

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

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**Participant organisation**

Europe in Law Association NGO  
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**Directed to OSCE/ODIHR**

**WORKING SESSION 3**

**Democratic institutions**

**Statement on the Situation of the Right to Free Elections in Armenia**

Europe in Law Association, NGO

There are serious systemic problems in Armenia in the area of the exercise and protection of the right to free and fair elections, which allow the ruling party and the incumbent president to ensure the desired results and remain in power. The Constitutional Referendum in 2015 and the Parliamentary Elections in 2017 are the best manifestations of this statement.

These systemic problems include abuse of administrative resources, problems of equal access to resources, and absence of effective remedies at domestic level. A number of observation missions during the Parliamentary Elections in 2017 detected impact on free will of the voters that could have affected the election results. **Other violations *inter alia* include** vote buying, directed voting, violation of the secrecy of the vote, violations of procedures during

summary of votes, electronic equipment failures, inconsistencies between electronic and paper-based voter lists, nearly 100% of participation of the military, violations in penitentiary and psychiatric institutions, as well as inaction by electoral commissions and the law enforcement bodies.

The complicated nature of the complaints procedure and problems related to the issue of legal certainty make it impossible for non-specialists to bring an election-related complaint. The electoral administration bodies are not effective, independent, impartial or fair. They are neither formed nor operate in a transparent manner. A vivid example of the said is that the same members of the CEC appointed by the President since 2011 were elected by the National Assembly after the Constitutional Changes. The courts do not act as effective legal remedy either.

The description of the current situation of democratic elections in more detail can be found in the report of the Citizen Observer Initiative //.

### **Recommendation.**

It is of utmost importance to deepen cooperation between civil society and OSCE/ODIHR, as well as other international experts in view of the fact that this cooperation has made it possible to reflect a number of very serious concerns of domestic experts in OSCE/ODIHR reports.