



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSCE Presence in Albania**

**Republic of Albania
Voter Registration for the Local Elections
June-July 2000**

Final Observation Report

**International Enumeration Observation Mission
in the Framework of the Electoral Assistance Programme**

20 August 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The OSCE Presence in Albania organised an International Enumeration Observation Mission from 3 June to 11 July 2000, in the framework of a multi-agency Electoral Assistance Programme, to observe door-to-door voter registration for the Local Elections in Albania.

The Mission assessed that in general, the aim of conducting a transparent and accurate registration was achieved. However, the conduct of the process has often been erratic, particularly at the start. Observers reported that the process had shortcomings in management and communications. On central level, there were apparent miscommunications between the Government of Albania and the international project partners regarding the need for ground organisation, structure, reporting relationships, and centralised oversight of enumeration. In most places at local level, officials seemed to have made the best of the situation with considerable commitment.

The Government of Albania is currently in the process of implementing reforms of its electoral processes. The action is being taken in response to new constitutional requirements, as well as recommendations made by domestic and international observers and election experts, for the improvement of electoral legislation and voter registration. This past May, the Albanian Government drafted and adopted a comprehensive Electoral Code which calls in part for an enumeration effort to produce an accurate, transparent, and computerised Voters List and issue voter cards for all eligible citizens.

The Electoral Code provided the general legal framework for this year's voter registration, and was for the most part adequately specified by governmental sub-legal acts. However, some provisions were insufficiently spelled out, so that several amendments were necessary, which were often issued late. These legal shortcomings often caused confusion over competencies and procedures. They also prompted repeated criticism, in some cases boycott, by local authorities and political parties.

The new procedures for voter registration in general fulfilled their purpose of introducing internationally accepted standards. However, official approval on procedures was often obtained at a late stage, causing further delays in training and purchase and delivery of materials. In practice, procedures were often rated too complicated for the current circumstances of the country. The most cumbersome procedure was the sorting of Enumeration Records (input lists) by polling unit. In larger cities experiencing significant internal migration, this effort seriously delayed the start of registrations.

A civic education campaign designed to inform citizens and officials about the enumeration procedures was late and failed to have much impact.

The official timeframe for the door-to-door enumeration diverged from real requirements and was not clearly defined. Government deadlines for the enumeration process conflicted with International Community schedules for the delivery of training and materials, causing premature starts for the enumeration process in many communities.

Non-payment for this duplication of work was a major issue of contention and caused many Enumerators to temporarily refuse to co-operate.

The delivery of enumeration materials to the field was achieved without major problems in general, albeit with considerable delays. This was the consequence of late decision-making, production and delivery. Observers reported inefficient further distribution from Prefectures to remote areas of the country. Training of members of the local enumeration structures was conducted countrywide and on all levels, however with delays and low standards.

The co-operation between representatives of central and local governments and enumerators was professional and efficient in most Municipalities and Communes. Exceptions were larger cities like Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodra, Kukës, and Lushnja, where political disputes and blockages hampered technical developments considerably, as did the verification and sorting of Enumeration Records and the creation of Local Enumeration Teams. These problems resulted primarily from procedural difficulties, rather than from a lack of co-operation.

In view of the observed shortcomings during the enumeration phase, the Government of Albania will need to take measures to ensure that the quality of the lists can be further improved during the revision period, as well as to carry out an early and intensive civic education campaign for this purpose.

1. GENERAL

1.1. Local Elections

Local Elections are scheduled to take place in Albania on 1 October 2000, with a possible second round on 15 October. The Electoral Code, in Article 152 (2) of its Transitory Provisions, provides that "the local elections of the year 2000 will take place no later than 1 November 2000."

1.2. The Electoral Assistance Programme

A List of Voters will be required for the Local Elections, and reform of voter registration is underway through an Electoral Assistance Programme. It aims primarily to assist in the development of procedures to create transparent and accurate voter lists for the upcoming and future elections.

The accuracy and transparency of voter lists has been an issue of concern in all past multi-party elections in Albania. Election Observation Missions of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) identified shortcomings in this respect during the Parliamentary Elections 1996 and 1997 as well as in the Constitutional Referenda of 1994 and 1998. The final report of the OSCE/ODIHR Civil/Voter Registry Pilot Project in Albania of 30 April 1999 also pointed out gaps in current practices for voter registration. OSCE/ODIHR reports have repeatedly made recommendations for improving the accuracy of the voter list and the accessibility of the voter register to the electorate. They have also stressed the need for an updated civil register based on actual residency, which would help to generate an accurate and verifiable voter register.

The Electoral Assistance Programme is a joint undertaking of the Government of Albania, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), and OSCE. As its final output, the Programme envisages the establishment of an accurate and transparent, computerised National Register of Voters. This would generate a preliminary List of Voters by 25 August, for revision by the Central Election Commission. Furthermore, the Programme provides for the issuance of voter cards and the establishment of a data centre to help manage this and future electoral processes. The computerisation of voter data was also intended to have a positive impact on the civil status system, which would be automated in the post-electoral stage.

The central component of the Electoral Assistance Programme is the nation-wide door-to-door enumeration of voter data, which started on 20 May and is now almost completed. However, enumeration in Tirana and Durrës has extended into August.

The enumeration process has several new features, which aim to increase its transparency and accuracy. First, it is based on a computerised input list (Civil Register Forms/Enumeration Records) containing civil registry data, to back up the door-to-door registration process. A Government Decision of 9 March 2000 specifies procedures for the preparation of this input list. It foresees the use of a copy of the civil register, previously computerised by the Social Insurance Institute, as a starting point for the automated compilation of the Register of Voters. During the first phase, this register was printed out and sent back to each local civil registry office for updating with current information on all citizens born on or before 31 December 1983, i.e. eligible to vote in the Local Elections of 2000 and the Parliamentary Elections of 2001.

Second, the enumeration directly involves local authorities and political parties through multi-party Local Enumeration Commissions, Enumeration Teams, and Enumeration Co-ordinators (liaison persons in larger Municipalities). Both Government and the international project partners launched civic education campaigns in order to familiarise the Albanian public with the new registration exercise.

1.3. The Enumeration Observation Mission

General

Along with helping to establish the Electoral Assistance Programme, the OSCE Presence in Albania responded to several requests by the Government of Albania to co-ordinate an International Enumeration Observation Mission within the framework of the Programme to help enhance the transparency of and confidence in the registration process. The Presence requested the International Community to second election experts for this purpose. The Governments of Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States provided a total of 23 Observers. The Government of Sweden sent Mr. Björn Birkoff to serve as Mission Co-ordinator, succeeded by Mr. Brian Marshall from the United States. Deputy Mission Co-ordinator was Mr. Tim Bittiger, Local Government Officer at the OSCE Presence. The Mission Co-ordinators advised and co-ordinated the exercise, and processed observer reports.

Organisation and Mandate

The Enumeration Observation Mission was affiliated to the OSCE Presence in Albania. The Presence provided the operational and security structure for the Observation Mission and, for the duration of their deployment, the Observers had the status of OSCE Mission Members. OSCE/ODIHR standards and practices were applied throughout the process.

The Enumeration Observation Mission monitored the voter registration process continuously from 6 June to 11 July. The Observers provided a broad presence throughout the country to assess all aspects of voter registration. Mixed nationality teams of two covered the process in each of the twelve Albanian Prefectures up to 30 June. From 1 to 11 July, a core team of seven Observers remained to follow the process in Tirana, Durrës, and Shkodra, where delays were experienced.

The Enumeration Observers were tasked with the following goals:

- Observe all aspects of voter registration, especially assess whether enumeration procedures are followed, and whether the impartiality of the process is maintained by all national enumeration officials.
- For this purpose, maintain close and continuous contact with the enumeration and other local officials.

The Enumeration Observers were requested to abide by the OSCE/ODIHR Observer Code of Conduct. This includes strict impartiality, the expression of no bias or preference, and non-interference with the enumeration process. Observers were mandated to bring irregularities to the attention of local officials, but never to give instructions to them or countermand their decisions.

Co-operation between Enumeration Observation Teams and OSCE Presence Field Stations were essential for the conduct of the observation exercise. Field Stations assisted in observing the enumeration as part of their mandate to monitor and support local democratisation issues, and

provided logistic support to the Enumeration Observation Mission Teams. The Heads of Field Station were charged with providing security, administration, and logistics support to Enumeration Observation Teams. Field Stations used its contacts with local officials to discuss ways of ensuring a transparent and accurate enumeration process, and they received advice from Enumeration Observation Teams about the need for corrective action on a daily basis.

Reporting

Observer Teams reported to the Mission Co-ordinator on a daily basis (except Sundays). The Mission issued three Interim Summary Reports listing the preliminary findings of the Enumeration Observation Teams. These reports were sent to the Government of Albania, the Electoral Assistance Programme partners, and the Friends of Albania to report on progress and encourage transparency in the enumeration process and, where necessary, to suggest the corrective action to be taken. The Mission also compiled Daily Summary Reports for use by the technical advisors to the Electoral Assistance Programme.

2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for door-to-door voter registration for the Local Elections 2000 is Article 154 of the new Electoral Code. In principle, this law gives full responsibility for voter registration to the Central Election Commission (Article 18 (6)). However, the lawmaker anticipated that the Central Election Commission would not be ready to assume its responsibility in time for the Local Elections of this year. Instead, a transitory provision for these elections was laid down in Article 154 of the Code, which specifies that:

"for the local elections of the year 2000, the Council of Ministers, through the organs of local government and the offices of civil status, prepares the *preliminary* National Registry of Voters and delivers it to the ... CEC [Central Election Commission] no later than August 25, 2000." *Emphasis added*

To this effect, the Council of Ministers issued Decision No. 210, dated 5 May 2000, "On the Second Phase of the Voter Registration for the Local Elections". The Decision specifies procedures for the establishment of the enumeration infrastructure, preparations and procedures for door-to-door enumeration, and computerisation of enumeration results by the National Centre for Voter Registration.

The Electoral Assistance Programme issued an Enumeration Manual and an Enumeration Co-ordinator's Manual, to illustrate procedures laid down in Council of Ministers' Decision No. 210.

During May and June, Decision No. 210 was amended by several Ministry of Local Government directives and instructions. The first amendment was made with Ministerial Directive No. 3, dated 20 May 2000, "On the Procedures of the Second Phase of the Voter Registration". It clarified rules for the establishment and composition of Local Enumeration Commissions and of Enumeration Teams, payment and funding issues, as well as delivery of enumeration results.

On 8 June 2000, the Ministry issued a second amendment, Protocol No. 3270/1, which extended the finish date for enumeration from 10 of June to 25 June.

The third ministerial amendment of 22 June 2000, Protocol No. 3498, clarified registration procedures for temporary residents.

On 26 June 2000, the Ministry issued an amendment (Protocol No. 3547) which specified payment for Enumerators.

3. ENUMERATION PROCEDURES

3.1. Structure and Competencies

The enumeration structure and its competencies are specified in Council of Ministers' Decision No. 210. It charges the Electoral Assistance Programme Management Board, the Ministry of Local Government, the Prefectures, and Mayors and Heads of Commune with the implementation of this phase of voter registration.

National Level

The Electoral Assistance Programme, through its National Project Director, was to provide central co-ordination for preparation and implementation of the door-to-door process. In particular, IFES gave technical assistance for enumeration procedures, training, and public awareness during this project phase. Enumeration results were computerised at a National Centre for Voter Registration (Data Centre) at the Financial Information Institute in Tirana. The Ministry of Local Government provided logistic support in the distribution of materials and established a National Help Line, staffed by Ministry representatives, to answer questions and give advice over the phone and in the field.

Prefectures

Contrary to prior voter registration processes, the involvement of the Prefects was restricted to monitoring and controlling to which extent enumeration procedures were respected (Article 11). They were also required to assist in the distribution of materials to the field.

Municipalities/Communes

Local Enumeration Commissions. At the local level, the Commissions were fully responsible for the registration in their respective areas. They consisted of seven members, composed of the Mayor or Head of Commune, the Council Secretary, the Head of the Civil Status Office, and representatives of the four political parties with the greatest number of seats in the Council. The Mayor/Head of Commune served as Chairman of the Commission (Article 1). The Local Enumeration Commissions were responsible for:

- Defining and numbering the polling units in their area (Article 2);
- Sorting the Enumeration Records by polling unit (Article 3);
- Recovering completed Enumeration Records, making and keeping copies, and delivering the originals personally to the National Centre for Voter Registration (Articles 9 + 10);
- Establishing two polling units for areas where the number of registered voters enumerated were found to exceed 1,000 (Article 9).

Enumeration Teams. Decision No. 210 required Mayors or Heads of Commune to set up, for each polling unit, three-member Enumeration Teams for each polling unit, composed of one representative from the Municipality/Commune and one representative each from the largest governing and opposition parties in the Council (Articles 4 + 5). Enumeration Teams were to accomplish the following tasks (Article 8):

- Register every voter in a household and assign them to one polling unit;
- Mark the Enumeration Record with a 'V' for voters present, an 'E' for émigrés, an 'L' for voters who had moved, and an 'X' for deceased voters (Article 8a);
- Fill in Temporary Resident Forms for voters not found on the Enumeration Record (Civil Registry Form) (Article 8b);
- Ask for identification through an ID document (Article 8c); and
- At the end of the process report to the Local Enumeration Commission and number and sign each Enumeration Record.

Enumeration Co-ordinators. In Municipalities with more than 30.000 inhabitants, the Local Enumeration Commissions had the option of appointing Enumeration Co-ordinators to oversee Enumeration Team activities (Article 6).

3.2. Enumeration Materials

Civil Registry Form. The door-to-door enumeration for the Local Elections of the year 2000 was based on an input or base list, called the Enumeration Record or Civil Registry Form. The 9 March 2000 Decision of the Council of Ministers provided for civil register data previously op-scanned by the Social Insurance Institute and to be transferred into input lists, to serve as the starting point for compiling a National Register of Voters. For reasons of quality control, this database was returned to each local civil registry office so as to ensure that it reflected the current status of civil register records for all citizens eligible to vote in the Local Elections 2000 and the Parliamentary Elections 2001.

Temporary Resident Form. In cases where voters could not be found on the Civil Registry Forms or had moved to another location, Temporary Resident Forms were to be used to list these voters in their current (temporary) residence rather than (permanent) domicile, if they wished to vote in that location. (Residence/domicile are defined in Article 2 (26) and (27), and Article 52 of the Electoral Code).

Voter ID Coupons. Each registered voter was to be issued with a numbered receipt, entitling him/her to receive a Voter ID Card at a later stage. The Enumeration Teams were required to keep a corresponding stub, signed by the voter.

4. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The OSCE Presence in Albania closely monitored and assisted in the political, legal, and technical aspects of the registration process during its preparation and implementation phases. The Presence reported developments to the OSCE Secretariat and to the International Community on a regular basis.

Between April and July 2000, the first two phases of voter registration (the preparation of an input list and door-to-door enumeration) became the focus of political debate between the Albanian political forces and drew considerable attention from the media. Both phases were temporarily boycotted by the opposition parties, which created serious delays in the process (see OSCE Presence Spot Reports of 17 April, and 2 and 30 June).

4.1. Preparatory Phase

The first phase, the preparation of an input list for enumeration by using data from the Social Insurance Institute and by verification by Civil Status Offices, was repeatedly criticised and impeded by the opposition and local authorities. They argued that the procedures and competent institutions defined by the Council of Ministers' Decision of 9 March were not backed by law and undercut legally established local authority over voter registration.

In April, the concerns of the political opposition resulted in the refusal of several mayors to instruct their civil status offices to update the civil status lists sent by the Social Insurance Institute. This delayed preparations for the enumeration to a critical point. In addition, the National Albanian Association of Municipalities announced it would file a complaint with the Constitutional Court, seeking to invalidate the Council of Ministers' Decision, which they claimed was not based on the law then valid. In May, the Electoral Assistance Programme was again faced with a challenge when the Democratic Party requested local authorities to start creating their own voter lists, following the previous registration system.

The legal gaps in voter registration procedures were filled by the adoption on 5 May of Council of Ministers' Decision No. 210 on enumeration procedures, and of the new Electoral Code, on 8 May. This solved many concerns of the opposition and local authorities, who subsequently co-operated with the Programme. A directive went out from the Democratic Party headquarters, revoking the request for parallel registration, and the Association of Municipalities withdrew their constitutional complaint.

4.2. Implementation Phase

The second phase of voter registration, the actual door-to-door enumeration was both slow and erratic, but improvements were made throughout the period. Whilst registration advanced in rural areas, many urban areas experienced considerable delays due to technical and political problems. Obstacles to enumeration included late official decision and subsequent failure to conduct training for enumerators and other key personnel, poor communications between local and central authorities, and, in some areas, a lack of co-operation in producing the voter register on time and according to prescribed procedures. Issues regarding registration management and procedures were often quickly politicised, especially in locations with divisions between central and local authorities.

The first political impasse emerged over the start and finish dates of voter registration, which remained unclear throughout the process. Confusion arose as a result of the publication of the Council of Ministers' Decision No. 210, which gave 20 May and 10 June as the respective start and finish dates. This was at variance with the international project partners' insistence that 5 June was the earliest technically feasible date for enumeration to start, and that training and materials would not be deliverable before this date, especially as the required official approval was obtained late.

On 5 June, the OSCE Presence sent a letter to the Minister of Local Government, urging clarification of these dates. Eventually the Ministry officially extended the deadline for finalisation of the process from 10 to 25 June. Despite this, local authorities remained uncertain as to how to proceed with registration, particularly after the extension of the completion date. Questions were asked about whether the premature work should be repeated, and inevitably whether the enumerators would be paid for this duplicated work.

On 22 June, the Head of Presence sent a letter to Prime Minister Meta, expressing concern about the situation. The OSCE Presence, with UNDP and IFES, urged the Government to take a number of corrective measures. These included: clarifying the requirement to repeat the enumeration process in certain areas and to address the question of extra payment for the additional work; also to issue a statement to confirm the prescribed enumeration procedures, particularly where queries had existed, and with particular emphasis on procedures for temporary residents.

Immediately after the letter was sent, the Ministry of Local Government issued clarification on enumeration procedures for temporary residents. Ministry representatives were deployed to all Prefectures in the last week of June to monitor progress, give advice and report back on developments on the ground. However, clear instructions as to whether to repeat the earlier work and about payment for this duplicated effort were not issued. A stalemate, therefore, continued to exist in many locations.

By the last week of June, Observers reported progress in most Prefectures and enumeration appeared to be underway. Many blockages, which had been caused by political or technical problems, had been resolved. In Elbasan Prefecture work started, despite an initial refusal by the Prefect and the Mayor to discuss the matter. In Kukës, the dispute between the Mayor and the Secretary of the Municipal Council about the composition of Enumeration Teams was finally overcome.

Major problems remained in Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, and Lushnja. All were experiencing delays due to the high influx of unregistered migrants from rural areas, as well as some political resistance. As in most other urban areas, procedures were unclear when dealing with temporary and unregistered residents and in areas where there are no street names or addresses. In Shkodra, the enumeration process was stalled due to a lack of communication, information, and training, which caused serious delays. In Tirana, the Socialist Party withheld the submission of all their nominations for Enumeration Teams. Enumeration in the capital eventually started on 23 June and is expected to finish in mid-August. In Durrës, the process was blocked by over-politicisation of the process. This deadlock was only resolved in the first week of July, after intervention by Government, the Democratic Party Headquarters, and OSCE. Up to this date, in Lushnja the controversial replacement of the mayor continues to affect the proper conduct of the enumeration process.

5. OBSERVATION OF THE ENUMERATION PROCESS

From 6 June to 29 June, all twelve Enumeration Observation Teams reported regularly, except Sundays, to the Mission Co-ordinator based at the OSCE Presence Headquarters in Tirana.

At the conclusion of the original period of observation, three teams had their mandate prolonged another two weeks as to continue coverage through 11 July of Durrës, Shkodra, and Tirana, three densely populated Prefectures where enumeration had been delayed.

All observer reports reflected observations of the process as well as interviews with Prefects, local authorities, enumeration officials, and representatives of political parties and the civil society.

5.1. Initial Observations

Observers began their mission by finding that many local governments, not having received instructions to postpone the start date, had begun registering voters some two weeks earlier so as to comply with the original dates set by Council of Ministers' Decision No. 210. Much of the enumeration effort was thus being done prematurely without the use of training manuals, proper forms and registration coupons, which only began arriving on 9 June. This situation applied at least to the following places:

- Most of the Prefectures of Durrës, Elbasan, Fier and Shkodra;
- Delvina Municipality and the Brataj, Vlahina and Kote Communes in Vlora Prefecture;
- Kruma Municipality in Kukës Prefecture; and
- Gjirokastra and Tepelena Municipalities in Gjirokastra Prefecture.

Local Enumerators were displeased to learn they would have to repeat their work using proper forms, registration coupons and procedures. There was also discontent over the fact that no financial compensation would be received for what was effectively extra service, and which had been incurred through no fault of their own. The Ministry of Local Government subsequently issued the Instruction dated 7 June 2000, extending the enumeration completion deadline from 10 June to 25 June. However, many Enumerators had by then suspended their activities and were demanding extra payment for the extra work. The impasse occurred at least in the following places:

- Elbasan Municipality in Elbasan Prefecture;
- Fier Municipality in Fier Prefecture;
- Tepelena Municipality in Gjirokastra Prefecture; and
- Kruma Municipality in Kukës Prefecture.

Elsewhere, the start of enumeration was also suspended, because sorting of Enumeration Records (Civil Registry Forms) was not complete, positions on Local Enumeration Commissions and Enumeration Teams had not been filled, or key officials were away. This situation applied in the following places:

- Durrës Municipality in Durrës Prefecture;
- Ballsh and Fier Municipalities and Lushnja District in Fier Prefecture;
- Kukës Municipality in Kukës Prefecture;
- Bushati Commune in Shkodra Prefecture;
- Much of the Tirana Prefecture (particularly Tirana Municipality); and
- Dhiver Commune in Vlora Prefecture.

Eventually, the enumeration effort resumed in all locations, but interim delays like these caused many local governments to later miss their enumeration deadlines.

5.2. Training Conduct and Training Materials

Evidence suggests that more advance preparation would have fostered a better understanding of correct procedures, thus reducing the need for clarifying amendments, revised data entries and many additional visits to registrant homes. Enumeration Observers gave mixed appraisals of the Enumerators' training programme, but generally rated it as 'bad'. Observers particularly criticised

programmes in Tirana, Shkodra, and Korça, whereas in Vlora, the majority of Enumeration Teams were said to be "well trained".

Enumeration Observers noted that Local Council Secretaries, Enumeration Co-ordinators and other officials seemed to demonstrate a good knowledge of the process, but Enumerators themselves more frequently relied upon past experience and did not seem to see training as a significant requirement. Classes were often relatively short and not always fully attended. The quality of Enumerator Team training varied throughout the country and could even differ a lot within the same Prefecture.

Several Observers complained that they found training to have been "the least transparent" part of the enumeration process. They said that when they asked for an opportunity to attend a training session, it generally seemed either that training "had taken place already" or that it would take place "in the near future but was not yet scheduled." Those Observers who did attend sessions generally commented that they were conducted more as "a recitation of instructions rather than training" and offered few possibilities for active questioning.

Overall, with some exceptions, the Enumeration Manual and Enumeration Co-ordinator's Manual were adequate. Insufficiently detailed explanations in some cases caused confusion between the Manuals and the Council of Minister's Decision No. 210, but the additional instructions answered most questions. However, the need for several supplementary amendments and explanations suggests the information provided in the Decision and the Manuals was sometimes inadequate. Altogether the amendments provided a clearer and more useful picture, but arrived too late. Both the officials and their teams were frustrated when amendments arrived after the door-to-door effort had already been repeated two or three times, calling for enumerators to redo hundreds of forms or revisit, in exceptionally hot weather, several hundred homes that were not always easy to reach.

5.3. Polling Units

The polling units as specified in the Constitutional Referendum of 1998 served as enumeration units for this registration process. They usually differed from administrative and civil status units. One three-member Enumeration Team was responsible for each polling unit and each will have one Polling Station on Election Day. For the purpose of door-to-door registration, Enumeration Records were sorted by polling unit and handed to the respective Enumeration Team as a point of reference.

In most cases, particularly in Korça, Lezha, and Vlora, Observers rated polling unit boundaries as well defined and not a significant problem. Primary complaints related to the larger, more densely populated Municipalities such as Tirana and Elbasan, where addresses and boundaries could be more difficult to establish. For example, Tirana Municipality's Local Enumeration Commission acknowledged that its maps were of questionable quality and outdated. In such circumstances, members of the same household could easily be assigned to two different polling stations or not be assigned to any station at all, a problem which needs to be remedied during the revision period.

Authorities in relatively small Municipalities and Communes had less difficulty providing boundary descriptions and maps, and many Communes did not see the necessity for having any maps at all. Rural polling units generally corresponded to a defined village, which diminished possibilities for confusion due to unclear geographical boundaries.

No major boundary disputes occurred between different local entities. In one case, the Tirana Prefecture decided that a new village, Lanabregas 2, while well within the borders of the Dajti Commune, should be placed under enumeration in Tirana Municipality. The border in Lezha Prefecture was not clear between Shëngjin and Lezha Municipalities, but the two towns were able to reach an understanding on the matter.

5.4. Enumeration Records and Voter ID Coupons

General

Observers rated the Enumeration Records and Voter ID Coupons (see Ch. III.B) as clear and accessible, but also poor for their timeliness of distribution. Most Prefectures received the materials from Tirana around 9 June and had them sorted, boxed and either dispatched to, or collected by, their Municipalities and Communes. The time it took for the Prefectures to distribute the materials to Municipalities and Communes varied considerably, with some towns getting them immediately and some getting them very late – a factor that often had little to do with distances. Many of the remotely located communities were reportedly left to pick up the materials themselves.

In general, delays in materials distribution are said to have adversely affected Enumeration Team motivation and the overall process. Some teams (especially in village areas) began registration with just the Civil Registry Forms, because other forms were delayed or, as in the case of Temporary Resident Forms, often in short supply.

Civil Registry Forms

Observers rated Civil Registry Forms as generally useful in the door-to-door enumeration process and available within deadline, but poorly sorted and not corresponding with polling unit boundaries. They were also not considered useful in areas with high population movement.

With regard to local residents, the Civil Registry Forms served as little more than a rough guide or base from which to begin the enumeration process. Much of the data, particularly for growing Municipalities or Communes, had not been properly updated for years. In addition, two or more families from different polling units were often found listed on the same Civil Registry Form. These also seemed to be generally organised by neighbourhood (civil registry units) and could not be easily sorted into polling units.

Civil Registry Forms in general were poorly maintained, but rural Commune Enumerators could overcome this problem because of their detailed knowledge of their areas. However, the larger Municipalities, with their high population densities and movements, presented a taller hurdle. Tracking and sorting these records caused major difficulties and serious delays for the Enumeration Teams.

5.5. Public Awareness

In almost all categories – timeliness, clarity, circulation, and penetration - Observers considered the public information campaign for the enumeration process to be poor. It was considered "good" only in terms of official awareness of it.

Observers in Vlora, Tirana, Shkodra, Korça, Elbasan, and Lezha saw no posters displayed and few pamphlets in circulation. A number of people interviewed knew that enumeration was taking place but not many had any idea of how it worked. Radio announcements and TV advertisements

started much too late and they did not adequately explain the importance of and procedures for registration.

People interviewed at random showed little interest in the enumeration process. In remote areas, residents seemed to value the visits of the Enumeration Teams and Observers, but elsewhere the visits were considered yet another bureaucratic activity to endure. Even some officials seemed unaware of the connection with the upcoming elections. Trust in their correctness seemed guided more by party affiliations than understanding of procedures. Some people even believed they would have to pay money for a new identity card or matching photo, and were reportedly not prepared to do so. Others were allegedly unwilling to accept Voter ID Coupons as, by doing so, they felt they would be obliged to vote.

5.6. Co-ordination among Actors

Observers considered the co-ordination between principal actors – representing Prefectures, Municipalities, Communes, Local Enumeration Commissions, Enumeration Teams, Enumeration Co-ordinators, and political parties – to have been generally good in all categories. Key exceptions were in the Municipalities of Durrës, Elbasan and Lushjna. Each of them experienced problems between local and national government officials, which temporarily suspended the enumeration process in those locales.

Since Enumeration Co-ordinators were foreseen only for Municipalities with more than 30.000 inhabitants, the Municipality/Commune Council Secretaries (and in some cases the Mayor or Head of Commune) assumed this role in smaller communities.

Meanwhile, Municipalities and Communes generally maintained good co-operation with their Local Enumeration Commissions (probably because the Commission Chairmen were always the Mayors or Heads of Communes). One exception was the Tirana Municipality's Local Enumeration Commission, which was criticised for a lack of involvement. This allegedly hindered the decision-making process. As far as is known, for example, no member of the Tirana commission went into the field to observe and better to understand the enumeration process.

The Prefectures had a very peripheral role in principal, but became involved in the process to a large extent in practice. Reports cited Lezha for delays in distributing material and reacting to problems, and Tirana for taking over eight days to inform Communes that the enumeration completion deadline date had been changed from 10 June to 25 June. In Shkodra, Communes and Municipalities did not know when and if more materials were due to arrive. From a more positive standpoint, Korça's Enumeration Co-ordinator was praised for his competence in responding quickly, both by telephone and personal visits, to many different queries by Local Enumeration Commissions.

Political parties on occasion caused problems by failing to supply Enumeration Team nominees in a reasonable time period and then frequently seeking to make significant changes. For example, in Tirana Municipality, the Socialist Party failed to supply nominees for four polling units and on 28 June sought to change 64 nominees. These actions made it difficult for Enumeration Co-ordinators to oversee Enumeration Teams. However, political party representatives on the Enumeration Teams generally worked well together.

Enumeration Teams were organised in a partisan way so as to consist of three members representing the municipality and the two main political parties. Reports from officials suggest

that Enumeration Teams often enumerated without all three members being present, but Observers could not always verify this information directly.

5.7. Enumeration Procedures (Door-to-Door)

Observers gave good evaluations of the door-to-door enumeration process (see Ch. III. C) with respect to its composition, teamwork and recording of control numbers and signatures, but were more critical of the Enumerators' diligence in checking identity cards. While often not present at the time of the Enumerator visits, people were otherwise described as co-operative and in most cases were able to present identity cards when asked.

However, in practice Observers consistently complained of difficulties in arranging to accompany Enumeration Teams in the field. "We never succeeded," said one, "in getting in contact with a team on the spur of the moment. We got the feeling that (most of) the few chances we had were staged just for us. The team members were nervous about having us around, and the rounds we took part in were short." Enumeration was also often conducted in the evenings, when more people were at home. Consequently, rural observation was out of the question in such cases because of OSCE security instructions.

Enumeration Teams often felt the written procedures were unnecessarily complicated and did not always follow them. Municipality and Commune representatives who had done enumeration previously were especially likely to see no need to check ID documents properly. In addition, they saw no reason why they should not provide Voter ID Coupons to persons they knew without seeing them physically during the enumeration process. According to one observer, half of the Enumeration Teams monitored were checking identity cards and half were not.

Enumeration Observers found that teams often worked by splitting up, collecting names for their area, and writing them down in a blank booklet. Reportedly, Enumerators thought this to be more appropriate than the plethora of official forms. At home, they would check these names with the received Enumeration Records and persons found in their list would be marked as present and assigned a blue Voter ID Coupon. The Coupon's control number would then be transcribed into the Enumeration Record to be signed by all team members. After doing this, Enumerators would split the team again, distribute the Coupons, and obtain, in most cases, one receipt signature from every family. Coupons were in some cases signed on the spot, but enumeration records were signed later during final checking back at the office. A lot of voters' names were reportedly written illegibly, which might cause trouble later during computerisation.

Particularly in the countryside, people often lacked identity cards and Enumeration Teams would try to solve this problem through personal recognition and cross checking with Enumeration Records. Otherwise, the most commonly presented documents were old identity cards and international passports held usually by the younger male population.

5.8. National Help Line

The National Help Line appears to have been seldom used. It seemed to elicit little interest at the Local Enumeration Commission level and a number of Municipalities/Communes do not have telephone connection with the outside world. Furthermore, the idea of directly or indirectly admitting to a superior that there are things they do not understand is foreign to many Albanians. Only the Prefecture seemed to know that this Help Line existed.

5.9. Data Processing

A National Data Centre has been established by the Electoral Assistance Programme to automate the National Registry of Voters, by updating the civil registry data compiled by the Social Insurance Institute with data verified during enumeration. A preliminary List of Voters will be produced and circulated, for public inspection during the revision period.

The Data Centre had its own challenges. Earlier delays had reduced available processing time by one month. Equipment, which arrived late, was still not installed by early July. Staff employment was also delayed, leaving new employees untrained. The number of citizens appearing on Temporary Resident Forms appears to be higher than anticipated due in part to address problems and high population migration. A further challenge was how to identify which polling unit was the correct one according to the Civil Register.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future enumeration exercises should incorporate the following recommended actions:

- The schedule for the exercise and any changes to it should be co-ordinated so as to coincide with the delivery of all necessary materials and to allow enough time for the conduct of registration. The process should only be started when all requirements are in place, materials should be delivered and distributed at the same time. Also, more time should be allowed to adequately respond to problems related to location accessibility, outdated lists, missing addresses, and the need for repeat visits (due to absent residents and changes in instructions).
- The public should be better informed about the nature, purpose and importance of this exercise and both the Enumerators' and registrants' roles in it. The enumeration effort should be constantly supervised. Offices of central and local authorities should be adequately staffed with anyone in authority to discuss and provide liaison for monitoring enumeration activities.
- Enumerators should be compensated for an increased workload, especially if incurred through no fault of their own. At least part of their salaries should be tied to their work accomplished.
- In a door-to-door enumeration, involving large numbers of unskilled local people, the training needs to be thorough and of high quality. A national-level training session should be arranged for Enumeration Co-ordinators, Prefectures and other responsible institutions and persons in each Municipality and Commune. The responsible institutions should pay more attention to this and make it a higher priority for investment. The international community should be more rigorously involved in the training and should be proactive in supplying experienced and highly skilled trainers. A formal training structure should be established for trainers with a tested training curriculum and manual so that procedures will be implemented uniformly.
- Officials should be better instructed as to the purpose of the effort and manuals should be better reviewed and edited so as to avoid the necessity for subsequent changes/amendments/clarifications.
- Detailed maps should be available at the local level. They should be provided by the respective authorities on the national level.

- A future enumeration process should incorporate field research so that problems connected to enumeration materials can be better foreseen and timeframes can remain realistic due to less frequent rule changes.
- A registration office (with party representatives) in every location and a six-week registration period could give a better result with fewer resources involved. A less complicated method should be chosen, to avoid frustration both in Local Enumeration Commissions and Enumeration Teams.