

Observers: Kyrgyzstan's elections competitive but lacked meaningful voter engagement

International observers of Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary elections on 28 November concluded that they were competitive with a wide range of political options for voters to choose from, but lacked meaningful voter engagement due to a stifled campaign, constitutional changes weakening parliament, and extensive legislative changes to key aspects of the election. Election preparations were handled efficiently by the election administration and election day was peaceful, observers said in a statement.

The joint observation mission from the OSCE PA, OSCE/ODIHR, and PACE noted that the authorities displayed the political will to ensure clean elections, but strict enforcement of subsequent measures led to a cautious campaign. "While overall well run and competitive, yesterday's elections reflected this rushed approach," said Danish parliamentarian Peter Juel-Jensen, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission. "To fully meet international commitments, much greater care will need to be paid in the future to standard democratic processes."

Fundamental freedoms were generally respected in the campaign, but new higher education requirements for can-



didates significantly limited the number of citizens eligible to run, observers noted. "Democracy is about representation and if women, young people and those who don't have university diplomas are so severely limited in the right to run, we should not be surprised by the lack of voter enthusiasm," said Dutch parliamentarian Farah Karimi, Head of the OSCE PA delegation.

The international election observation totaled 351 observers from 41 countries, including 55 parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA. The PA delegation was supported by Andreas Baker, Stephanie Koltchanov, Nat Parry, Dimitrije Todoric, Manuchekhr Salokhudinov, Anastasiya Griadasova, and Emomali Mirzoev from the International Secretariat.

OSCE PA Bureau meets on eve of Ministerial Council in Stockholm

The OSCE PA's Bureau met Wednesday in a blended format in Stockholm ahead of the OSCE's 28th Ministerial Council for discussions on OSCE-related work.

Bureau members heard from Assembly President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Treasurer Peter Juel-Jensen (Denmark), Secretary General Roberto Montella, and Chairperson of the Permanent Council in Vienna Ambassador Ulrika Funered, who noted the importance of co-operation between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the OSCE.

Amb. Funered reported on the activities of the Swedish Chairpersonship and Minister Ann Linde's visits to participating States and field missions. She highlighted the need to reestablish trust and stimulate discussion within the OSCE.

President Cederfelt reported on her activities since the on-



line OSCE PA's Autumn Meeting. She highlighted, inter-alia, her visit to Turkey as an important step taken to reinforce co-operation on a number of key OSCE challenges.

Bureau members also discussed current international issues, including conflicts, migration challenges, the situation in Afghanistan, climate change and election observation activities.

Vice-President Shakirov addresses health conference and IPA CIS

Vice-President and Special Representative on Sustainable Development Goals Askar Shakirov (Kazakhstan) represented the PA at the International Conference on Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals and the 53rd Plenary Session of the IPA CIS in Saint Petersburg last week.

He informed about the increased attention of the OSCE PA on the health-security link and on how COVID has exacerbated social inequalities, urging for increased resilience-building. He

emphasized the role of parliamentarians in promoting relevant legislation, exercising oversight and mobilizing adequate resources for healthcare policies. "We have the power to ensure that our healthcare strategies are developed on the basis of inclusivity and equality," he said, also calling for depoliticized international cooperation on health. Addressing the IPA CIS plenary, Shakirov emphasized the importance of maintaining dialogue open among parliamentary assemblies.

Featured tweets @oscepa

The OSCE PA's Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement, Cypriot parliamentarian Kyriakos Hadjiyianni, tweeted on 27 November about a speaking engagement at Friedrich-Alexander University. He spoke at the university about the importance of civil society and the role of the OSCE PA. A particular focus of his speech was on science diplomacy, which he described as complementary to civil society.



MP Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis
@KHadjiyianni

I had a great opportunity to speak at the @FAU_Germany by #OCERlangen & present our views as @OSCEPA on the role of @civilsociety & the importance of @sciencediplomacy. Two complementary roles. Special 🙏 to the organizers of @insscide_eu. @STGS_FAU @eelisa_eu @AnnitaDemetriou