



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

CZECHIA

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 3 and 4 October 2025

ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

27 – 30 May 2025



Warsaw
17 July 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
III. FINDINGS	3
A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT	3
B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM	5
C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION	6
D. VOTER REGISTRATION	7
E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION	8
F. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT	8
G. CAMPAIGN FINANCE.....	9
H. MEDIA.....	10
I. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION	12
J. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS	12
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	12
ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS.....	13

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ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report

I. INTRODUCTION

In anticipation of an invitation to observe the 3 and 4 October parliamentary elections in Czechia, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 27 to 30 May 2025. The NAM was composed of Kseniya Dashutsina, ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, and Ranko Vukčević, ODIHR Election Adviser.

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

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its co-operation and assistance in organizing the NAM. ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 13 May 2025, President Petr Pavel called parliamentary elections for 200 members of the Chamber of Deputies for 3 and 4 October. The Chamber of Deputies is elected under a proportional system through 14 regional open candidate lists. Pre-election preparations unfold amidst a highly competitive and deeply polarized political environment, with significant divisions between the governing coalition and the main opposition.

These elections will be held under a largely unchanged legal framework, as most changes following the 2024 electoral reform will apply from 2026. Amendments applicable to the upcoming elections are limited to postal voting for citizens residing abroad. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered the legal framework conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. However, some previous ODIHR electoral recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to the lack of safeguards against misuse of office and state resources during the campaign, insufficient regulation of media ownership and cross-ownership, and the continued underrepresentation of women in political life. In this context, some interlocutors emphasized that legal framework would benefit from additional, detailed review to identify areas for future improvement of both the legislation and its implementation ahead of future electoral cycles.

The elections are administered by a decentralized, four-tiered structure led by the State Election Commission (SEC), supported by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Electoral preparations are ongoing, and all ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the election administration at all levels. While the meetings of the SEC are not public, the media

are invited to key sessions, and decisions are published. The election administration plans to conduct comprehensive voter information, primarily focusing on procedural aspects of voting. In line with 2024 legislative amendments to the Act on the Right to Digital Services, voters will be able to identify themselves using electronic identification documents for the first time. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted the importance of assessing how the election management bodies respond to broader public concerns, particularly in relation to the introduction of postal voting and the potential for external interference.

Citizens aged 18 years or older are eligible to vote, although the legislation continues to disenfranchise persons deprived of legal capacity, including those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. A 2024 legal amendment addressing this issue will enter into force only after the 2025 elections. For these elections, voter registration remains decentralized and passive. Preliminary voter lists are not published, and voters omitted from the lists may still be added on election days upon proof of residence. There are some 8.3 million registered voters for the upcoming elections. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of the voter register.

Citizens eligible to vote may stand as candidates if they are at least 21 years old by the second election day. Candidates may be nominated through registered political parties, movements, or coalitions, and the legislation does not allow for independent candidacies. All political parties met by the ODIHR NAM stated their intention to nominate candidates, and none foresaw challenges with candidate nomination or registration.

Following the 2024 amendments, eligible citizens residing abroad are able to vote by mail for the first time in these elections. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that the implementation of postal voting introduces new administrative and logistical challenges that merit additional scrutiny. Several interlocutors also noted that its introduction has been used by some actors as a narrative to question the integrity of the elections. The MoI, the CZSO, and the MFA are undertaking voter education and are providing both virtual and in-person training to staff at diplomatic missions.

Women continue to be under-represented in public and elected office, and legislative initiatives to promote gender-balanced participation have stalled, although some political parties have adopted voluntary internal measures. Political parties met by ODIHR NAM noted a lack of internal policies of many parties aimed at enhancing the electoral participation of women, despite longstanding ODIHR recommendations.

Most parties met by the ODIHR NAM expect to campaign without hindrance, through a mix of traditional campaign methods and social networks. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate a polarized campaign, expressing concerns over the potential use of harsh and divisive rhetoric with personalized accusations. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns related to the spread of disinformation and foreign influence; the ODIHR NAM was informed of several preventive measures by state institutions.

Several ODIHR recommendations related to transparency and effectiveness of campaign finance remain unaddressed, including a lack of interim reporting prior to election days, and limited oversight of third-party campaigning. Campaign finance is monitored by the Office for the Supervision of the Management of Political Parties and Movements. The Office informed the ODIHR NAM that it expects to increase its staff and resources in the coming period to meet new obligations stemming from the EU Digital Services Act, including expanded online monitoring. Several NAM interlocutors acknowledged the professional approach of the Office, but also noted challenges in the enforcement of campaign finance rules stemming from limited mandate and resources.

The media environment is pluralistic, with public and private broadcasters, print outlets, and dominant online sector. While representatives of all political parties the ODIHR NAM met with expressed satisfaction with media access and regarded the coverage as fair and balanced, several interlocutors voiced long-standing concerns related to the concentration of media ownership, as well as about threats to journalists. Defamation remains criminalized, contrary to ODIHR recommendations. The legal framework guarantees freedom of expression and mandates balanced political coverage by broadcasters. Czech Television and Czech Radio are required to allocate free airtime to contestants. Oversight of compliance is provided by the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (CRTB), and some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that while the CRTB fulfils its mandate within the existing legal framework, its capacity to conduct effective monitoring is limited.

Responsibilities for electoral dispute resolution are divided among multiple institutions. Administrative complaints are handled by municipal or regional bodies and may be appealed to the courts. The ODIHR NAM was informed that election-related cases are prioritized to ensure an effective remedy, though no statutory deadlines apply to Constitutional Court rulings.

Previous ODIHR recommendation to amend the law to explicitly guarantee access for citizen and international observers, in line with OSCE commitments, remains unaddressed. The authorities assured the ODIHR NAM that any potential ODIHR observation activity would be, as in previous years, facilitated in accordance with OSCE commitments.

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed a potential ODIHR observation activity for the upcoming parliamentary elections, recognizing that an external assessment would contribute to further improvements of the electoral process, and underlining the value of previous ODIHR recommendations. They emphasized the importance of the assessment by a potential ODIHR election observation activity in light of the highly polarized political environment and the need to contribute to public confidence in the electoral process.

Specific aspects that could benefit from further assessment include the amended legal framework, the conduct of electoral operations, including the postal voting, as well as the conduct of the campaign, including on-line, its oversight, media coverage and regulatory framework, as well as the participation of underrepresented groups. Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 3 and 4 October 2025 parliamentary elections.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Czechia is a parliamentary republic, with a government headed by the prime minister, appointed by the president. The president, as head of state, is directly elected by popular vote. Legislative authority is vested in a bicameral parliament, comprising the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, both directly elected. Elections to the Chamber of Deputies (hereinafter parliamentary elections) were called by the president on 13 May 2025, in line with the law, and are set to take place on 3 and 4 October 2025.

The last parliamentary elections were held on 8 and 9 October 2021 and resulted in a change of government.¹ The political alliance SPOLU, comprising the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL), and Tradition Responsibility Prosperity (TOP 09) which came second in the number of seats, formed a majority government in coalition with the PirStan alliance, comprising the Czech Pirate Party (Piráti) and Mayors and Independents (STAN). The ANO political party, which had led the previous minority government, is now in the opposition.

Pre-election preparations are unfolding amidst domestic policy challenges, including an economic slowdown driven by inflation and rising energy prices. The political landscape remains highly polarized, and is further framed by contentious foreign policy issues, notably continued aid and military support for Ukraine, as well as the growing influence of populist and extremist rhetoric in public discourse.

Despite the long-term priority set out in the Gender Equality Strategy for 2021-2030 to promote gender equality and address inequality, women remain under-represented in public offices, holding 50 seats (25 per cent) in the outgoing Chamber of Deputies and 17 out of 81 Senator positions (21 per cent).² In the outgoing government, only 2 of 16 ministers are women.³ Among the judiciary, 4 of the 15 judges of the Constitutional Court and 11 of 42 the judges (26 per cent) of the Supreme Administrative Court are women.⁴ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed to the lack of meaningful action by political parties to promote women within their structures, the demanding schedules and unusually long sessions of the parliament, as well as the persistence of traditional gender roles in the society, as key factors hindering women's political participation.⁵ Previous legislative initiatives to introduce mandatory gender quotas on candidate lists have not been adopted, and only a few political parties have voluntarily implemented internal quota measures.⁶

ODIHR has previously observed six elections in Czechia.⁷ Most recently, ODIHR deployed Election Expert Teams (EET) for the 2023 presidential election and 2021 parliamentary elections. The final report for the 2021 parliamentary elections, issued in June 2023, contains ten recommendations, including three priority ones, for the authorities to improve the electoral process and bring it closer in line with OSCE commitments.⁸

¹ Four political parties and alliances were elected to the Chamber of Deputies: SPOLU (71 seats), ANO (72 seats), Pirates and Mayors (37 seats), and Freedom and Direct Democracy (20 seats).

² See [Gender Equality Strategy for 2021-2030](#).

³ Eva Decroix, a member of parliament from ODS, replaced Pavel Blažek as Minister of Justice on 10 June 2025, becoming the second woman in the cabinet. Until then, only one minister was a woman.

⁴ The number of the Supreme Administrative Court judges includes permanent appointees and those temporarily transferred or seconded from regional or municipal courts to help manage caseloads or cover vacancies.

⁵ See [2022 Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Czechia, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), which noted the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and the underrepresentation of women in political and public life.

⁶ The last attempt to introduce gender quotas was in 2015, when the Minister of the Interior, together with the Minister for Human Rights, proposed a draft law on minimum quotas for candidate lists in elections to the Chamber of Deputies and regional assemblies. However, it was not approved by the government which halted the legislative process.

⁷ See all previous ODIHR [election-related reports on Czechia](#).

⁸ In paragraph 25 of the [1999 OSCE Istanbul Document](#), OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations".

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 1992 Constitution (last amended in 2013), the 1993 Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (last amended in 2021), and the 1995 Law on Parliamentary Elections (Election Law, last amended in 2024).⁹ Czechia is a party to major international instruments related to democratic elections.¹⁰

The Election Law has been substantively amended in early 2024; however, provisions applicable for the upcoming elections are limited to postal voting for citizens residing abroad.¹¹ Most of the new provisions will enter into force on 1 January 2026, including those on the establishment of a digital election information system to manage a newly created unified voter register, electronic submission of candidate lists, the possibility to apply for voter's ID card, and the removal of voting restrictions based on legal capacity. According to ODIHR NAM interlocutors, the delay in the implementation of these amendments was necessary to ensure the proper development of the information system, as well as comprehensive training and procedural alignment.

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors consider the legal framework conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. However, some previous ODIHR electoral recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to the lack of safeguards against misuse of office and state resources during the campaign, insufficient regulation of media ownership and cross-ownership, and the continued underrepresentation of women in political life. Some interlocutors stated that these issues might be addressed through pending legislative initiatives, including a draft Law on Election Campaigns, which aims to further regulate campaign conduct and media coverage. In this context, some ODIHR NAM interlocutors suggested that a more comprehensive review of the legal framework could be useful, not only to address outstanding recommendations but also to reflect on the practical implications of recent and pending reforms. Such a review could support the refinement of both the legislation and its implementation ahead of future electoral cycles.

The 200 Members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected for a four-year term through a proportional representation system in 14 multi-member electoral districts, which correspond to the 14 administrative regions.¹² Parties must surpass the 5 per cent nationwide threshold; two-party alliances require 8 per cent, and coalitions of 3 or more parties 11 per cent. Voters may cast up to four preferential votes for candidates on their chosen party list, and any candidate who receives over five

⁹ This framework is complemented by other legislation, including the 2000 and 2001 Laws on Elections to Regional and Municipal Councils, the 1991 Law on Association in Political Parties and Movements, the 1993 Law on Constitutional Court, along with various regulations and instructions issued by the MoI, and relevant provisions of the Civil Procedure Code, Administrative Procedure Code, and Criminal Code.

¹⁰ Including the [1950 European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#), [1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), [1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), [1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), [1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families](#), [1995 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), [2003 UN Convention against Corruption](#), and [2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#). Czechia signed the [2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#) in 2016 but has not ratified it as of June 2025. Czechia is also a member of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

¹¹ Another election-related law adopted in April 2024 is the Law on Election Administration, which is also set to enter into force on 1 January 2026.

¹² Seats are first allocated to parties proportionally within each electoral region, after which the *D'Hondt* method is applied to distribute mandates based on the total number of votes.

per cent of such votes within their district is moved to the top of the list, ranked by the number of preferential votes received if multiple candidates cross the threshold.

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections are administered through a decentralized, four-tier system involving multiple bodies at the national, regional, municipal, and precinct levels. At the national level, the process is overseen by the State Election Commission (SEC), chaired by the Minister of the Interior (MoI), and supported by the MoI, the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). At the regional level, there are 14 Regional Offices, 6,254 Municipal Offices, and some 14,700 Precinct Election Commissions (PEC).¹³ While all interlocutors met by the NAM expressed a high level of confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the election administration at all levels, some noted the importance of assessing how election management bodies respond to broader public concerns, particularly regarding the introduction of postal voting and potential external interference.

The SEC is a permanent body composed of ten members, including three women, and is responsible for co-ordinating the conduct of elections and for announcing and publishing the final results.¹⁴ Contrary to a previous ODIHR recommendation, its meetings are not public. However, the media are invited to attend and report on key sessions and announcements.¹⁵ The MoI registers candidate lists, distributes data to municipalities for voter list preparation, and is responsible for the production of ballot papers and envelopes. The MoI published a detailed calendar of key electoral activities and information for voters and prospective candidates. The CZSO is responsible for the tabulation of election results and operates through a network of 506 data collection points, staffed predominantly by internal municipal employees.¹⁶ The CZSO publishes election results in data disaggregated by the PEC level.

Regional Offices are responsible for registering candidate lists within their respective administrative units, providing logistical support to the CZSO, and training PECs. Each registered political party, movement, or coalition contesting the election in a given municipality may nominate one member and one substitute to each PEC. Vacant positions are filled by municipal employees or volunteers appointed by the mayor.¹⁷ Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors voiced concerns about possible difficulties in recruiting PEC members due to relatively low remuneration.

The MoI informed the ODIHR NAM of their plans to conduct comprehensive voter information efforts, primarily focusing on the procedural aspects of voting. In line with 2024 legislative amendments to the Act on the Right to Digital Services, voters will, for the first time, be able to identify themselves using electronic identification documents.

To support the participation of voters with disabilities, the law provides for several accessibility-related measures. The MoI has formally requested that mayors identify and prioritize the most

¹³ Municipal offices manage electoral operations at the municipal level, including the establishment of polling locations, recruitment and training of polling staff, compilation of voter lists, and appointment of PEC members. PECs run the voting process, count votes, and submit local results to the CZSO.

¹⁴ Contestants are not represented in the SEC.

¹⁵ While the SEC does not publish detailed minutes of its meetings, its decisions and official communications are accessible through official traditional, digital, and social media.

¹⁶ The CZSO uses an application to support PECs in generating electronic protocols which while not mandatory, was reportedly used by some 97 per cent of PECs in the last elections; the protocols are submitted to the data collection points, where the results are tabulated and transmitted via a secure communication line.

¹⁷ A PEC consists of a minimum of 5 members if it serves more than 300 registered voters, or of a minimum of 4 members if it serves up to 300 voters.

accessible premises for use as polling stations.¹⁸ The MoI provides some voter information in Czech Sign Language through dedicated videos available on its official website.¹⁹ Voters with hearing impairments can also access these videos by scanning a QR code printed on the official leaflet delivered to all voters. Despite previous ODIHR recommendations, comprehensive efforts to expand accessibility, such as alternative formats for voter information or the systematic training of election officials, are not mandated by law.

D. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens aged 18 years or older on the second day of the election are eligible to vote. For these elections, citizens deprived of legal capacity, including persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are not allowed to vote. The 2024 amendments lifted restrictions on the right to vote based on legal capacity, in line with previous ODIHR recommendations; however, the change will be only applicable after the 2025 elections. Some 8.3 million citizens are currently registered voters.²⁰

Until the unified voter register becomes operational from 1 January 2026, voter registration remains decentralized and passive. Citizens are automatically included in the voter lists based on their permanent residence, with municipal authorities responsible for maintaining and updating the registers using data from the population register maintained by the MoI. Citizens residing abroad must actively register with the special voters list maintained by the embassy or consulate closest to their place of long-term residence.²¹ Voters may apply for an Absentee Voting Certificate from the municipality of their permanent residence, enabling them to vote at a different polling station or a diplomatic mission abroad.

Voters have the right to verify the accuracy of their personal data in the voter lists upon request at their respective municipalities. However, preliminary voter lists are not published. Despite a previous ODIHR recommendation and contrary to international good practice, voters whose names are missing from the lists may still be added on election days by the PECs if they prove residence within the polling precinct. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not express any concerns with this practice. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of the voter lists, and welcomed the introduction of the unified voter register as a measure to improve the accuracy of voter data.

For the first time, eligible citizens abroad are able to vote by mail in the upcoming elections, provided they register in the special voters list maintained by the embassy or consulate general closest to their place of long-term residence and request a postal voting package no later than 40 days before the first election day.²² Some 110 polling stations are expected to be established abroad, at all diplomatic representations, for both in-person and postal voting purposes.

While the introduction of postal voting aims to facilitate the participation of voters who previously faced practical barriers due to the limited number of diplomatic missions, some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that it introduces new administrative and logistical challenges, including ensuring the timely delivery and return of ballots. They considered that these aspects would benefit from closer

¹⁸ Voters with disabilities may seek assistance from another person if they are unable to vote independently or request mobile ballot boxes at home or in institutions. The law also entitles voters to request curbside voting.

¹⁹ See the Ministry of the Interior [website](#) related to voter information in Czech Sign Language.

²⁰ There were 8,275,752 registered voters for the 2021 parliamentary elections, and 8,245,962 registered voters for the first and 8,242,566 for the second round of the 2023 presidential election.

²¹ Special voter lists are also compiled for voters in detention centres, prisons, and healthcare facilities, based on information provided by the respective institutions.

²² Authorities do not have precise data on the number of citizens residing abroad, with estimates from approximately 70,000 based on consular registrations to several hundred thousand.

operational attention during implementation. Moreover, some actors have used this development in public discourse to raise concerns about the integrity of the electoral process, a strategy seen by some ODIHR NAM interlocutors as potentially effective in the context of a generally cautious public attitude towards changes to long-standing electoral practices. The MoI, the CZSO, and the MFA are undertaking voter education efforts and are providing both virtual and in-person training to staff at diplomatic missions.

E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Citizens eligible to vote may stand if they are at least 21 years old on the second election day and meet general eligibility criteria. Candidates may be nominated by registered political parties, movements, or coalitions whose activity has not been suspended.²³ Contrary to OSCE commitments, the legislation does not provide the possibility for independent candidates to stand for elections. All political parties met by the ODIHR NAM stated their intention to nominate candidates, and none foresee challenges with candidate nomination and registration.

Registered political parties, movements, or coalitions submit their candidate lists to the relevant Regional Office, no later than 66 days before the first election day. Each candidate list must be accompanied by proof of payment of a registration fee of CZK 19,000.²⁴ According to some ODIHR NAM interlocutors, various political parties plan to register on the list of a single political party to avoid running as a coalition and benefit from the lower threshold. While this long-standing practice is not contrary to the law, and some parties stated that it facilitates representation of smaller parties and prevents the loss of votes, some ODIHR NAM interlocutors criticized it for potentially undermining genuine political competition and confusing voters.

Political parties are not legally obliged to ensure gender balance on their lists, nor are they required to report gender-disaggregated nomination data.²⁵ Political parties met by ODIHR NAM acknowledged a lack of internal policies to promote electoral participation of women, despite longstanding ODIHR recommendations.²⁶

F. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The official campaign period commenced with the calling of the elections and continues until the announcement of final results.²⁷ Individuals and legal entities may register as third parties to campaign independently in support of or against a candidate or a political entity. While paid advertising is allowed in online and print media, there are no rules ensuring transparency or accountability for digital platforms, such as algorithmic impact or content moderation.²⁸ The current legal framework does not provide explicit prohibitions and effective safeguards against the misuse of state resources during election campaigns, and previous ODIHR recommendations on this remain

²³ The same coalition must maintain identical composition and name across all regions in which it fields candidates. There is no requirement for candidates to reside in the electoral region where they stand.

²⁴ The registration fee is refunded only if a candidate list was not registered. 1 EUR equals 24.8 CZK.

²⁵ In 2021 elections to the Chamber of Deputies, 31.6 per cent of the candidates were women.

²⁶ The Green Party introduced intra-party quotas in its statutes as early as 2011. The Czech Social Democratic Party adopted intra-party quotas in 2014 but abolished them in 2019 when adopting new statutes.

²⁷ While the law does not provide for a campaign silence period, campaigning is prohibited on election days within and in the immediate vicinity of polling stations. Publication of election-related opinion polls is prohibited during the three days before election days, and on the election days themselves.

²⁸ According to a recent survey conducted for the MoI by the STEM agency, some 78 per cent of respondents stated concerns about the negative influence of social networks on elections.

unaddressed. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that the lack of distinction between official and campaign activities of the incumbents undermines the fairness of the process.

Most parties met by the ODIHR NAM expect to campaign without hindrance. However, several ODIHR NAM interlocutors also noted that some political parties began campaigning prior to the official announcement of the elections, leaving such activities outside of the regulated period and without effective oversight. Concerns were also expressed that parties close to the governing coalition may have had advance knowledge of the timing of the announcement, allowing them to secure prominent billboard placements and campaign venues before others.

The campaign is expected to primarily focus on of economy, energy security and prices, migration and border control, support for Ukraine, relations with the EU and NATO, and rising concerns over disinformation and electoral integrity. Contestants informed the ODIHR NAM that they plan to campaign through a mix of traditional campaign methods and social networks. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate a polarized campaign, expressing concerns over the potential use of harsh and divisive rhetoric with personalized accusations.²⁹

Majority of ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about the spread of disinformation and manipulative narratives, including potential foreign interference aimed at undermining public trust in the process. A co-operation network has been established between various institutions, including the National Cyber and Information Security Agency (NÚKIB), the MoI, and the Centre Against Terrorism and Hybrid Threats, which are engaged in monitoring social networks, conducting public awareness initiatives, and exchanging information on emerging threats. A dedicated inter-institutional working group was recently set up under the auspices of the National Security Council (BRS) to co-ordinate efforts related to electoral integrity, including disinformation and cyber risks. The ODIHR NAM was informed about limited co-operation with social media platforms in removing harmful content as well as insufficient legal tools to combat disinformation effectively. Interlocutors expressed hope that the implementation of the European Union legislation, in particular the Digital Services Act, will improve the transparency and accountability of online platforms.³⁰

On 14 May, the MoI announced plans for a public awareness campaign to explain mechanisms ensuring the fairness of the electoral process. This initiative includes providing clear information on the role of election commissions and the safeguards in place during the voting process.³¹

G. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is primarily regulated by the Act on the Association in Political Parties and Political Movements, which outlines the rules on sources of funding, expenditure limits, reporting obligations, and oversight mechanisms. The legal framework establishes general transparency requirements; however, several ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including lack of interim reporting prior to election days, and limited oversight of third-party campaigning.³²

²⁹ Stačilo movement publicly questioned whether the fairness of the campaign was undermined by the President's statement that he would not appoint individuals who "oppose the system" to government and reportedly addressed the Ombudsperson regarding this matter.

³⁰ The Czech Telecommunications Office was designated as the national Digital Services Coordinator, tasked with supervising platform compliance and coordinating enforcement efforts under the DSA.

³¹ A [survey by the STEM agency for the MoI](#) revealed that 54 per cent of respondents fear potential manipulation of the upcoming October parliamentary elections by the current government and its supporters, while 60 per cent are concerned about electoral fraud in connection with the postal vote.

³² Although Act No. 89/2024 Coll. introduces additional procedural obligations related to campaign finance transparency and reporting, these changes will enter into force only after the 2025 elections.

The law provides for private and public funding of parties and campaigns, including loans. Public funding is provided based on performance in previous elections.³³ Donations from the state, municipalities, and their affiliated entities, state-funded organizations, charitable foundations and religious institutions are prohibited. While foreign donations are currently permitted, new provisions entering into force after the 2025 elections will limit such donations to individuals and legal entities based in the European Union.

Individual donations are capped at CZK 3 million per entity, and there is an expenditure ceiling of CZK 90 million for each political party, movement, or coalition. This limit includes in-kind contributions and spending by third parties. A 2024 Supreme Administrative Court ruling stated that requiring certain civil society actors to register as third-party campaigners may infringe on freedom of expression, particularly when their activities involve general advocacy rather than direct electoral campaigning. While third-party spending remains subject to the same limit, enforcement in practice is complex, particularly in distinguishing between political advocacy and electoral campaigning. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that this creates potential for misreporting, particularly when entities campaign indirectly in favour of a contestant without registering as third parties, impacting oversight and accountability.

The Office for the Supervision of the Management of Political Parties and Movements (ÚDHPSH) monitors party and campaign finances, including donations, expenditures, third-party involvement, and compliance with annual and election-related reporting obligations.³⁴ It also oversees online campaigning, including political advertising and sponsorships on social media platforms. Due to limited institutional capacity, ÚDHPSH outsources certain tasks, such as the technical collection of campaign-related data but it is preparing to increase its staff and resources in the coming period to meet new obligations stemming from the EU Digital Services. The ÚDHPSH has sanctioning powers for non-compliance; these are mostly administrative fines and are subject to judicial review. Act, including expanded online monitoring. Several NAM interlocutors acknowledged ÚDHPSH's professional approach, but noted challenges in enforcement due to its limited mandate and capacity.

Political parties and candidates are required to submit detailed financial reports on campaign income and expenditures, including donations, loans, and in-kind contributions. There is no requirement for interim reporting prior to election days, and final reports must be submitted within 90 days after the election. The ÚDHPSH then reviews the reports within 180 days.

H. MEDIA

The media environment is pluralistic, with a wide range of public and private outlets operating across television, radio, print, and online platforms.³⁵ Television remains the main source of political information, with the Czech Television (ČT) and private networks *Nova* and *Prima* leading in viewership. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors voiced long-standing concerns about concentration

³³ It includes an annual contribution of CZK 900,000 per seat won in the Chamber of Deputies, and a base allowance of CZK 6 million per year for parties that obtain at least 3 per cent of the vote, with additional funding for each additional tenth of a percentage point up to 5 per cent.

³⁴ Regional Offices have an auxiliary role in campaign finance oversight with limited responsibilities; they may impose fines for administrative infractions such as failure to submit required campaign materials or violations of poster display regulations, but do not supervise campaign financing, donations, or expenditure reporting.

³⁵ According to the [Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024](#), Czech television and print media have experienced significant declines in weekly usage since 2015, by 25 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively. Online and social media use for news has also decreased since 2022, though to a lesser extent.

of media ownership, particularly in the print and online media, with dominance of a small number of economic groups.

Freedom of expression and the right to access information are guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, and censorship is explicitly prohibited.³⁶ Defamation is a criminal offence, contrary to international standards, but ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that it is rarely applied in practice. Concerns persist about threats and verbal attacks on journalists, including by high-level political figures, and about limitations in access to information held by the president's office.

The public broadcaster- ČT- generally enjoys high public confidence. In 2024, Parliament initiated amendments to increase the licence fee for television and radio from January 2025, with automatic inflation indexing.³⁷ The Director General of ČT was recently dismissed on procedural grounds, and some ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns that this decision was politically motivated.³⁸

The legal framework requires all broadcasters to provide balanced and objective coverage of political parties and movements in news and political programming. Paid political advertising is permitted only in print and online media. ČT informed ODIHR NAM that they plan to allocate 14 hours of free airtime each, distributed equally among all registered contestants. While contestants are responsible for the content of these spots, ČT reviews them for potential discriminatory or inflammatory content prior to broadcast. Regular editorial coverage of the campaign is offered through standard news programming. In addition, ČT plans to organize pre-election debates in several formats. Between 8 and 12 political parties with the highest support in opinion polls conducted by the broadcaster, regardless of their current parliamentary status, will be invited to participate in prime-time debates. This approach is intended to ensure broader inclusion and reflect public interest; however, some smaller parties expressed concerns to the ODIHR NAM about limited access to prominent debate formats under this model. Overall, representatives of all political parties the ODIHR NAM met with expressed satisfaction with media access and regarded the coverage as fair and balanced.

The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (CRTB), established under the Broadcasting Act of 2001, oversees broadcast media. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that while the CRTB fulfils its mandate within the existing legal framework, its capacity to conduct comprehensive monitoring during the election period is limited by institutional and resource constraints. For these elections, the CRTB informed the ODIHR NAM of its intentions to conduct comprehensive quantitative and qualitative monitoring of both public and commercial broadcasters, including content accessibility for persons with hearing and visual impairments. The planned analysis will assess airtime allocation, frequency, and framing of coverage, editorial neutrality, and the inclusion criteria for TV debates.

³⁶ In Reporters Without Borders's 2025 World Press Freedom Index, Czechia rose to 10th place out of 180 countries, up from 40th in 2021.

³⁷ Licence fees is a primary funding source and has remained at CZK 135 per month since 2008, which severely strained its finances. It will be increased by CZK 15 (to CZK 150) for ČT and CZK 10 (to CZK 55) for radio.

³⁸ Jan Souček, ČT Director General since October 2023, was dismissed by the Czech Television Council on 6 May 2025. In a secret vote, 15 out of 17 councillors cited violations of public broadcasting law, miscommunication with the Council, the abrupt cancellation of news programmes, and his failure to report instances of external pressure on ČT.

I. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Complaints concerning voter registration or procedural issues are handled by municipal or regional authorities and may be appealed to regional courts.³⁹ The Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) serves as the primary judicial body for adjudicating challenges to the conduct and results of elections, while the Constitutional Court may consider complaints raising constitutional concerns. Complaints regarding the registration of candidate lists must be lodged with the competent regional court within two days of the decision; rulings are final and must be issued within 15 days. Appeals on the overall validity of elections, or the election of individual candidates, can be filed with the SAC within ten days of the official announcement of results. The SAC has 20 days to rule on such cases.⁴⁰ The ODIHR NAM was informed that election-related cases would be given priority treatment to ensure an effective remedy. ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed overall confidence in the effectiveness of the electoral dispute resolution process and the impartiality of the courts.

J. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The legal framework does not explicitly provide for either citizen or international election observation. ODIHR has previously recommended that the law be amended to explicitly guarantee access for both, in line with OSCE commitments. The authorities assured the ODIHR NAM that any potential ODIHR observation activity would be, as in previous years, facilitated in accordance with OSCE commitments.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed a potential ODIHR observation activity for the upcoming parliamentary elections, recognizing that an external assessment would contribute to further improvements of the electoral process, and underlining the value of previous ODIHR recommendations. They emphasized the importance of the assessment by a potential ODIHR election observation activity in light of the highly polarized political environment and the need to contribute to public confidence in the electoral process.

Specific aspects that could benefit from further assessment include the amended legal framework, the conduct of electoral operations, including postal voting, as well as the conduct of the campaign, including on-line, its oversight, media coverage and regulatory framework, as well as the participation of underrepresented groups. Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 3 and 4 October 2025 parliamentary elections.

³⁹ Voters may request corrections to the voter list at their municipality, and if no remedy is provided within two working days, the decision can be appealed to the regional court, which must issue a ruling within three days.

⁴⁰ If the complaint raises constitutional issues, it may be referred to the Constitutional Court; however, no statutory deadline is imposed for the Court's deliberation.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Veronika Mítková, Director of Human Rights and Transition Policy Department
Jan Kamínek, Human Rights and Transition Policy Department
Tereza Kriegová, Consular Department

Ministry of the Interior

Tomáš Jírovec, Director of the Elections Department
Petr Široký, Head of Department for Legal and Methodological Management of Elections

Czech Statistical Office

Eva Krumpová, Deputy Director
Jana Slavníková, Head of Department for Election Results Processing
Jan Cieslar, Spokesperson

Constitutional Court

Vlastimil Göttinger, Secretary General
Monika Hanych, Head of the Analysis Department

Supreme Administrative Court

Vojtěch Šimíček, Presiding Judge of a Chamber

Office for the Supervision of the Financing of Political Parties and Political Movements

Jan Outlý, Co-ordinator of the Agenda for the Elections to the Chamber of Deputies

Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting

Jiří Maceška, Vice-chair
Kateřina Lojíková, Senior Officer

Czech Telecommunications Office

Marek Ebert, Chairman of the Council
Tomáš Ondrejka, Head of Digital Services Unit, Department for Supervision of Specialised Agendas

Public Broadcaster - Czech Television

Michal Kubal, Executive Director of ČT24, Managing Editor for News Service
Josef Rubeš, Chief Editor

Political Parties⁴¹

Eva Decroix, Vice President, Civic Democratic Party
Karel Havlíček, Deputy Chairman, ANO
Daniel Sterzik, Chairman, Stačilo
Kateřina Konečná, Campaign Leader, Stačilo
Petr Karola, Member of the Presidium, Stačilo

Civil Society

Jitka Adamčíková, Chairwoman, Women in Media; Board Member, Foundation Independent Press
Veronika Šprincová, Gender Expert and Project Manager, Fórum 50%

⁴¹ ODIHR offered meetings to all parliamentary political parties.

Marína Urbániková, Researcher and Board Member, Endowment Fund for Independent Journalism
Lucia Vilimovská, Project Manager, Transparency International

International Community⁴²

Representatives of diplomatic missions of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Türkiye.

⁴² The ODIHR NAM extended an invitation to representations of all OSCE participating States resident in Czechia.