

INTERIM REPORT
15 May –3 June 2013

7 June 2013

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Parliamentary elections will be held on 23 June. The elections are widely viewed as an important test in light of Albania's aspirations towards European Union accession.
- The 140-member parliament will be elected under a proportional list system in 12 multi-member districts. After the Central Election Commission (CEC) failed to agree, the parliament distributed seats in each district based on outdated population statistics. The Constitutional Court declined jurisdiction in an appeal on this matter.
- Parliamentary elections are regulated by a comprehensive legal framework, which provides a sound legal basis for the conduct of democratic elections, if implemented and fully adhered to by stakeholders. A number of key OSCE/ODIHR recommendations were addressed when the Electoral Code was extensively amended in 2012 following an inclusive legal reform process involving major political stakeholders and civil society.
- Sixty-six political parties and two independent candidates will contest the elections. Sixty-two parties will run within one of two coalitions and four parties will run individually. The registration process was largely inclusive. The three largest parliamentary parties were fined for not meeting the gender quota requirement in their candidate lists.
- The elections are administered by a three-tiered administration system comprising the CEC, 89 Commissions of Electoral Administration Zones (CEAZs) and 5,508 Voting Centre Commissions. Counting is conducted regionally in 89 Ballot Counting Centres. Commission membership is based on political nominations. Political parties continue to replace CEAZ members after the completion of training, raising concern about their impartiality and effectiveness.
- The CEC currently operates with only four members, which hinders its ability to administer the elections in accordance with the law. The Electoral College has thus far adjudicated 11 complaints against CEC decisions and its failure to adopt decisions. In one case it assumed the CEC's responsibility by establishing the number of Electoral Administrative Zones.
- While election preparations continue, delays are noted, with some legal deadlines not being met. The CEC holds frequent public sessions. At times, however, its decision-making lacks transparency. Some CEC decisions have been criticized for lacking sound legal motivation.
- Voter lists (VLs) have been finalized, with a total of 3,271,885 eligible voters. VLs are on display at most voting centres and also available online. Some 348,346 voters without a complete address remain on lists, according to the Ministry of Interior. Special VL auditors appointed by the two major political parties reported their findings to the CEC and MoI.

- The campaign environment has been generally calm and peaceful. The campaign of parties in the ruling coalition has emphasized achievements in government, while opposition parties focus on social security issues, fighting corruption and allege pressure and dismissal of public servants. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed some official government events being used for campaign purposes.
- The legal framework for the media coverage of the campaign includes provisions for all broadcasters regarding free airtime, news coverage and paid advertisement. The campaign receives extensive media coverage, though voter information is so far absent. Although prohibited by law, spots funded by public institutions are aired on private and public TV. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM monitors six TV channels and four daily newspapers.

II. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the OSCE and based on the recommendations of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 11 to 14 March, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 15 May. The EOM, led by Conny McCormack, consists of a 15-member core team based in Tirana and 30 long-term observers (LTOs), who were deployed on 21 May throughout the country. Mission members are drawn from 24 OSCE participating States. The OSCE/ODIHR has requested participating States to second up to 400 short-term observers to observe voting, counting and the tabulation of results.

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 23 June parliamentary elections are widely viewed as an important test for Albania's aspirations towards European Union accession. The political environment has been tense since the last parliamentary elections in 2009, the first elections held under a regional proportional electoral system. The elections reduced the number of parties in parliament from 12 to 6 and resulted in near equal representation of the governing coalition led by the Democratic Party (DP) and the opposition led by the Socialist Party (SP), with 70 and 66 seats, respectively.

The issue of the composition of the Central Election Commission (CEC) has been at the centre of attention and concern. Following the departure of the Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI) from the governing coalition in April 2013, the parliament dismissed the SMI-proposed member of the CEC who was replaced by a representative of the Republican Party (RP) from the governing coalition.¹ This dismissal led to the resignation of the three opposition-proposed members, who have not yet been replaced.

The political climate is characterized by longstanding polarization and mistrust between the DP and the SP. The majority of participating parties joined one of two coalitions for the upcoming elections: 25 parties are in the Alliance for Employment, Prosperity and Integration, led by the DP of Prime Minister Sali Berisha, and 37 parties joined the Alliance for European Albania, led by the SP and its leader Edi Rama. All parties currently in parliament run within these coalitions.

IV. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The 140-member unicameral Assembly (parliament) is elected for a four-year term under a proportional system, with 12 multi-member electoral zones (districts) that correspond to the

¹ Article 18 of Electoral Code provides an exhaustive list of reasons for early termination of the mandate of CEC members, which does not include re-composition of parliament or new information about ineligibility.

country's administrative regions. Political parties, coalitions and independent candidates can contest the elections. Closed candidate lists are submitted by parties for each district. Parties that receive at least three per cent and coalitions that receive at least five per cent of valid votes in a district qualify for seat allocation.

The number of seats in each district ranges from 4 to 32. Based on current population distribution statistics submitted by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the CEC is required to calculate the number of seats per district and submit the proposal to parliament for approval.² While it is a technical calculation, the CEC was politically divided and unable to reach an agreement on the number of seats per district and referred the matter to parliament. Subsequently, parliament decided to base seat distribution on the 2009 (rather than the 2013) population statistics.³

The parliamentary elections are regulated by a comprehensive legal framework, including the Constitution and the 2008 Electoral Code, most recently amended in July 2012. Other applicable laws include the Law on Political Parties, Law on Demonstrations, and Criminal Code. The CEC and the MoI supplement the electoral legal framework by instructions and decisions. The CEC did not adopt all necessary regulations on the preparation for elections at least 60 days prior to election day, as required by Article 23.4 of the Electoral Code.

Following a broadly inclusive legal reform process informed by recommendations by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Electoral Code was extensively amended in July 2012, supported by the major political parties. These changes address a number of previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on legal reform including key revisions to the selection process for election commissions, a revised process for voter list compilation, a simplified process for candidate registration, more equitable regulations for access to media and public campaign funds, and strengthened independence of the Electoral College.⁴ The Criminal Code was amended in March 2012 establishing new electoral offences, strengthening penalties for existing electoral offences, and repealing prison terms for defamation and libel.

Overall, the 2012 amendments significantly improved the electoral legislation, which provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections. However, the need for political will to fully implement and adhere to the legislation is a pre-condition to achieving a genuinely democratic election process and instilling public confidence.

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections are administered by a three-tiered administration system comprising the Central Election Commission (CEC), 89 Commissions of Electoral Administration Zones (CEAZs) and 5,508 Voting Centre Commissions (VCCs). Counting is conducted regionally in 89 Ballot Counting Centres (BCCs), one for each Electoral Administration Zone (EAZ).

The CEC is the only permanent election administration body. In line with the 2012 amendments, the CEC chairperson is elected by parliament from nominations submitted by parliamentary parties following an open application process.⁵ Election commissions at all levels have seven members.

² The number of seats assigned to each district should be based on the number of residents.

³ Two seats should have shifted districts under the current population statistics: Berat and Korce districts should have one less seat and Durres and Tirana districts each one additional seat.

⁴ The Electoral College is a judicial body comprising eight judges selected by lottery from the Court of Appeal judges before each national election whose mandate is limited to adjudicating complaints against the CEC.

⁵ The CEC chairperson is elected for a four-year term, while the other six CEC members are elected for a six-year term. The current CEC was confirmed by parliament on 18 October 2012.

Half of the CEAZ and VCC chairpersons are appointed by the parliamentary majority party, and the other half by the largest opposition party. The other six commission members are appointed according to the same formula at all levels of the election administration: two members are proposed by the parliamentary majority party and two members by the opposition; the other parliamentary majority parties and opposition parties each propose one member. No less than 30 per cent of nominations of CEAZ members should be from the underrepresented gender. Political parties continue to replace CEAZ members after the completion of training. Although permitted by law, this raises concern about their impartiality and effectiveness.⁶

While the three opposition-nominated CEC members have not participated in the CEC's work since their resignation in mid-April, the CEC continues to operate with four members. There are specific types of decisions the Electoral Code expressly requires to be adopted by a qualified majority of five votes, including the certification of results and allocation of seats.⁷ Currently, the CEC adopts normative acts that require five votes by a simple majority of four votes.⁸ Alternatively, the CEC avoids adopting decisions necessary to amend outdated acts.⁹ At present, the CEC is operating without having adopted its own rules of procedures, as required by law.

Some CEC decisions have been criticized for lacking sound legal motivation. In conjunction with changes to the CEC membership, the CEC replaced all members of the CEAZ nominated by the second largest opposition party (the Human Rights Union Party) with nominees of the RP "due to the new circumstances created in the composition of the groups of parliamentary majority and opposition".¹⁰ In another case, the CEC decided to manually reorder parties on the ballot after the lottery to determine their order was conducted, despite the law requiring "a random order, as drawn by lots".

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM receives full co-operation from the CEC. The CEC holds regular public sessions, which are streamed online. However, the sessions are frequently called without due notice. CEC decisions are not published immediately on its website, as required by law. This reduces the transparency of CEC decision-making.

While preparations for the elections are on-going at all levels, some legal deadlines have not been met. The formation of VCCs has been delayed beyond the 24 May deadline due to the late submission of nominations by political parties. Additionally, determining the location of some voting centres was delayed beyond the deadline, due to late or incomplete submissions of proposals by mayors as well as legal challenges against their locations.

VI. NEW ELECTION TECHNOLOGIES

The revised Electoral Code requires the CEC to pilot two new election technologies for these elections: an electronic voter verification system (EVS) in Tirana District, and an electronic counting system (ECS) in Fier District. The EVS is anticipated to be implemented in up to 1,422 voting centres, allowing for verifying and automatically registering voters on election day. An initial test of the functionality of EVS equipment was conducted on 17 May. While the CEC expressed general confidence in the functionality of the EVS, representatives of some political

⁶ The CEC chairperson estimated that more than 10 per cent of CEAZ members have been replaced after their training and on 28 May called on political parties to refrain from requesting further replacements.

⁷ See articles 24, 61, 62, 94, 95, 98, 101, 103 and 179 of the Electoral Code.

⁸ For instance, CEC decisions no. 426, 445 and 446.

⁹ CEC instruction no. 4 of 9 March 2009 on the organization and function of VCCs reflects the then applicable political and legal situation, for instance that the VCC secretary was a non-voting VCC member.

¹⁰ CEC decision no. 274 of 25 April. (Article 32 of the Electoral Code, provides an exhaustive list of reasons for early termination of CEAZ members. Re-composition of parliament is not included in the list.)

parties and civil society expressed discontent with the inability of the system to read deteriorated IDs or to prevent attempts of multiple voting at different voting centres.

The ECS uses ballot scanners in BCCs to facilitate the counting of ballot papers. In April, the CEC conducted a series of tests, which revealed a number of problems with the system, including slow processing speed and insufficient capacity. A recent CEC decision to maintain the ballot design may preclude the ECS pilot project from taking place since the capacity of the selected system is limited to 42 names while the final ballot lists 67. Additionally, a number of acts specifically necessary for the implementation of these pilot projects require a qualified majority of five voters in the CEC.

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

Albania has a passive voter registration system. Voter lists (VLs) for the elections are extracted from the electronic database of the National Civil Status Register (NCSR) maintained by the General Directorate of Civil Status of the MoI. While civil status offices of local government units (LGU) are responsible for the content of the VLs, the CEC supervises the overall VL compilation process. The CEC fined a total of 139 mayors for failure to submit or for submitting late or incomplete information about the number of voters and locations of voting centres.

Citizens aged 18 years or older by election day, except those declared mentally incompetent by a court, are eligible to vote. The 1,130 citizens aged 100 years or older were removed from the voter list, and 380 were reintroduced upon the voters' request. According to the CEC, the final number of eligible voters is 3,271,885. The MoI informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that the number of suspected duplicate records was reduced from 7,674 in December 2012 to 1,139 in May 2013, and that the total number of voters on VLs without a complete address code was reduced from 542,808 in February to 348,346 voters in May.¹¹

Since January, updated extracts of the electoral components from the NCSR database were published monthly. Electoral subjects could request copies of VLs for verification purposes, which several parties did. The CEC appointed two technical auditors proposed by the DP and the SP to verify VL quality. Their separate findings and recommendations were presented to the CEC and sent to the MoI for follow-up. Though the SP auditor questioned the accuracy of data provided and quality of VLs, most OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors have not expressed such concerns.

VLs are displayed in most VCCs and CEAZs visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM thus far, though often posted past the 20 May deadline. Voters are also able to check their details online. Voters omitted from a VL or listed with errors may submit a request for correction until 24 hours before election day to a district court.

VIII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

To contest the elections political parties and independent candidates (proposed by a group of voters) must be registered as electoral subjects with the CEC. Initially, the CEC registered 64 political parties and 2 independent candidates as electoral subjects with six political parties and five independent candidates denied registration. These six parties appealed to the Electoral College,

¹¹ Voters are identified through a 10-digit number (first three digits indicate the municipality, the next four indicate the voting centre, and the last three indicate the address code). When the last three digits are unknown they are indicated with 888, 999 or 000.

which satisfied two of the appeals and ordered the CEC to register their parties and dismissed the other four claims.¹² In total, the CEC registered sixty-six parties and two independent candidates.

Candidate lists of non-parliamentary political parties running individually, or in coalitions which have fewer seats in the outgoing parliament than the number of parties in the coalition, must be supported by signatures of 5,000 or 7,000 registered voters, respectively. Independent candidates require signatures of at least one per cent of voters (but no more than 3,000 voters) registered in the respective district. A candidate can only run in one district. In addition, persons holding certain public posts must step down to become a candidate.

After providing parties an opportunity to make corrections, the CEC approved all candidate lists, which include a total of 7,127 candidates, including 2,729 women. Each candidate list requires at least one male and one female in the top three spots and each list must consist of at least 30 per cent of each gender. To meet this quota, many parties included women at the bottom of the lists where they are unlikely to win. As per the 2012 amendments, the fine for non-compliance was increased to 1 million ALL per list.¹³ However, the provision that obliged the CEC to deny registration to any list that fails to meet the gender quota was repealed. The CEC issued fines against the three largest parliamentary parties (the SP, DP and SMI) for failing to meet the gender quota in four, six, and four districts, respectively. While the CEC provided these parties an opportunity to correct the lists, they chose not to do so.¹⁴

IX. ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The 30-day campaign period commenced officially on 24 May and ends at midnight on 21 June, when the campaign silence period begins. However, parties have been campaigning actively since before the official campaign start, with leading political figures and high government officials touring the country presenting candidates and programmes at large-scale rallies. Campaign activities are conducted individually by parties and not by coalitions.

The campaign environment has been generally calm and peaceful. The DP emphasizes its achievements in government, particularly infrastructural development and salary increases for public officials. The SP criticizes the government and promises advancements in economic development (including through progressive taxation) and social security, and in the fight against corruption. However, the substance of campaign messages is often overshadowed by verbal attacks between the two major parties.

The smaller parties express dissatisfaction with their lack of financial means and limited media access and convey concerns about potential irregularities on election day, especially during counting. These parties tend to campaign door-to-door or have small-scale meetings with voters only in areas where they expect higher levels of support.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed some official government events being used for campaign purposes. Frequent openings of new roads and the launch of other infrastructure projects have been accompanied by DP campaign slogans and flags. The prime minister's official website covers the

¹² In the two cases overturned by the Electoral College, the CEC applied documentation requirements outside the legal criteria for party registration. In one case, the CEC denied a party registration on the grounds that its court attestation did not include an official acronym, which is not required by law.

¹³ Equivalent to approximately EUR 7,120 (1 EUR= 140 ALL).

¹⁴ On 24 May, the Electoral College revoked an eight million ALL fine imposed on the People's Christian-Democratic Party for breaching the gender quota in eight lists (lacking at least 30 per cent men), on grounds that the CEC had not provided an opportunity to correct the lists.

campaign events that he attends. On 13 May, the prime minister issued an order that high public officials are to prevent the use of public funds and means for campaign purposes.

Opposition parties allege that public-sector workers have been required to attend rallies or ensure support for the governing party. They further claim that their supporters, including persons representing the opposition in election commissions in past elections or their family members have been dismissed from state jobs on political grounds. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM met with some of these former employees, who confirmed such claims.¹⁵

All political parties met by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM reported delays in receiving public funding for the elections. The parliament allocated the total amount of public funding only on 30 May, one week after the beginning of the campaign period.¹⁶ The CEC approved the distribution of the funds among electoral subjects on 3 June.¹⁷ Independent candidates are not entitled to public funding for their campaigns.

X. MEDIA

Despite a limited advertising market, numerous media outlets operate in Albania. TV and radio are considered the primary information sources; print media have limited circulation mainly in urban areas, while Internet is free. The media offer a plurality of viewpoints, but are seen as politicized.

The public broadcaster, *TVSH*, is obliged to provide free airtime to all political parties according to their representation in the parliament. On 20 May, the CEC decided to allocate a total of 60 minutes to parties with more than 20 per cent of seats in parliament (the DP and the SP), 30 minutes to the 4 remaining parliamentary parties, and 10 minutes to the 60 non-parliamentary parties. While the Electoral Code does not provide independent candidates with free airtime, the CEC decided to allot them five minutes each. The order of appearance was established by lottery. Since 24 May, *TVSH* has been airing the free airtime slots daily from 18:30.

The Electoral Code requires all broadcasters to ensure their newscasts contain equal time for parties with more than 20 per cent of seats in parliament, which should be double the amount of allocated time compared to other parliamentary parties. News coverage of non-parliamentary parties is at the discretion of the editors. The activities of public institutions promoting institutional achievements, such as inaugurations of public works, are considered election-related and are counted in the airtime of the party associated with the head of the institution. Propaganda and political comments by journalists are banned during news editions. Pre-recorded campaign material prepared by political parties should be clearly identifiable as such in order to preserve the credibility of news reporting.

Paid political advertising is allowed on private broadcasters during the official campaign. However, TV channels began broadcasting political spots on 23 May, before the start of the official campaign. On 22 May, by issuing a press release, the CEC prolonged its legal deadline to submit information about advertising fees by three days to 23 May. The CEC eventually published the list of fees on its website.

On 21 May, the CEC established the Media Monitoring Board (MMB), 37 days after the deadline. The MMB is charged with monitoring the media and proposing administrative sanctions during the campaign. The CEC is legally required to examine MMB reports at least once a week during the

¹⁵ Complaints were lodged with district courts by public servants who claim wrongful dismissal on political grounds. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM is following up on the complaints.

¹⁶ The parliament allocated ALL 65 million for public funding of political parties.

¹⁷ Public funding is distributed to eligible political parties within five days from the approval of candidate lists.

campaign and to consider complaints submitted by electoral subjects. By law, each CEC member nominates one member to the MMB from a list of nominees proposed by non-profit media organizations. Some two weeks after the deadline, the CEC asked the District Court of Tirana to provide a list of such organizations. The CEC then publicly announced that any media non-profit organization could send proposals for MMB membership given that the list provided by the court was incomplete as only 14 of 54 organizations received the CEC notice.¹⁸ Only eight non-profit organizations proposed candidates.

On 3 June, the CEC approved procedures requiring broadcasters to notify the MMB if they refuse to broadcast pre-recorded campaign material prepared by electoral subjects in their newscasts. A number of OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed their concern that the new procedures imply a requirement to broadcast such material, thus departing from provisions in the Electoral Code.

On 18 May, the OSCE/ODIHR commenced its media monitoring of a cross-section of media outlets with quantitative and qualitative analysis of their political coverage.¹⁹ Media are devoting extensive coverage to the elections, mainly focusing on the campaign of the major parties.

Although prohibited by law, spots funded by the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications, the Albanian Development Fund, and the Albanian Postal Service praising their achievements have been aired by *TVSH*, *TV Klan*, *News 24* and *Ora News*.

XI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints against CEAZ decisions can be appealed to the CEC and complaints against CEC decisions to the Electoral College, with the latter having ten days to adjudicate.²⁰ In cases of the CEC's failure to reach any decision by the legal deadline, the Electoral College may not examine the case in substance and must return the matter to the CEC for decision within a ten-day deadline. The Electoral Code lacks a clear process and jurisdiction to handle campaign-related complaints.

Only electoral subjects have a right to file complaints against election administration bodies. Other election stakeholders, such as voters, citizen groups and NGOs, may not challenge election-related decisions and actions that impact their voting or public electoral rights.²¹ Decisions of the Electoral College cannot be appealed to a higher court. The Constitutional Court is mandated to review court decisions to ensure compliance with constitutional guarantees of due process, though there are no legal deadlines for issuing decisions in an election period.²²

To date, the CEC has not received any complaints against CEAZ decisions and the OSCE/ODIHR EOM has not been informed of any complaints lodged with CEAZs. Although parties have publicly raised allegations of campaign violations, formal complaint mechanisms have not been utilized to resolve such matters. The Electoral College has adjudicated 11 complaints against CEC decisions and failure to make decisions. A controversial decision related to the Electoral College's

¹⁸ For instance, the Union of Albanian Journalists and the Albanian Media Institute were not included in this list.

¹⁹ This includes primetime broadcasts of six TV channels (*TVSH*, *Top Channel*, *TV Klan*, *Vizion Plus*, *News 24* and *Ora News*) and four daily newspapers (*Panorama*, *Shqip*, *Mapo* and *Shqiptarja.com*).

²⁰ Complaints against the CEC's aggregation of district results are adjudicated by the CEC in the first instance.

²¹ Voters may only appeal against exclusion from the voter register and civil society groups may only appeal against decisions denying them accreditation as election observers.

²² In a meeting with the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, the President of the Constitutional Court noted that despite its mandate under Art. 131.f of the Constitution, any appeals to the Constitutional Court claiming violation of due process by the Electoral College will not automatically be reviewed by the court.

determination of the number of EAZs, following the CEC's failure to take a decision. Though the court was legally mandated to order the CEC to make the decision, it adjudicated the case in substance and established 89 EAZs.²³

On 14 February, the SP filed an appeal to the Constitutional Court challenging the constitutionality of parliament's decision on the distribution of the seats, arguing the parliament was not legally mandated to make the decision without CEC's proposal and that its failure to apply the current population distribution statistics violated the equality of the vote. On 7 March, the Constitutional Court declined jurisdiction over the case.²⁴

XII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The Electoral Code provides for citizen and international observation. Electoral subjects also have the right to appoint observers. Citizen observers can be nominated by domestic non-governmental organizations. Citizen and international observer organizations have the right to appoint observers to the CEAZ, the VCCs and to each BCC counting table. As a rule, CEC accredits observers.²⁵ Political parties and independent candidates may appoint one observer per voting centre and one per ballot counting table. Coalitions may appoint three observers per voting centre and counting table. A party that is a member of a coalition is not entitled to appoint observers independently. Thus far, the CEC has accredited 299 citizen observers from 3 organizations and 631 international observers.

XIII. OSCE/ODIHR EOM ACTIVITIES

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM opened in Tirana with a press conference on 15 May. The Head of Mission has met with the Prime Minister, the CEC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Speaker of Parliament, the President of the Constitutional Court, the Electoral College and with representatives of political parties, media and civil society. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM has also established regular contacts with the election administration at all levels, governmental institutions involved in the election process, civil society and media.

For election day observation, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM will join efforts with delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Roberto Battelli has been appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term observer mission for these elections.

*The English version of this report is the only official document.
An unofficial translation is available in Albanian.*

²³ The administrative proposal initially discussed by the CEC included 76 EAZs, however changed to 89 EAZs in its court submission. The SP claims the number 89 was proposed by the DP to the SP in private negotiations.

²⁴ The court held that the claimant had not exhausted its legal remedies as required under Art. 131.f of the Constitution. However, decisions of the parliament are not reviewable by the Electoral College or any other court.

²⁵ Article 6.6 of the Electoral Code envisages that the CEC may delegate the right to accredit partisan observers to CEAZs 'by its instruction'. Thus far, CEAZs have not accredited any observers.