, no candidate received 25% of the valid votes, a second round of elections would be held between the first and second candidates. If, in a district with only two candidates, neither candidate received 25% of the valid vote, the seat would remain unfilled.

#### Referendum Results

The new Armenian Constitution was adopted by the approval of 68% of participating voters (37.8% of all eligible voters): 828,370 (68%) voted in favor of the Constitution, and 349,721 (28.7%) voted against, with 39,440 (3.2%) ballots declared invalid. A total of 1,217,531 (55.6%) of the 2,189,804 eligible voters participated in the referendum.<sup>2</sup>

#### Election Results

The country-wide majoritarian lists provided more than 1,500 candidates for the voter to choose from. Out of the possible 150 seats in the majoritarian system, 123 were filled. The remaining 27 seats will be contested during a second round of voting on July 29 (15 seats to be decided between the top two vote-getting

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<sup>2</sup> Supreme Council of the Republic of Armenia, Department of External Relations.

candidates, 12 seats to be partially or wholly re-run due to complaints or protests). All 40 of the proportional list seats were filled during the first round.

### CANDIDATES ELECTED FROM PARTY LISTS<sup>3</sup>

<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total Seats</u>
"Republic" Union	329,300	42.66%	20
"Shamiram" Union	130,252	16.88%	8
Arm. Communist Party	93,353	12.10%	6
Nat'l Democratic Union	57,966	7.51%	3
Nat'l Union for Self-Determination	42,987	5.57%	3
Liberal-Democ. Party	19,437	2.52%	0
Kamk-Hay Dashnaktsutyn	15,424	2.00%	0
Arm. Democratic Party	13,874	1.79%	0
Agrarian-Democ. Party	12,143	1.57%	0
Mission Party	10,426	1.35%	0
Scientific-Industrial & Civil Union	9,940	1.29%	0
National State	8,397	1.09%	0
Public Organizations	6,706	0.87%	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>750,205</u>	<u>97.20%</u>	<u>40</u>

## 5. ELECTION OBSERVATIONS

In the observations, as well as in the recommendations, this report concentrates on the Parliamentary elections. Much of what is said, though, also concerns the referendum.

### 5.1. LEGAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS

#### The Electoral Law

***a) The election law does not provide procedures for Armenian citizens living abroad to vote, however, the Delegation was told that expatriates could vote in consulates and other specified locations. There was no explanation of how this would take place.***

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<sup>3</sup> Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Armenia to the OSCE.

*b) Due to having two separate laws governing the referendum/election process, mobile ballot boxes provided hospitalized or elderly voters only the right to cast ballots in the referendum and not the elections.*

*c) The election law set limits on campaign financing for candidates and political parties, but no problems were reported to the Delegation regarding hardships or unfair restraints.*

*d) The appeals processes for both the CEC and the court systems were insufficient and slow to the number of grievances lodged. Because of this, protests were not addressed in a timely manner and the ability of some candidates to participate in the elections may have been denied.*

*e) Compared to pro-governmental candidates, the method used for disqualifying candidates and parties based on the signatory lists seems to have been applied more stringently towards independents and candidates from opposition parties.*

*g) The denial of registration to some political parties also changed the composition of local election commissions generally in favor of pro-governmental parties. Independent candidates were also unable to secure any form of representation in the local election bodies. This imbalance of political representation on local commissions may have resulted in biased resolutions of grievances presented before, during and after elections.*

## 5.2. THE MEDIA

*a) In general little to no voter information on the electoral process was published or disseminated before the election. There seemed to have been almost no effort to educate voters on voting procedures, ballot design, or any other aspect of the electoral process. This may have contributed to the extraordinarily large number of invalid votes cast on election day. A total of 34.7% of all votes cast for the proportional representation system were invalid (411,743 out of 1,183,573 ballots).*

*b) The lack of balanced media coverage also resulted in reduced public discussion and debate over the issues. A heavy bias in the media coverage apparently allowed state-supported candidates greater publicity. In addition, pro-governmental spokespersons appeared on television and in newspapers threatening dire consequences (including a suspension of foreign aid) and civil war for the Armenian population, if voters selected opposition candidates and parties in the elections. Although stating a political viewpoint is not in itself a problem, the opposition was obviously unable to provide counter arguments because of relatively reduced access to the press.*

**c) There was also little to no debate in the press over the new Constitution; only the governmental point of view seemed to have been presented. In fact, the primary goal of the media seems to have been only to promote a "yes" vote in the referendum. Most major newspapers even displayed sample ballots showing a "yes" vote.**

**d) Several candidates and party officials complained to the Delegation about the actual campaign press coverage. Although candidates were guaranteed by law an equal amount of time on television, some opposition candidates charged that electricity supplies were turned off during their broadcasts, and resumed after their time was up. In these cases the candidate was considered to have used all of the allotted time and was not granted further coverage. The Delegation could not substantiate any definite patterns, as the country is plagued with power outages.**

The Delegation concludes that the media did not fulfill its role as a clearinghouse for information in the pre-election period. Due to the small number of media outlets (i.e. the limited run of newspapers, a state monopoly of printing facilities, and central control of television and radio outlets), the press remained closely controlled by, or in the hands of, the state.

### 5.3. OBSERVATIONS AT POLLING STATIONS

On election day the OSCE Parliamentary Delegation divided into five groups which visited more than 60 polling stations, covering 15 out of 37 administrative regions of Armenia [see Annex 1]. The Delegation concentrated on the Yerevan region, however, which is home to more than half the population of Armenia. The monitors arrived at the polling stations prior to commencement, and observed opening procedures. Members of the Delegation were also present at the closing of polling stations, monitored closing procedures, and the counting of votes.

The Delegation found that proper procedures were generally followed:

***In most polling stations the conditions and practical arrangements were satisfactory and in accordance with the law: Good order was maintained, ballot papers were available, and the voting booths were safe. The ballot boxes were sealed and in most cases properly guarded. (In many instances local officials were witnessed constructing additional voting booths in order to speed the process, and to maintain a secret ballot.) Adherence to the one-man one-vote principle was generally observed, as was the sanctity of the secret ballot.***

The Delegation did, however, observe some irregularities and breaches of proper procedures:

**a) Some polling stations were overcrowded, resulting in problems with ballot control and other potential procedural violations. Overcrowding often seemed the result of poor organization on the part of local commission officials.**

**b) Election posters and leaflets for some, but not all, candidates running in a district were observed in some polling stations.**

**c) Posters, leaflets, and sample ballots urging voters to vote "yes" in the referendum were in evidence at many polling stations.**

**d) In less than 10% of the polling stations voters were observed collecting, marking or depositing two or more sets of ballots for both the parliamentary and referendum questions. This kind of family voting, while against the Armenian election law and Constitution, and contrary to the democratic principles of one-man one-vote, was comparatively rare and did not appear to place the overall fairness of the elections in question.**

**e) In some polling stations two or more voters were observed entering the voting booth together. In these cases the persons seemed to be members of the same family. Some voters were also witnessed marking their ballots outside the booths. The officials did not always intervene in these cases.**

**f) In accordance with the law, mobile ballot boxes were observed to be used apparently only for the referendum and not for the elections.**

**g) Although the polling station closing time could legally be extended (from 8pm to 10pm) under "exceptional" circumstances, there was no standard provision on election day to notify polling stations--some were informed by telephone, others only heard the news on the radio.**

**h) While there appeared to be a high voter turnout, some people may have been discouraged by the long lines caused by poor organization at some polling stations.**

**i) The ballot design appeared to be hard to read and understand for old as well as young voters. Virtually no voter education or instructions were provided in advance.**

**j) The voter registration procedure, which included the completion of a new, two-sided registration form, was exceedingly slow. Although this added safeguard was adopted for further security, it made the overall process for the voter and officials far more time consuming. The Delegation reported the average time for voter registration and casting ballots ranged from ten to forty minutes.**

**k) The Delegation observed remarkably large numbers of domestic monitors and political party proxies--between five and 38 per polling**

*station—representing each of the parties having candidates on the ballot. These monitors kept parallel vote counts, but often complained over not being able to see registration and other procedures. Although they played a crucial role in securing a free election, a small number of domestic monitors and party proxies were observed to be interfering in the process and even berating local election officials. In a few polling stations visited by the Delegation, party proxies were handing out campaign leaflets.*

*l) There seemed to be little standardization among polling stations concerning voting procedures, organization of local election commissions and other activities on election day. For instance, while one polling station might require three official signatures on a ballot for validation, another required seven commissioners' signatures.*

*m) A Delegation team was turned away from a military voting site, although the regulations did allow for international observers to be present.*

Most irregularities, however, seemed not to have been intentional. In general, a lack of experience, training and organization of local election commissions was apparently to blame.

#### 5.4. COUNTING OF VOTES

Members of the Delegation observed closing and vote counting procedures. No irregularities were observed.

### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Armenia exhibited some remarkable democratic progress during its first multi-party parliamentary elections. The vast majority of polling stations were run efficiently and special care was given to preserve the sanctity of the secret ballot and the one-person one-vote principle. Throughout an active political campaign, popular participation was generally spirited and peaceful. In order to improve the shortcomings of these elections, however, the following recommendations are suggested by the Delegation:

The pre-election period is an integral component of an election. **1) It is vital that all voices be given an opportunity to participate in the election process.** Banning political parties reduces voter choice, changes the balance of local election commissions, and calls the overall legitimacy of the election process into question for some Armenian citizens. **2) Equal standards for the application, interpretation and protection of the law must be applied to all parties and candidates.** One uniform standard of law should apply to ruling party candidates, opposition party candidates, and for independents. **3) A timely appeals procedure needs to be**

***implemented that will fairly address grievances before the elections take place.***

***4) The government and the Central Election Commission must provide up-to-date voter lists, for use in the registration of candidates and the identification of voters. 5) The officials in polling stations must be instructed in standardized methods for organizing and operating polling stations in order to avoid overcrowding, potential system abuses, etc. Proper information, training and education should correct most of the procedural problems that were observed.***

***6) The government must not attempt to influence the outcome of the electoral or referendum processes, the press coverage, or the events surrounding the elections. 7) Greater balance for both sides of political issues and between candidates must be provided. For voters to make informed decisions, they must be educated about each of the choices on a ballot. 8) Voter education campaigns would also be useful for describing the registration system, the ballot design, and voting procedures. 9) Voter registration procedures need to be simplified while maintaining the same precautions for security. 10) Domestic monitors and proxies should be allowed to observe registration procedures.***

Annette Just  
Head of Delegation

## Annex 1

## ELECTION DAY

On Wednesday, July 5, the Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was divided into the following groups, covering many of the regions of the Republic of Armenia:

**Group 1 . . . Yerevan, Spitak, Aparan, Aragatz**

Annette JUST . . . . . Denmark, Head of Delegation  
Tone TINGSGÅRD . . . . . Sweden

**Group 2 . . . Yerevan, Hrazdan, Krasnoselsk, Taush, Ijevan, Noyemberian, Echmiadzin**

Vaclav CUNDRLE . . . . . Czech Republic  
Jan DECKER . . . . . Czech Republic  
Jaromir KALUS . . . . . Czech Republic  
Tomas STERBA . . . . . Czech Republic  
Abigail CARTER . . . . . International Secretariat

**Group 3 . . . Yerevan Area**

V. BRAKATSOULAS . . . . . Greece  
Christos VIZOVITIS . . . . . Greece  
Stig KJELDEN . . . . . International Secretariat

**Group 4 . . . Yerevan, Sevan, Kamo, Kotayk, Gugark**

Tõnu KAUBA . . . . . Estonia  
Liisa HYSSÄLÄ . . . . . Finland  
A. APOSTOLOU . . . . . The Netherlands  
Victor I. PICA . . . . . Romania  
Varujan VOSGANIAN . . . . . Romania  
Gustavo PALLARÉS . . . . . International Secretariat

**Group 5 . . . Yerevan Area**

Eric RUDENSHIOLD . . . . . International Secretariat

Annex 2

ELECTION MONITORING PROGRAMME  
DELEGATION OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (JULY 1 - 6, 1995)

Saturday, July 1

Evening                      Arrival of the Delegation to Yerevan, Armenia

Sunday, July 2

12:30 - 14:00              Meeting with Mr. Kim Balayan, Chairman of the  
Standing Committee on Juridical Questions of the  
Armenian Supreme Council. Information on the  
Constitution and the Electoral Law.

19:00 - 21:00              Briefing on the political situation in Armenia by  
representatives of the National Democratic Institute  
(NDI). Hotel Dvin.

Monday, July 3

09:00 - 13:00              Separate meetings with representatives of the following  
political parties:

*Party Ramkavar Azatakan of Armenia (Liberation  
Democratic Party):* Roupen Mirzakhanian, Vatche  
Kaltsian and Hovig Gorgekian

*Union of Self-Determination:* Parurir Hayrikian, Susane  
Avakian, Vardan Astsaterian.

*Democratic Party of Armenia:* Karine Danielan, Aram  
Sarkistan

*Armenian All-National Movement:* M. Ovagimiam

*Dashnak Group of the Supreme Council of the Republic of  
Armenia:* Kim Balayan

*National Democratic Union:* Vazgen Manouikian and  
David Vardanian

*Scientific-Industrial and Political Union of Armenia:*  
Raphael Ghazaryan and M. Zoloumian

- 13:30 - 14:30 Meeting with representatives of the media.
- 16:00 - 18:00 Meeting with the Central Electoral Commission (CEC). Briefing for all international observers organized by the OSCE ODIHR/UN joint operation on election monitoring in Armenia.
- 18:15 - 19:15 Meeting with representatives of national minorities.
- 19:15 - 20:15 Meeting with the representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Tuesday, July 4

- 11:00 - 12:00 Meeting with Mr. Babken Ararktsian, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Armenia.
- 12:30 - 13:30 Meeting with Mr. Vahan Papazian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.
- 13:45 - 15:00 Meeting with Mr. Levon H. Ter-Petrosian, President of Armenia.
- 15:30 Reception offered to the Delegation by H.E. Leonidas Hrisanthopoulos, Ambassador of Greece, Hotel Armenia.
- 16:15 - 16:45 Meeting with Mr. T. K. Barsegian, President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Armenia.

Wednesday, July 5

- 7:00 - 23:00 Election day, monitoring of polling stations throughout the country (see Annex 1).
- 23:00 - 24:00 Meeting of the Delegation, Hotel Dvin.

Thursday, July 6

- 08:30 - 09:30 Meeting of the Delegation, Hotel Dvin.
- 10:00 - 11:30 Press Conference.
- Departure.

## Annex 3

## OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Press Release 6-7-95

Parliamentary Elections in Armenia

A delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the parliamentary elections in Armenia on 5 July 1995 at the invitation of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Armenia. The Delegation, which was led by Annette Just, Member of the Parliament of Denmark, included 13 parliamentarians from eight countries and four members from the International Secretariat. Countries represented in the delegation include: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania, and Sweden.

During their visit to Armenia, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation met with representatives from registered and unregistered political parties, the mass media, the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission, the President of the Supreme Council, the President of Armenia, the Chairman of the Supreme Court, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, members of national minority groups, and non-governmental organizations.

On election day, members of the Delegation visited 15 administrative regions of Armenia, including Yerevan, and 60 polling stations, including their opening and closings.

The Delegation congratulates the government of Armenia for holding its first multi-party elections and recognizes this effort as a first and vital step towards democratic development. The Delegation also strongly encourages the citizenry of Armenia to participate in any subsequent rounds of voting that may be necessary to seat the new Parliament. In order for Armenia to take further steps in the democratization process, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation believes it is vital for the population of the republic to continue to participate fully and peacefully in all aspects of the electoral process. If election results or procedures are disputed, they must be protested through the appropriate legal channels and exhausted in the appeals process.

It is the opinion of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation that a lack of democratic traditions (both in governmental bodies and in the politically active population) in Armenia may have caused some difficulties in the electoral process in the republic. However, these were not determined to be the sole reason for all of the problems which were observed. The delegation considers that the elections, while generally well run in terms of procedures on the day of the elections, were also seriously marred by other pre-election conditions. Therefore, the delegation believes that the elections may only be considered by international standards as generally free but not fair.

The government is to be commended for allowing large numbers of domestic monitors to be an integral part of the election process. Inviting international monitors to observe elections is also an important step in opening up the electoral process. The following areas were highlighted as significant problems by Delegation members calling into question the fairness of the overall process (particularly in the pre-election period):

1) Level Playing Field--

a) A six-month ban on the activities of an entire political party (as opposed to individuals accused of crimes) resulted in the removal of a major opposition voice from the elections process.

b) A significant number of accusations of violence and intimidation against independent candidates (to encourage their withdrawal from the election) were heard by the delegation from a sufficient number of sources to raise reasonable speculation that such instances occurred.

2) Election Law and Implementation--

a) The system to resolve complaints and grievances within the time required was insufficient to address the large number of appeals that were made. This potentially precluded some candidates from participating in the elections.

3) Election Management & Conduct--

a) A lack of standardized procedures and training of local polling station workers resulted in disparities in conditions between polling sites. Although this may not have been intentional on the part of authorities, it belied the fact that apparently no effort was made to educate officials on correct procedures for democratic elections.

b) Voter lists appeared to be grossly outdated and included large numbers of voters who no longer reside in those districts.

4) Voter Information, Media Access & Coverage--

a) Although technical problems and a lack of media sources exist in Armenia, insufficient press coverage resulted in significantly large numbers of voters not knowing anything about candidates, platforms, or referendum issues.

b) Interference from the executive branch of government was blatantly obvious regarding the referendum through the broadcasting and distribution of biased information to voters and displayed at polling sites.

The Delegation wishes to note that although procedural and technical violations were witnessed in some polling stations, this generally appeared to be due to poor organization by local officials. Proper procedures at polling stations were observed to be more the rule than the exception. Adherence to the one-man one-vote principle was generally observed, as was the sanctity of the secret ballot. The Delegation also wishes to emphasize that a multiple number of parties and points of view were represented in the election, and there appeared to be a definite choice between candidates. This combination of circumstances allowed for generally free election activity on July 5. Pre-election flaws, however, marred overall election fairness.

Although the conduct of the elections and referendum in Armenia was not perfect, the Delegation urges the Armenian population to continue to strive for the republic's future democratic development through continued high turnouts in subsequent run-off elections.

The Delegation will immediately send its initial findings to the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, currently meeting in Ottawa, Canada, and will present its final report to the subsequent Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Stockholm, Sweden, scheduled for July 2-6, 1996.

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