

OSCE parliamentarians observe presidential election in Uzbekistan



Daniela De Ridder and Reinhold Lopatka speak to the press in Tashkent, 24 October 2021

At a press conference in Tashkent on Monday, a joint observation mission from the OSCE PA, OSCE/ODIHR and the European Parliament said that despite important reforms in recent years, Sunday's presidential election in Uzbekistan was not truly competitive due to a lack of genuine pluralism and meaningful engagement between candidates and citizens.

Significant procedural irregularities were noted on election day, observers said, and Uzbekistan's legal framework does not yet fully comply with international standards for democratic elections. While fundamental human rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the constitution, they continue to be restricted by other legislation and are frequently not implemented in practice.

"This election has shown that the democratic reforms of recent years must be carried forward to confirm what has already been achieved," said Austrian parliamentarian Reinhold Lopatka, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the

short-term OSCE observer mission. "Full respect for basic freedoms and real competition among political forces, which were lacking here, will be essential to live up to the people's democratic aspirations."

German parliamentarian Daniela De Ridder, Head of the OSCE PA delegation, noted that observers were warmly welcomed in polling stations across the country. "However, we noted a number of old problematic habits with procedures often not followed, especially during counting," she said. "I hope that the high-level legal reforms we have noted will continue and impact all parts of society, strengthen the democratic political culture, and finally do away with these negative practices."

While election preparations were carried out professionally, large numbers of voters added to the voter lists without proper safeguards, observers said.

The international election observation totaled 366 observers from 44 countries, composed of 255 ODIHR experts and long- and short-term observers, 99 parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA, and 12 from the EP.

From the International Secretariat, the OSCE PA's delegation was supported by Andreas Baker, Stephanie Koltchanov, Farimah Daftary, Manuchekhr Salokhudinov, Daria Boyarskaya, Dimitrije Todoric, Nina Henke, Anna Di Domenico, Freyja Koci, Loic Poulain, and Guido Almerigogna.

Registration reminder for 2021 OSCE PA Autumn Meeting

Secretaries and staff of Delegations are kindly asked to register participants for the 2021 Autumn Meeting by 29 October. The Autumn Meeting is taking place in an online format on 3-4 November and the theme of the Parliamentary Conference is "Current Security Challenges: Focus on Afghanistan." Additional information about registration, as well as a detailed programme for the Autumn Meeting, can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2ZFXfro>

High-level PA delegation visits Uzbekistan to discuss reforms and co-operation with OSCE

A high-level OSCE PA delegation, composed of President Margareta Cederfelt (Sweden), Vice-President and Special Representative on Central Asia Pia Kauma (Finland), and Secretary General Roberto Montella concluded yesterday a series of official meetings seeking to further reinforce co-operation between the OSCE PA and Uzbekistan. The PA delegation met with the Chair of the Senate, Tanzila Narbaeva; the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber, Nurdinjon Ismoilov; the Head of the Delegation of Uzbekistan to the OSCE PA, Sadik Safoev; and other parliamentarians. Talks also took place with the Foreign Ministry, the OSCE Project Co-ordinator



in Uzbekistan, and representatives of civil society and the international community.

Discussions underlined the scope and depth of the reforms undertaken by Uzbekistan in recent years and addressed regional security challenges, in particular regarding the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

Special Rep. Guliyev discusses SE Europe with regional heads of OSCE field operations

The OSCE PA's Special Representative on South East Europe, Vice-President Azay Guliyev (Azerbaijan), has participated in this week's Regional Meeting of Heads of OSCE Field Operations in South-Eastern Europe. Guliyev spoke today at the meeting, outlining his plans to visit the region and informing colleagues that the PA will likely be observing the April 2022 Serbian parliamentary elections and the October 2022 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also reported on the recent Regional

Policy Dialogue with Legislators from South-Eastern Europe on the Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, co-organized by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE PA. The event, he said, underlined the key role of parliaments in addressing challenges posed by the rehabilitation, reintegration and prosecution of FTFs. Guliyev further stressed the value of parliamentarians' close co-operation with the CPC and field operations.