



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

ICELAND
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
27 APRIL 2013

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT
25-28 February 2013



Warsaw
25 March 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
III. FINDINGS	3
A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT.....	3
B. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM	3
C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION	5
D. VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER REGISTRATION	6
E. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATE LISTS	6
F. ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA	7
G. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE	8
IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	9
ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS	11

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I. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE to observe the upcoming 27 April 2013 parliamentary elections, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Iceland from 25 to 28 February 2013. The NAM included Tatyana Bogushevich, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, and Lusine Badalyan, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the parliamentary elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM was to recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions, the election administration, as well as with representatives of political parties, and media. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance and co-operation in organizing the visit. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for having taken the time to meet with the mission and sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The parliament of Iceland (*Althingi*) is a unicameral body composed of 63 deputies, elected for a four-year term. Members of parliament are elected through a proportional list system from six multi-member constituencies.

The pre-electoral environment is characterized by fragmentation of the political landscape. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors attributed the emergence of new political parties and their intention to contest the elections to the disappointment of the public with the traditional big parties and with politics in general. The economic crisis and social problems, such as household loans and unemployment, remain important topics and dominate the political discussion.

The legal framework governing the parliamentary elections comprises primarily the Constitution and the Parliamentary Election Act. In 2010, a constitutional review process was initiated, which is on-going. Some political parties favour full revision of the Constitution, while others would like to see only certain changes. While the legislation foresees observers from political parties and provides that the counting of ballots is open to the public, it does not provide for civil society and international election observation. Thus it does not ensure compliance with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. A long-standing problem is the lack of equality of the vote due to differences in the number of voters per mandate between constituencies. This was criticized by a number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors.

The responsibility for the organization of elections is shared between the Ministry of Interior, the National Registry, local authorities, as well as the National Election Commission (NEC), Senior Election Commissions (SEC) and Local Election Commissions (LEC). The division of responsibilities between various election commissions and executive bodies is not clearly defined in the law. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence and trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration.

The National Registry Office bears overall responsibility for the compilation and revision of a central database of registered voters, based on the population register. The voter lists are available for scrutiny in the municipalities ten days before election day, as well as on the internet. Corrections to the lists can be made up to election day. Early voting in-country and abroad starts eight weeks before election day, while the candidate nomination process is completed only two weeks before election day.

Candidate lists can be put forward by political organizations, which are assigned a letter of the alphabet as an identifier by the Ministry of Interior, after presenting 300 signatures of voters. Candidate lists are submitted to relevant SECs and should also be supported with signatures of voters from the relevant constituency. Guidance on how the supporting signatures should be collected, or the criteria or procedure for verification are lacking. The legislation does not provide for individual candidates, but individuals can present joint lists of candidates.

The election campaign and campaign coverage by the media are largely unregulated. There is no official campaign period. Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors mentioned broadcast and internet as the main sources of information during an election. The legal framework for the media has been undergoing reforms in the past years. According to draft amendments, which at the time of the NAM were pending approval in the final reading, the National Broadcaster (RUV) would be obliged to provide free airtime to all political parties contesting the elections. These changes were mostly welcomed by OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, however, the RUV expressed concerns regarding the proposed changes in view of the need to provide airtime to a potentially high number of contestants. The media plan to cover the campaign with a variety of formats, including debates.

Political parties and candidates may be funded from public subsidies and private donations. The National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for monitoring the finances of political parties and candidates. Some interlocutors deemed the scrutiny of financial reports by the NAO as not sufficiently scrupulous. Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated improvement in legal regulations and increased transparency of campaign and party finance after the 2010 and 2011 legal amendments. However, many mentioned that the legislation would benefit from clarification and further reform in a number of areas.

No significant concerns were expressed to the OSCE/ODIHR NAM related to the respect for fundamental freedoms, transparency of the electoral process, candidate registration, and election day proceedings. However, OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that the legal framework regulating media and media coverage of the campaign, as well as political party and campaign finance could benefit from review. They expressed an interest in OSCE/ODIHR's expertise in these areas and mentioned that a potential election-related activity and the subsequent recommendations would be of help for the reform process in Iceland.

In these circumstances, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission to specifically look into the issues outlined in this report, such as the legal

framework, political party and campaign finance, as well as media coverage of the campaign. The OSCE/ODIHR continues to stand ready to engage with the authorities in a follow-up process after the upcoming elections to assist them in addressing outstanding recommendations from OSCE/ODIHR's assessment of the 2009 early parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR is also prepared to provide legal opinions and advice on election legislation or drafts thereof should the authorities so request.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Iceland is a parliamentary republic. The political party that has the largest number of parliamentary seats forms the government.¹ The parliament (*Althingi*) is a unicameral body composed of 63 deputies, elected for a four-year term. The president of Iceland is directly elected and has certain constitutional powers, but has a largely representative role. On 26 February 2013, the Ministry of Interior set the date of general parliamentary elections for 27 April 2013.

Following the April 2009 early parliamentary elections, five political parties entered the parliament: the Social Democratic Alliance gained 20 seats, the Independence Party 16 seats, the Left-Green Movement won 14 seats, the Progressive Party 9 seats and the Citizens' Movement 4 seats. The political landscape has considerably changed and fragmented since the 2009 elections. The party Citizens' Movement transformed into a new party Dawn. Several members of parliament switched parties or established new parties. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors attributed the emergence of new political parties and their intention to contest the upcoming elections to the disappointment and disillusionment with the political parties that used to dominate the political landscape in Iceland.² In the outgoing parliament 27 of the 63 deputies are women (43 per cent).

The OSCE/ODIHR deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 2009 early parliamentary elections, which concluded that "Iceland has a long tradition of holding democratic elections, and these elections were conducted in keeping with that tradition."³ The final report offered a set of recommendations aiming at, among other things, improving the electoral legal framework, coverage of the electoral campaign by the media and electoral dispute resolution procedures.

B. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The legal framework governing the parliamentary elections comprises primarily the Constitution and the Parliamentary Election Act. A number of other applicable legal acts provide additional regulation, such as Broadcasting Act and the Law on Financial Affairs of Political Organizations and Candidates and Their Duty to Provide Information.

¹ Past governments have always been coalition governments of two or more parties.

² The Social Democratic Alliance, the Independence Party, the Left-Green Movement and the Progressive Party.

³ The OSCE/ODIHR's election-related reports for Iceland are available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/iceland>.

In 2010, the parliament initiated a review process of the 1944 Constitution, which was amended several times since its adoption. A publicly elected Constitutional Council was established and tasked to review the Constitution and to suggest amendments. Elections to the Constitutional Council took place in November 2010.⁴ However, the election results were appealed to the Supreme Court, which in January 2011 ruled the Council elections invalid. The Supreme Court decision, described by some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors as controversial, stated that the secrecy of the vote had been undermined and the counting had not been open to candidate representatives. Subsequently, members of the Council were appointed by the parliament and drafted suggestions for constitutional changes.⁵ In October 2012, a national referendum on the suggested constitutional changes was held with six questions on the ballot, all of which were supported by voters.⁶ By the time of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM the draft amendments were under consideration by the parliament.

Political parties that the OSCE/ODIHR NAM met with expressed different opinions on the changes to the Constitution. Some political parties favour a full revision while others, mostly the opposition, support certain amendments, primarily those changing the way in which the Constitution can be amended. Currently, when parliament adopts an amendment to the Constitution, it should be dissolved and a general election be held. The newly elected parliament should then approve the amendment in order for it to take effect.

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that a number of changes were introduced to the Parliamentary Election Act after the 2009 parliamentary elections, mostly of technical nature. Some of the substantive changes included the right of political parties not represented in election commissions to appoint representatives with advisory vote to the National and Senior Election Commissions, and the possibility for disabled voters to be assisted by their representative rather than by electoral officials. However, some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed the opinion that the electoral legislation should be further reviewed and improved after the 2013 parliamentary elections, in particular with regard to early voting, registration of candidate lists and electoral campaign provisions.

The Parliamentary Election Act provides for the presence of political party observers in polling stations on election day. In addition, the counting of ballots is open to the public. However, the law does not provide for civil society and international election observation and is thus not in compliance with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁷ Following its assessment of the 2009 early parliamentary elections, the OSCE/ODIHR recommended that the law be amended to introduce relevant provisions. The Ministry of Interior assured the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that, should the OSCE/ODIHR decide to deploy an election-related activity, full access would be granted to election administration bodies and the overall process.

⁴ Over 520 candidates competed for 25 seats.

⁵ On 16 November 2012, the Constitutional Committee of the parliament asked the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) to provide an opinion on the draft of the new Constitution. See the Venice Commission opinion on the draft at: [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2013\)010-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2013)010-e).

⁶ Three questions related to the electoral system and sought voters' opinion on: granting the right to individual candidates to run, ensuring equal weight to votes cast in all constituencies and possibility of organizing referenda upon the initiative of the electorate.

⁷ Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that participating States "consider the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from OSCE participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law".

For the purpose of parliamentary elections, the country is divided into six multi-member constituencies, the boundaries of which are defined by law. Members of parliament are elected through a proportional list system, with 54 seats allocated at the constituency level and the remaining 9 seats are allocated at the national level among parties that passed the five per cent threshold. These 9 “adjustment seats” are considered a compensatory measure to ensure proportionality at the national level. Political parties that are putting forward candidate lists determine the sequence of candidates on the ballot. However, voters can change the sequence of candidates by indicating their preference (preferential vote). According to OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors this possibility is not widely used by voters.

Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors mentioned the long-standing problem of the lack of equality of the vote.⁸ The OSCE/ODIHR EAM in 2009 recommended considering a review of the relevant legal provisions for the distribution of parliamentary seats in order to ensure compliance with the principle of equal suffrage. The legislation provides that if the number of voters per parliamentary seat in one constituency is more than half of the number of voters per seat in another constituency, the National Election Commission (NEC) should reallocate the seats after parliamentary elections to diminish the difference. Following the 2009 early parliamentary elections, one seat from the North-West Constituency was allocated to the South-West Constituency. However, considerable differences in the number of votes needed to elect a candidate within different constituencies remain. According to OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, this issue is not adequately addressed by the current legal provisions for the reallocation of seats.

The courts do not have any role in the adjudication of election-related complaints, unless those concern criminal matters. The NEC, the Senior Election Commissions (SECs) and the parliament have jurisdiction over election disputes. The newly elected parliament certifies the legality of elections and the eligibility of the elected members of the parliament.

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The responsibility for the organization of elections is shared between a number of state bodies, including the Ministry of Interior,⁹ the National Registry, local authorities, as well as the NEC, SECs and Local Election Commissions (LECs). The division of responsibilities between various election commissions and executive bodies is not clearly defined in the law. The Ministry of Interior oversees the technical preparations for elections and established a practice of holding regular meetings with all relevant bodies responsible for the organization of elections and with electoral stakeholders. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating out-of-country voting.

The NEC and the SECs in each of the six constituencies are composed of five members nominated by the parliamentary political parties and appointed by the parliament after each parliamentary election for a four-year period. The law does not provide clear criteria for the selection of commission members. The NEC and SECs elect their own chairpersons. LECs are formed by the municipalities and consist of three members. It is considered a civil duty to take up a seat in an election commission. LECs are responsible for organizing and conducting

⁸ Some two-thirds of the Icelandic population is concentrated in three constituencies: Reykjavik South, Reykjavik North and South-West Constituencies, returning 35 out of 63 seats.

⁹ Previously, this responsibility was vested with the Ministry of Justice. In 2011, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Transport were merged into the Ministry of Interior.

voting at polling stations and for transferring ballot boxes to the SECs, where the counting of ballots and tabulation of results takes place.

The legislation provides for early voting that starts eight weeks before election day, i.e. for these elections it started on 2 March. This is six weeks before the deadline for the submission of candidate lists (12 April). District commissioner offices are responsible for the organization of early voting in-country.¹⁰ Early voting abroad is taking place in Icelandic embassies and consulates; it can also take place at hospitals, prisons and ships at sea. Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors questioned the current requirement that voters abroad are responsible for mailing their ballot themselves. A voter may cast multiple early votes. The voter who voted early can also decide to vote at a polling station on election day. In case of multiple votes, only the last vote is counted. The OSCE/ODIHR indicated in the 2009 EAM report that while early voting remains an important feature of Icelandic elections, it would be timely to undertake a comprehensive review of the practice and relevant legal provisions to update and simplify procedures. It was also recommended that early voting should not begin before candidatures have been confirmed by the NEC.

OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence and trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. They raised no particular concerns regarding the technical preparations and the conduct of the upcoming elections.

D. VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens that are 18 years of age and older with permanent residence in Iceland have the right to vote. Voters residing abroad remain in the voter register for eight years, after which they have to apply to the National Registry for being included in it.¹¹ According to the National Registry the preliminary number of voters is about 240,000, with some 12,000 living abroad.

The National Registry Office bears overall responsibility for the compilation and revision of a central database of registered voters, based on the population register. After elections are called, the National Registry provides the voter lists by polling station to municipalities, where lists are made available for public scrutiny ten days before election day. Corrections to the lists can be made up to election day. Corrections regarding a new domicile are not allowed, unless the change took place five weeks before election day. Since 2010, voters can also check their entries in the register on the internet.

E. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATE LISTS

Candidate lists can be put forward by political organizations.¹² The Parliamentary Election Act does not provide for individual candidates, but individuals can join and present joint lists. The OSCE/ODIHR was informed of a complaint lodged with the authorities by several individuals intending to run as independent candidates, claiming that this possibility is provided by the Constitution.¹³ To contest elections, political organizations should be first assigned by the

¹⁰ There are 26 District Commissioner offices in the country, which are appointed by the Ministry of Interior and have wide administrative responsibilities.

¹¹ The decision to add a non-resident citizen to the register remains effective for a period of four years.

¹² According to the Parliamentary Election Act, political organizations are those that put forward candidates or have done so in previous elections.

¹³ Article 34 of the Constitution stipulates that every national having the right to vote and with “an unblemished reputation” is eligible to be elected to the parliament.

Ministry of Interior a letter of the alphabet as an identifier. The Ministry keeps a record of letters assigned to political organizations during the last parliamentary elections and publishes it no later than eight weeks before the parliamentary elections.¹⁴ Political organizations without assigned letters should apply to the Ministry of Interior no later than three days before the candidate nomination deadline, presenting 300 supporting signatures of voters.¹⁵

Candidate lists should be submitted to relevant SECs no later than 15 days before election day, i.e. on 12 April for the upcoming elections. Each candidate list must contain exactly double the number of candidates, as there are seats in the relevant constituency. Candidate lists should be supported by signatures of voters from the relevant constituency. The number of supporting signatures should be between 30 and 40 times the number of seats in the constituency. A voter can sign in support of only one candidate list. In cases when a SEC identifies that the voter signed for two lists, then the signature is not considered for any of the lists.

The law does not provide any guidance on how the supporting signatures should be collected, or on the criteria or procedure for their verification. Some political organizations intending to nominate candidate lists for the upcoming elections mentioned that SECs do not provide standardized guidance for collecting signatures, and that the requirements at times differ among constituencies. The NEC also acknowledged this issue. The OSCE/ODIHR recommended in 2009 that consideration should be given to developing standard forms and guidance for all constituencies in order to make the candidate registration process as inclusive, consistent and unambiguous as possible.

Most political parties met with by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM indicated that they conduct primaries for selecting candidates and adhere to an internal party quota of 60 per cent to 40 per cent for the representation of the different genders during the formation of their candidate lists.

F. ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA

The election campaign is largely unregulated with no official campaign period. Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors consider broadcast and social media as the main sources of information during the election campaign.¹⁶ Political parties mentioned the media, both broadcast and print, the internet, as well as meetings with voters as the main means of campaigning. The economic crisis and social problems, such as household loans and unemployment, remain important topics and dominate the political discussion. Other topics widely discussed in the run up to the elections are the potential constitutional amendments, including those related to the ownership of the country's national resources.

The main nation-wide television channels that provide news programming and coverage of electoral campaigns are the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RUV) and the private broadcaster Channel 2. There are also a number of local television stations. Radio channels, including public radio RUV, are also important sources of information.

The legal framework regulating the media primarily comprises the Broadcasting Act and the

¹⁴ The Ministry of Interior was due to publish the list of identifying letters assigned to the seven parties that participated in the 2009 parliamentary elections by 2 March.

¹⁵ The Ministry of Interior checks the signatures with the help of the National Registry office. According to the Ministry of Interior, at the time of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM seven new political parties had already applied for a letter.

¹⁶ Reportedly, some 85-90 per cent of the adult population of Iceland is registered on Facebook.

National Broadcasting Service Act. However, electoral campaign coverage by the media is not regulated. The legislation only generally requires respect for the freedom of speech and that the presentation of different opinions is ensured.

The legal framework for the media has been undergoing reforms in the past couple of years. The Broadcasting Act was amended in 2011. In addition, at the end of 2012 the Minister of Education established a multi-party committee tasked to study the 2009 OSCE/ODIHR media-related recommendations. The committee reviewed the recommendations and presented to the authorities suggestions for legal amendments. At the time of the NAM, the parliament voted in the second reading for the amendments to the National Broadcasting Service Act.¹⁷ According to the draft amendments, which at the time of the NAM were pending approval in the third and final reading, the National Broadcaster would be obliged to provide free airtime to all political parties contesting the elections. The OSCE/ODIHR recommended in 2009 that the provision of free airtime could be addressed in legislation in order to ensure consistent practice in each election. Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed this amendment and expressed hope that it would enter into force before the upcoming elections. However, the RUV expressed concerns regarding these potential changes in view of the need to provide airtime to a potentially higher number of contestants than in the past.¹⁸

RUV informed the OSCE/ODHIR NAM that it plans to organize two live debates with leaders of political parties contesting the elections and six live debates with different candidates. In addition, RUV intends to air 30-minute presentations of programs of each of the parties. Debates are also planned on public radio. RUV plans to actively use its internet page and social media accounts to provide information on the campaign and will encourage its users to pose questions for the candidates. Private Channel 2 also intends to organize debates, inviting parties that opinion polls show as having a chance of obtaining seats in parliament. It indicated that would attempt to provide coverage to other contestants as well.

A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed the opinion that it could be a challenge for the media to cover the campaign due to the large number of parties potentially contesting the elections and the fact that the final number of parties and their candidate lists will be known only two weeks before election day. A few political parties expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the media's coverage, especially for new political parties.

Paid advertising is allowed in all media. Some political parties informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that, as during previous parliamentary elections, there will likely be an inter-party agreement to set spending limits for the campaign in the media.

G. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that the Act on the Financial Affairs of Political Organizations and Candidates and Their Duties to Provide Information of 2006 (hereinafter Party and Campaign Finance Act) was amended in 2010 and 2011 to increase the transparency of political party and campaign finance. In December 2010, the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (GRECO) published an interim compliance report on

¹⁷ On 13 March the parliament adopted the amendments in the third and last reading.

¹⁸ The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that the legislature decided that the National Broadcasting Service would choose the format of providing free airtime.

transparency of party funding in Iceland, indicating that most of its previous recommendations were met.¹⁹

Political parties and candidates may be funded from public subsidies and private donations. Parties that obtain at least one seat in the parliament or receive more than 2.5 per cent of votes in the last general elections are entitled to public funding. According to the 2011 amendments to the Party and Campaign Finance Act, parties that contest elections in all six constituencies are entitled to claim campaign expenses for up to ISK 3 million.²⁰ In addition, funding is provided for the activities of parliamentary groups. Parties and candidates can also receive donations from legal entities and private persons not exceeding ISK 400,000. Anonymous donations and donations from state and foreign companies are not allowed. There is no spending limit for political parties; however, the act sets a spending limit for candidates.

The National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for monitoring the finances of political parties and candidates. Political parties are obliged to submit annual financial reports to the NAO by 1 October every year. After reviewing the reports, the NAO publishes its summaries. Some interlocutors deemed the scrutiny of financial reports by the NAO as not sufficiently scrupulous. The legislation does not require parties to provide separate campaign-related financial reports, while candidates are obliged to submit statements on campaign expenditures within 3 months of an election. The NAO informed that six parties did not submit the 2010 annual reports before the 1 October 2011 deadline. The Party and Campaign Finance Act foresees fines for not submitting reports or for submitting incomplete information to the NAO.²¹ However, the NAO informed that it uses publicity as a measure of control. GRECO noted in its 2010 compliance report that the authorities could consider introducing administrative sanctions to be used by the NAO in cases of violations of procedural rules.

Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated improvement and increased transparency of campaign and party finance after the 2010 and 2011 amendments to the Party and Campaign Finance Act. However, many mentioned that the legislation would benefit from clarification and further reform in a number of areas. In particular regulations on donations by ‘affiliated organizations’ lack clarity and are open for different interpretations, according to some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors.²²

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM noted the confidence of its interlocutors in the integrity of the electoral process and the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. No significant concerns were expressed related to the respect for fundamental freedoms, transparency of the electoral process, candidate registration, and election day proceedings. However, OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that the legal framework regulating media

¹⁹ See the GRECO compliance report at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3\(2010\)2_Interim_Iceland_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3(2010)2_Interim_Iceland_EN.pdf).

²⁰ The exchange rate is approximately 1 EUR : 160 ISK.

²¹ Article 12 of the Party and Campaign Finance Act. Article 5 of the same act also includes the general requirement that the right to public funding is subject to compliance with submission of relevant information to the NAO.

²² According to the Party and Campaign Finance Act, ‘affiliated organizations’ are legal entities in which the same parties hold a majority of the shares. Affiliated organizations may donate jointly up to the limit of ISK 400,000.

and media coverage of the campaign, as well as political party and campaign finance could benefit from review. They expressed an interest in OSCE/ODIHR's expertise in these areas and mentioned that a potential election-related activity and the subsequent recommendations would be of help for the reform process in Iceland.

In these circumstances, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission to specifically look into the issues outlined in this report, such as the legal framework, political party and campaign finance, as well as media coverage of campaign. The OSCE/ODIHR continues to stand ready to engage with the authorities in a follow-up process after the upcoming elections to assist them in addressing outstanding recommendations from OSCE/ODIHR's assessment of the 2009 early parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR is also prepared to provide legal opinions and advice on election legislation or drafts thereof should the authorities so request.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Emil Breki Hreggviðsson, Director of the Department of International Affairs
Jóhann Jóhannsson, Head of Consular Section

Ministry of Interior

Hermann Sæmundsson, Director of Human Rights and Local Government Department
Skúli Guðmundsson, specialist
Stefania Traustadóttir, specialist

National Election Commission

Sigríður Benediktsdóttir, Deputy Chairperson
Þórhallur Viljálmsson, Secretary

Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Parliament

Valgerður Bjarnadóttir, Chairperson of the Committee
Margrét Tryggvadóttir, Member of the Committee
Lúðvík Geirsson, Member of the Committee
Anna Margrét Guðjónsdóttir, Member of the Committee

Judicial Affairs and Education Committee of the Parliament

Skúli Helgason

State Audit Office

Sveinn Arason, Chairperson
Óli Jón Jónson, Information and International Relations Officer
Guðbrandur R. Leosson, Senior Auditing Officer
Lárus Ögmundsson, Manager

Registers Iceland

Ástríður Jónsdóttir, Legal Adviser

Constitutional Council

Salvör Nordal, Chairperson

Bright Future Party

Heiða Helgadóttir, Party Chairperson

Dawn

Þórður Björn Sigurðsson, Chairperson of the Executive Board
Sigurður Hr. Sigurðsson, Board Member
Friðrik Þór Guðmundsson, Candidate

Democracy Watch

Svanur Kristjánsson

Independence Party

Jónmundur Guðmarsson, Party Secretary
Svanhildur Hólm Valsdóttir, Political Adviser to the Chairperson

Karl Pétur Jónsson, Special Adviser

Left-Green Movement Party

Auður Lilja Erlingsdóttir, Party Secretary

Pirate Party

Herbert Snorrason

Progressive Party

Einar Gunnar Einarsson, Office Manager

Anna Kolbrún Árnadóttir, Special Assistant to the Secretary General

Right Green Party

Guðmundur Franklín, Party Chairperson

Svanur Sigurðsson, Party Secretary

Social Democratic Alliance

Sigrún Jónsdóttir, Party Secretary

Media

Sigríður Hagalín, National Broadcasting Service RUV, Editor of Election Coverage

Kristjan Mar Unnarsson, Channel 2, Chief of News

Finnur Beck, Media Committee, Chairperson

Björn Þorláksson, Media Committee on behalf of Left Green Movement

Eysteinn Eyjólfsson, Media Committee on behalf of Social Democratic Alliance

Friðrik Þór Guðmundsson, Media Committee on behalf of Citizens' Movement

Sunna Gunnars Marteinsdóttir, Media Committee on behalf of Progressive Party