

Observers: Kyrgyzstan's well-run presidential election impaired by uneven playing field



up to the aspirations of its people for a functioning democracy, fully fair competition on a level playing field is critical. This was not the case here.”

“The political environment has evolved rapidly recently, but it was clear early on that this election was dominated by Sadyr Japarov, whose visibility and funding dwarfed all others,” said Reinhold Lopatka, Head of the 44-member OSCE PA delegation and Special Representative on Central Asia. “While Kyrgyzstan has previously distinguished itself within the region for its level of political debate, discussion was more centered on personalities than programmes which may account for the relatively low turnout we have seen.”

The election was generally well organized and citizen observers were able to participate actively throughout the process, observers noted. The legal framework has been amended several times since the last presidential election, addressing some previous ODIHR recommendations. However, the laws on elections and referenda revealed gaps and ambiguities requiring regulation.

Despite a wide range of media outlets, there is little analytical or critical reporting amid excessive compensation claims in the courts for defamation charges, observers said.

From the International Secretariat, the OSCE PA Special Limited Election Observation Mission was supported by Gustavo Pallares, Andreas Baker, Manuchekhr Salokhudinov, Freyja Koci, and Stephanie Koltchanov.

Despite a large number of candidates and initiatives to improve the election process, the integrity of Kyrgyzstan's presidential election on 10 January was weakened by a major imbalance in the outreach and visibility of the candidates as well as allegations of misuse of public resources, said observers from the OSCE PA and OSCE/ODIHR in a statement issued Monday.

While all candidates were largely able to campaign freely and fundamental freedoms were generally respected, the campaign was dominated by the former acting president, whose financial and organizational resources were far greater than all other contestants, the observers found.

“The past months have been dramatic for the people of Kyrgyzstan and chaotic for its politics, but yesterday we saw a generally well-run process,” said Peter Juel-Jensen, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission. “However, if Kyrgyzstan is going to live

PA to participate in Chairmanship Opening, President Bowness to address Permanent Council

The OSCE PA will participate in the OSCE Chairmanship Opening events and several side meetings within the framework of the Annual Meeting of the Chairmanship with Institutions and Field Operations, on 14 and 15 January – all taking place online. OSCE PA President Peter Lord Bowness will address the OSCE Permanent Council on 21 January.

Observers note lack of real competition in Kazakhstan's parliamentary elections

Preparations for Kazakhstan's 10 January parliamentary elections were efficiently run, but an uncompetitive campaign and limitations on fundamental freedoms left voters without genuine choice, observers from the OSCE PA and OSCE/ODIHR said in a statement issued Monday. Observers found the legal framework not yet conducive to holding elections in line with OSCE commitments, despite a number of revisions introduced since the country's last parliamentary elections.

“We welcome the efficient organization of the elections, especially given the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which was rightfully not allowed to impact the exercise of voting,” said Kristian Vigenin, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission. “On the other hand, we remain concerned about the political environment elections took place in. OSCE principles call for unhindered pluralism and a flourishing, free and vibrant civil society: our hope is that the ‘listening state’ concept promoted by the President will truly enable this to happen and that all citizens' voices will be valued.”

The appointment and composition of commissions at all levels raised concerns about their independence, observers said. Election day was generally calm but was tarnished by concerted measures to prevent some domestic observers from an effective observation.



There are still major barriers to freedom of association and there are few political options, with no new parties registered since 2013. The political landscape is heavily dominated by the ruling party, and the distinction between party and government is often blurred. As all political parties contesting the elections supported the policies of the ruling party, the campaign was not competitive, and voters had no genuine choices.

The international election observation mission to the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan totaled 48 observers from 20 countries, including 41 ODIHR-deployed experts and long-term observers, and seven parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA. The PA's Limited Election Observer Team was supported by Farimah Daftary, Guido Almerigogna, Aidyn Kaiyrbekova, Anastasiya Griadassova, and Alexandra Toussaint.