

## Albania's elections competitive and well run but lacked level playing field: observers



The President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, meets with Farah Karimi and Björn Söder in Tirana on 8 May 2025.

Albania's 11 May parliamentary elections were competitive and professionally managed, with the authorities rising to the challenge of organizing out-of-country voting for the first time and candidates mostly campaigning freely, but they were marked by widespread misuse of public resources and institutional power by the ruling party, while numerous reports of pressure on public employees and other voters as well as cases of intimidation were of concern, international observers said in a statement Monday.

The joint observation mission from the OSCE PA, ODIHR, PACE, and the European Parliament, found that the legal framework forms an adequate basis for holding democratic elections, although the need remains for comprehensive electoral reform. Shortcomings and ambiguities in the legal framework created uncertainty and limited accountability. Many longstanding recommendations remain unaddressed.

"The legal framework and institutional capacity enabled well-run elections, reinforcing a solid democratic foundation, but voters were not given a chance to hear a genuine exchange of political ideas," said Farah Karimi (Netherlands), Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observers.

Observers noted there was generally high confidence in the use of technology, although some concerns were expressed, mainly by the opposition. Preparations for the elections were efficient and election day itself was generally well assessed, but procedures were often not followed and a number of cases of intimidation and interference in the process were observed.

"The introduction of out-of-country voting is a commendable development that enables diaspora participation in elections. However, despite recent changes to the legal framework, some previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed," said OSCE PA head of mission Björn Söder (Sweden).

The independence and diversity of the media were undermined by untransparent financing, ownership concentration, and interference with editorial autonomy, which led to self-censorship among journalists and had a negative impact on the amount and quality of information available to the public. The lack of independent reporting also hindered the media's oversight role.

Observers also noted the misuse of state resources, with senior government representatives engaging in numerous official events that often overlapped with campaign messaging and included the announcement of social benefit programmes and infrastructure projects, giving the ruling party an undue advantage.

The election observation mission to Albania totalled 365 observers from 47 countries, composed of 238 ODIHR-deployed experts and long-term observers, 97 parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA, 22 from PACE, and 12 from the EP. The observation mission's findings will be presented at the 32nd Annual Session in Porto.

## Annual Session deadline reminder

Secretaries of Delegations of the OSCE PA are kindly reminded that participants to the upcoming Annual Session in Porto should register via the OSCE PA online registration platform by **Sunday 25 May**.

Please also note the following document deadlines for the Annual Session:

- Supplementary Items - **25 May 2025**
- Amendments to Committee Draft Resolutions - **15 June 2025**
- Amendments to Supplementary Items - **22 June 2025**

## CCT Vice-Chair Loperfido observes Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism

On 9 May, Emanuele Loperfido (Italy), Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, attended a ceremony in Pordenone, Italy, to commemorate Italy's Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism. In a social media post marking the occasion, Loperfido stated: "Terrorism still strikes. We honor all victims - many in uniform - who gave their lives for our freedom. Their memory drives us to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts, including through my activity in the @oscepa CCT."

Established as Italy's Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism by an act of parliament in 2007, 9 May marks the anniversary of the kidnapping and assassination of Italian statesman Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades, a far-left terrorist group. The event that Loperfido attended was organized in collaboration with the local Questura to commemorate the Capaci bombing, a terrorist attack carried out by the Sicilian Mafia in 1992



Emanuele Loperfido attends event in Pordenone, 9 May.

that killed magistrate Giovanni Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo, and three police escort agents. Notably present at the event was Falcone's armored escort vehicle, a symbol of Italy's fight against organized crime and terrorism.

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