

**Speech of the Director of the National Human Rights Centre of the Republic of  
Uzbekistan at the OSCE meeting on Human Dimension  
(October 3, 2012, Warsaw)**

**Democratic elections**

As a part of the realization of "The concept of further deepening democratic reforms and formation of civil society in the country," of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, a group of deputies of the Democratic Party "Milliy Tiklanish" prepared an initiative draft law, which provides the introduction of amendments and supplements to the laws "On Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan" and "On elections to the regional, district and city Councils (Kengash) of People's Deputies."

The draft law was broadly discussed among the members of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the territorial election commissions, experts from ministries and departments, as well as representatives of political parties, the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan, the institutions of civil society and media. More than 60 seminars and "round tables" in all regions of the country, three international conferences were conducted, the results of which were summarized and studied more than 100 submitted proposals and recommendations.

During the development of the draft law successful experience of developed democratic countries was studied (USA, Canada, Germany, France, Spain, South Korea, Japan, etc.).

The draft law provides the following main provisions:

**First.** The concept and understanding of the election campaign is determined in Article 27. So "election campaign" is defined as "activity committed during the election campaign which is aimed at encouraging voters to vote for a candidate for deputy or political party."

**Second.** Election campaign is not allowed on the day of elections and the day before it (Art. 27). The proposed rule is introduced in order to provide voters with additional time needed to determine their views, political preferences, and the adoption of a conscious decision on the question of for whom and which political party to vote for. This also will allow to eliminate the possibility of any abuse, violations ahead of the vote.

**Third.** In order to improve the efficiency of the election campaign, types, forms and methods of its conduction are determined (Article 27) based on the analysis of election campaigns in 2004 and 2009.

Thus, it is proposed to define the following election campaign ways: spreading information about the program and (or) the election platform of a political party with a call to vote for its candidates for deputies, spreading information about the candidate with a call to vote for him.

The following forms of election campaign were defined: public debates, discussions, press conferences, interviews, presentations, meetings with electorate, distribution of short video about the candidate for deputy or political party.

The following methods of election campaign are proposed: use of media, including television, publication and distribution of printed, visual, audio-visual and other campaign materials, meetings with electorate.

Also it is established that the candidates, political parties may use other types, forms, methods of election campaign, not prohibited by law,

**Fourth.** Time-frames, order and procedures for early voting are determined (Article 41).

Under the current provision a voter who is unable to be on election day at his residence, may request a ballot paper from the precinct election commission, make a decision and leave it in a sealed envelope. However, this rule does not provide the terms and the whole procedure of early voting. In this regard, it is proposed to establish the following:

- early voting begins 10 days before the election and ends on the day before the election;

- the time of early voting is determined by the District Election Commission and made available to voters, observers, media representatives;

- for conducting of early voting an application of the voter is required (with the reason of his absence on the day of the election);

- a ballot paper is given in the presence of at least two members of the precinct election commission;

- a ballot paper is enclosed in an envelope that is confirmed with a seal and the signatures of two members of the commission and the voter.

The proposed rule regulates in more details the procedure of early voting and will ensure the transparency of the procedure,

**Fifth.** The following provision is introduced "within three days prior to the election day and on election day the results of opinion polls, forecasts of election results, and other researches related to the ongoing elections must not be published (announced) including the publication in the information telecommunications networks (including the Internet)"(Article 65).

The inclusion of this provision will contribute to more effective protection of the rights of voters, eliminating prejudice against a particular candidate, the possibility of violations of the electoral law.

**Sixth.** Observers shall be entitled to attend the Conference of the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan on the elections of deputies to the Legislative Chamber (Article 6). The proposed legal mechanism will ensure openness and transparency of the election of deputies from the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan.

**Seventh.** There is a possibility of formation of polling stations in places of detention is provided (art.art.8, 32, 33, 38). The introduction of this provision will further ensure the implementation of the electoral rights of citizens in custody.

The adoption and implementation of this Act will contribute to the full implementation of the principle of freedom of election, the further democratization of the electoral system in the country, increase the effectiveness of providing equal conditions for candidates for deputies and political parties during the election campaign, and promotion of the principles of openness and transparency of the deputies' election.