



## LIMITED ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

### Republic of Croatia – Parliamentary Elections, 4 December 2011

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#### STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Zagreb, 5 December 2011** – Following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed a Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) for the 4 December parliamentary elections.

The elections were assessed for their compliance with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections, as well as with Croatian legislation. This statement of preliminary findings and conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the election process. The final assessment of the elections will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the election process, including the handling of possible post-election complaints and appeals. The OSCE/ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some eight weeks after the completion of the election process.

In line with standard OSCE/ODIHR methodology for LEOMs, the mission included long-term observers but not short-term observers. The OSCE/ODIHR LEOM did not undertake a comprehensive and systematic observation of election day proceedings, but visited a limited number of polling stations.

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#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

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The 4 December 2011 parliamentary elections took place in a pluralistic environment and were administered in a professional and transparent manner. While characterized by a high degree of public confidence, further steps should be taken to improve the process, particularly with the legal framework and compilation of voter lists.

The legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections, overall. However, a number of provisions could be improved in order to fully comply with OSCE commitments, including those related to candidate registration, election observation, and equality of the vote. There is a broad consensus among election stakeholders that the legal framework should be consolidated and harmonized, as previously recommended by the OSCE/ODIHR.

The equality of voting rights is undermined by the current delimitation of constituencies. Although the law states that the number of registered voters in the 10 territorial constituencies should not differ by more than 5 per cent, the final voter lists indicate variations of up to 33 per cent. Most interlocutors met by the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM recognized the need for the incoming parliament to address this issue as a priority.

Although most OSCE/ODIHR LEOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of voter lists, the high number of registered voters relative to the 2011 preliminary census results raises concerns.

The State Election Commission (SEC) performed their duties in a professional and transparent manner and was trusted and considered impartial by the majority of stakeholders. Although the law foresees a tight election calendar, the SEC administered these elections efficiently, meeting all prescribed deadlines.

The candidate registration process was inclusive, providing voters with distinct choices. In total, 4,359 candidates from 40 political parties, 23 coalitions, and 28 independent lists contested these elections. Thirty-five per cent of candidates were women, up from 30 per cent in 2007. The law does not allow for individual independent candidates, but only for groups of independent candidates.

Electoral contestants were able to conduct their activities freely. The campaign was measured and focussed mainly on the economy and unemployment. Billboards, posters and candidate meetings were visible throughout the country, especially in urban centres.

New campaign finance regulations enhanced the transparency and accountability of this process. Regulations were welcomed and largely respected by electoral contestants. However, certain issues require further attention, including pre-campaign expenditures, disclosure of commercial discounts, and the efficacy of sanctions.

The media provided voters with access to a plurality of views. National broadcast media are obliged to provide airtime to all contestants on an equal basis. While designed to encourage a level playing field for contestants, media regulations often resulted in subdued coverage in the public media and limited coverage in the private media.

The few complaints and appeals filed during these elections were processed in a transparent manner. The law provides for a timely and effective right to judicial review for all aspects of the election process.

Election day procedures in the limited number of polling stations visited by the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM were conducted in an orderly and transparent manner. Differently coloured ballots were used for the national minority contests and voters chose their constituency in front of Voting Committees. The secrecy of the vote may have been compromised in some instances by the potential ease with which the low number of national minority constituency voters could be identified.

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## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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### Background

Following the dissolution of the parliament on 28 October, President Ivo Josipović called for parliamentary elections to be held on 4 December. These elections were the seventh parliamentary elections following Croatia's independence and the first since the conclusion of European Union (EU) accession negotiations on 30 June. Croatia is expected to sign the EU Accession Treaty on 9 December, with a national referendum on accession expected to be held in the following months.

The outgoing government is formed by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), together with the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and the Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS). In the run-up to the elections, the *Kukuriku* coalition was formed by four opposition parties: the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats (HNS), the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS), and the Croatian Party of Pensioners (HSU).

The elections took place at a time when the former leadership of the HDZ faced corruption charges, including against ex-Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. On 27 October, it was announced

that the State Attorney's Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime (USKOK) had expanded the investigation to the HDZ as a legal entity.

## Legal Framework

The primary law governing the 2011 elections is the 1999 Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament (LERCP, amended in 2010) and the 1990 Constitution (amended in 2010). The legal framework is fragmented and also encompasses a number of other laws,<sup>1</sup> including the recently adopted Law on Political Activity and Election Campaign Financing (2011). Legislation is complemented by decisions and instructions issued by the State Election Commission (SEC).

New provisions regulating out-of-country voting were applied for these elections. The Constitution and, consequently, the LERCP were amended in 2010 to fix the number of Members of Parliament (MPs) elected by citizens residing abroad to three, a number previously determined by voter turnout within the out-of-country constituency. Changes also limited out-of-country voting to the seats of Croatian diplomatic representations. Although this resulted in a significant reduction in the number of out-of-country polling stations, the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM was not made aware of any difficulties in administering out-of-country voting in a reduced number of polling stations.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections. However, a number of provisions could be improved in order to fully comply with OSCE commitments, including those related to candidate registration, election observation, and equality of the vote. In addition, the LERCP foresees rather short deadlines for electoral preparations, which presented a challenge to the work of the election administration. There is a broad consensus among election stakeholders that the legal framework should be consolidated and harmonized, as previously recommended by the OSCE/ODIHR.

## Electoral System

A total of 151 MPs are elected from 12 multi-member constituencies to serve four-year terms in the unicameral parliament (*Sabor*). The territory of Croatia is divided into 10 constituencies, each electing 14 MPs under a closed-list proportional representation system. There is a five per cent threshold for the allocation of mandates.

In addition, there are two non-territorial constituencies. One represents Croatian citizens residing abroad and elects three MPs under a closed-list proportional representation system, also with a five per cent threshold. The other constituency elects 8 MPs to represent the 22 constitutionally recognized minorities in 6 separate elections under a majoritarian system. Within this constituency, 3 seats are reserved for the Serb minority and 5 for the other 21 minorities. Voters who are identified on the voter lists as belonging to a national minority, on the basis of self-declaration, have the option to vote for either national minority candidates or for candidates in their regular constituency. Amendments adopted by the parliament in 2010 that modified the way in which national minority seats are allocated were repealed by the

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<sup>1</sup> The legal framework also includes the Law on Voter Lists (2007), the Law on the State Election Commission (2006, amended in 2007), the Law on Constituencies (1999), and the Law on Political Parties (1993, amended in 2001).

<sup>2</sup> For these elections, 124 polling stations were established in 52 countries. For the 2007 parliamentary elections there were 263 polling stations in 52 countries.

Constitutional Court in July 2011.<sup>3</sup> Most OSCE/ODIHR LEOM interlocutors expressed the view that the current system of national minority representation should be reviewed, particularly with regard to the equality and the secrecy of the vote.

The equality of voting rights is undermined by the current delimitation of constituencies, which has not been revised since the adoption of the 1999 Law on Constituencies. Although the LERCP states that the number of registered voters in the 10 territorial-based constituencies should not differ by more than 5 per cent, the final voter lists for these elections indicate variations of up to 33 per cent.<sup>4</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR has previously recommended that constituency boundaries should be revised to ensure the equality of voting rights and be in line with international standards.<sup>5</sup> Most interlocutors met by the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM recognized the need for the incoming parliament to address this issue as a priority.

### **Election Administration**

The parliamentary elections were administered by a four-tiered system, comprising the SEC, 11 Constituency Election Commissions (CECs),<sup>6</sup> 559 Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) and City Election Commissions (CiECs), and 6,827 Voting Committees (VCs). Overall, the election administration performed their duties in a professional and transparent manner. They were trusted and considered impartial by the majority of stakeholders.

The SEC is a permanent, independent, and professional body composed of a president, four vice presidents and four members appointed for a term of eight years. The president of the SEC is the president of the Supreme Court. Two of the vice presidents are Supreme Court judges and all other members are appointed by parliament. The SEC held daily public sessions throughout the election period, which were conducted in a collegial manner. The SEC adopted ten instructions regulating various aspects of the process, including technical details of candidate registration and voting procedures for special categories of voters such as members of the armed forces, prisoners and detainees, and homebound voters. SEC decisions and instructions were published on its website in a timely manner. Despite the tight election calendar, the elections were administered in an efficient manner and met all prescribed deadlines.

Lower-level election commissions were appointed by the next higher election commission. The members of commissions at all levels should have a legal background. CEC and MEC/CiEC sessions were generally called on an *ad hoc* basis and were open to observers, although not usually publicly announced. Lower-level election commissions visited by OSCE/ODIHR LEOM observers were well-organized and had a balanced gender representation.

Parliamentary parties are entitled to have representatives in the extended membership of all lower-level commissions, a measure designed to enhance transparency. The LERCP does not set deadlines for their appointment except for VCs. Late appointment could limit their ability to

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report at: [www.osce.org/odihr/elections/Croatia/84048](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/Croatia/84048).

<sup>4</sup> Constituency IV had 320,189 voters, while constituency IX had 426,431 voters; this is a difference of 33 per cent.

<sup>5</sup> The 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, I, 2.2.iv, states: “Seats must be evenly distributed between the constituencies... The permissible departure from the norm should not be more than 10%, and should certainly not exceed 15% except in special circumstances.” In addition, I, 2.2.v, states: “In order to guarantee equal voting power, the distribution of seats must be reviewed at least every ten years, preferably outside election periods.”

<sup>6</sup> The SEC directly oversees elections in the out-of-country constituency, co-ordinating technical aspects with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

make an effective contribution to the work of the commissions. OSCE/ODIHR long-term observers noted that party-nominated members acted more as observers than as commission members.

In line with its responsibilities, the SEC implemented cascade training for lower-level election commissions. The SEC also provided specific election information for candidates, first-time voters, and the general electorate through leaflets and a few TV and radio spots.

### **Voter Registration**

The number of voters registered for these elections was 4,504,081, including 411,758 registered to vote in the out-of-country constituency. Voter lists are compiled by the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) on the basis of the records of citizenship, permanent residence, travel documents and records of addresses for people residing abroad. A special office is established in the City of Zagreb for the compilation of the voter lists for out-of-country voting. Voters who expected to be absent from their place of residence on election day could temporarily register to vote elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

Voters did not receive individual notifications as prescribed by the LECRP, but they were able to check their details at MPA offices, through an internet-based search programme, or via an SMS service. The MPA informed the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM that double registration was not possible since all data is entered and verified in a centralized register. Efforts to improve the accuracy of the voter lists were undertaken, although the deletion of deceased voters residing abroad was not always possible.

Although most OSCE/ODIHR LEOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of voter lists, some concerns were voiced regarding the discrepancy in numbers between the voter register and the preliminary results of the 2011 census.<sup>8</sup> While the difference could be partly explained by the different methods used for the census and the compilation of voter lists, such a difference can undermine public confidence in the voter lists.

### **Candidate Registration**

A total of 313 candidate lists and 4,359 candidates were registered by the SEC in an inclusive process. Candidates from 40 political parties, 23 coalitions, and 28 independent lists contested these elections. Two lists were withdrawn following their initial submission. There were 15 lists registered in the out-of-country constituency and 56 candidates registered in the national minority constituency. The Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS), which fielded three candidates in the national minority constituency, also contested the elections in one territorial constituency.

Candidate lists in the 10 territorial constituencies had to contain at least 14 names. Contrary to paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, the legislation does not allow for individual independent candidates, but only for groups of independent candidates.<sup>9</sup> A list submitted by a group of voters had to be supported by 500 signatures.<sup>10</sup> For the out-of-country constituency, the lists must contain between 6 and 14 candidates. Candidates for the national

<sup>7</sup> Within Croatia, only 5,394 voters registered to vote in another municipality.

<sup>8</sup> According to the preliminary results of the 2011 census, Croatia's population is 4,290,612.

<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 7.5 provides that participating States "respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination."

<sup>10</sup> In contrast, to register a political party requires only 100 signatures (Article 6 of the Law on Political Parties).

minority constituency may be nominated by political parties, registered national minority non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or a group of voters. Those minority candidates nominated by a group of voters required only 100 supporting signatures. There is no requirement that candidates have residency in the constituency in which they stand.

The LERCP does not state the criteria for candidate ineligibility, but only the reasons that lead to the curtailment of the mandate of an elected MP. The Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) inquired with the SEC whether Branimir Glavaš, convicted of war crimes and currently serving a prison sentence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, could be a candidate, and whether he could head the party's lists.<sup>11</sup> The SEC responded that he could not be a candidate, but that he could head the lists.<sup>12</sup> On 12 November, the Constitutional Court *ex officio* overruled the SEC opinion, stating that even though the law does not explicitly foresee a prohibition, permitting him to head the list would be contrary to the values enshrined in the Constitution.

In total, 35 per cent of candidates were women, an increase from 30 per cent in the 2007 elections. While the 2008 Law on Gender Equality calls for parties to achieve a gender balance on candidate lists, the law lacks clarity on the conditions for implementation. There are no regulations concerning the position of women on lists. Women candidates were in the first position in only 15.6 per cent of candidate lists.

### **Campaign Environment**

The official election campaign started on 17 November and ended at midnight on 2 December. However, according to several OSCE/ODIHR LEOM interlocutors, pre-campaign activities had commenced already in the early autumn when HDZ and the *Kukuriku* parties toured the country to present their platforms.

Electoral contestants were able to conduct their activities freely and the campaign was measured. Billboards, posters and candidate meetings were visible across the country, especially in urban centres. HDZ and *Kukuriku* ran the most prominent campaigns, but regional contestants such as HDSSB and the independent lists of Milan Bandić and Stipe Petrina ran equally visible campaigns in their respective parts of the country. Several contestants, in particular, *Kukuriku*, the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLP), and the Croatian Labourists, made increased use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to connect with voters. Smaller parties informed the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM that a lack of adequate funds hampered their ability to reach out to the electorate. Interlocutors also cited the absence of debates among the leading contestants as an impediment to voters' ability to make an informed choice.

These elections took place within a broad political discussion on EU accession, corruption investigations against HDZ, and an increased incidence of nationalist rhetoric, in part related to recent arrests and convictions of war crimes suspects and commemoration of the 1991 events, particularly in Vukovar.<sup>13</sup> However, none of these themes featured prominently in the campaign, with party and candidates focussing on economic issues, such as unemployment, taxation, and investments in infrastructure.

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<sup>11</sup> Article 22 of the LERCP states: "the head of the list does not need to be a candidate."

<sup>12</sup> Article 10.3 of the LERCP states: "The mandate of a member of parliament shall cease... if he is convicted by a final court decision to a prison sentence longer than six months."

<sup>13</sup> Among the parties represented in the outgoing parliament, only the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) voiced opposition to EU membership as part of its electoral platform.

The SEC supervises the overall conduct of the election campaign. In addition, an independent seven-member Ethics Commission was established on 8 November and monitored the campaign in line with an Election Code of Ethics that it issued on 14 November. The Ethics Commission reviewed a total of 28 cases, 12 of which were found to be in breach of the Code of Ethics. However, neither the SEC nor the Ethics Commission can issue legally binding decisions and no sanctions are foreseen in the law.

## Campaign Finance

In line with previous recommendations made by the OSCE/ODIHR, campaign finance regulations were strengthened and consolidated in the 2011 Law on Political Activity and Election Campaign Financing. Political parties, candidates, and independent lists of candidates can finance their campaign activities with their own financial resources and donations.<sup>14</sup> In-kind contributions must be counted at market value. Total campaign cost per candidate list should not exceed HRK 1.5 million (approximately EUR 201,000) per constituency.

Each electoral contestant is required to open a special bank account for all campaign contributions and expenditures. The SEC oversees campaign finance regulations and has the authority to check these accounts at any time. If irregularities are detected, the SEC forwards a case to the courts to decide on sanctions, including fines, or the transfer of unauthorized funds to the state budget. Parties, candidates and heads of independent lists were required to submit to the SEC campaign income and expenditure reports seven days before election day. Final reports are to be submitted 15 days after election results are announced. On 21 November, the SEC issued a statement warning contestants that resources used for campaign purposes before the start of the official campaign should be reported as campaign expenditures.

One party did not open a special bank account and 27 contestants failed to submit preliminary reports by the deadline.<sup>15</sup> In the reports submitted, certain irregularities were identified. The SEC has so far forwarded three cases to the prosecutor's office.<sup>16</sup>

Political parties and NGOs generally welcomed the new campaign finance regulations. However, certain issues remain unaddressed, including the non-reporting of expenditures prior to the official campaign, the lack of transparency with commercial discounts, and the limited provisions for timely and effective sanctions. Small parties and independent candidates also raised concerns about added bureaucracy.

Two domestic NGOs, GONG and the national chapter of Transparency International, monitored campaign spending. On 19 November, they issued a report in which they published a market price-based estimate of amounts spent by political parties on the first day of the official campaign. The HDZ complained to the SEC that the report featured false information and thereby undermined its campaign. The party argued that it had paid discounted rates for advertising, and therefore spent only half the estimated amount. On 21 November, the SEC stated that NGOs are entitled to publish such data but that they are responsible for the accuracy of their reports.

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<sup>14</sup> The limit for contributions in a calendar year is set at HRK 30,000 (approximately EUR 4,000) for individuals, HRK 200,000 (EUR 26,800) for legal entities to political parties, and HRK 100,000 (EUR 13,400) for legal entities to candidates.

<sup>15</sup> The Croatian Christian Democratic Union (HKDU) failed to open a special campaign account. Six political parties, one head of a list of independent candidates, and 20 national minority candidates did not submit preliminary reports.

<sup>16</sup> These related to the failure of HKDU to open a campaign bank account and to the HSS and the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLS) receiving individual donations that exceeded the limit.

## Media

The media environment in Croatia is diverse. The main source of political information is television. Nine TV channels broadcast nationally, and four air regular news and current affairs programmes. Contestants were able to convey their platforms freely through the media, providing voters with access to a variety of political views.

The LERCP and the Rules of Procedure for the national broadcasters govern the coverage of the campaign in the media.<sup>17</sup> The public broadcaster *HRT* is obliged to provide equal coverage of all contestants, and to allocate free airtime to all contestants in a variety of special election programmes. If private national broadcasters choose to cover the activities of contestants in their programmes, they are also required to do so on a strictly equal basis. Political advertising is allowed only during the official campaign and was used by contestants on a limited scale; most regularly by HDZ and the *Kukuriku* coalition.

The results of OSCE/ODIHR LEOM monitoring,<sup>18</sup> showed that *HRT* complied with its legal obligations. *HRT* provided contestants with 10 minutes of free airtime on TV and radio, covered the key campaign activities of contestants, and granted equal access to representatives of each list during the 11 discussion programmes organized at constituency level. Five additional discussion programmes were aired for the representatives of minorities.

The private TV channels with national outreach, *Nova TV* and *RTL*, chose not to cover contestants' campaign activities because of a stated lack of technical capacity to comply with the legal requirement of equal coverage of all contestants. No candidate debates were aired. The evening prime-time programmes, both news and current affairs, offered only limited editorial coverage of political actors. Of this coverage, the news programmes of *Nova TV* dedicated the largest share to the government with 22 per cent of airtime, while *Kukuriku* received 16 per cent and HDZ 15 per cent. *RTL* provided 26 per cent of coverage to *Kukuriku*, 23 per cent to HDZ, and 10 per cent to the government. Both TV channels provided free airtime on an equal basis in their morning programmes to all contestants for presentation of their platforms.

While designed to encourage a level playing field for the campaign, the legal framework governing media coverage of the campaign is overly restrictive and impedes editorial independence. It also results in subdued campaign coverage in the public media and very limited prime-time coverage in the private media with nationwide coverage. Despite broad consensus among media and party representatives, the previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations that the strict equality requirement be reconsidered remain unaddressed.

The monitored newspapers provided a diversity of views, focusing primarily on *Kukuriku* and HDZ. In contrast to the national broadcast media, newspapers also offered analytical coverage of candidate platforms, and in-depth interviews with representatives of key political entities. As in other media, the corruption investigation against HDZ featured prominently.

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<sup>17</sup> Articles 28-30 of the LERCP, and the 2003 "Rules of Procedure for Electronic Media with National Concession in the Republic of Croatia during the Election Campaign" (amended in 2007).

<sup>18</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR LEOM commenced its media monitoring on 11 November. It included prime-time broadcasts (18.00 – 24.00) of public TV channels *HTV1* and *HTV2* as well as of the private channels *Nova TV* and *RTL*, as well as the contents of newspapers *Jutarnji List*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, *Večernji List*, *Vjesnik* and *24 Sata*. *TV KN* was monitored from 20 November, the day the national broadcasts of this channel were re-launched.



The Council for Electronic Media has a mandate to monitor activities of electronic media in general and the power to impose sanctions, as defined by the 2009 Law on Electronic Media. The Council received no complaints related to election coverage. Complaints could also be filed with the SEC and the Ethics Commission. However, these bodies do not have any power to impose sanctions and only a limited capacity to investigate complaints.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

Complaints about alleged electoral violations can be filed with the SEC by political parties, heads of independent lists, candidates, and a minimum of 100 voters or 5 per cent of the voters of a constituency. The SEC is obliged to decide on complaints within 48 hours. SEC decisions can be appealed before the Constitutional Court. Appeals may also be made directly to the Constitutional Court, or the Court may act *ex officio*, in cases when electoral activities are being carried out in breach of the Constitution and the law. In the pre-election period, six complaints pertaining to candidate registration were filed with the SEC, all of which were dismissed as unsubstantiated or not based in law. Four of them were appealed before the Constitutional Court, which in all cases upheld the SEC decision. Overall, the law provides for a timely and effective right to judicial review for all aspects of the election process.

### **Election Observation**

Although the LERCP only provides for election observation by NGOs, the SEC, as in previous parliamentary elections, issued an instruction that extended this right to international observers. The previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendation that party representatives be allowed to observe parliamentary elections remains unaddressed. The SEC accredited some 3,225 observers from 23 organizations and 46 international observers for these elections. The main domestic observer organization, GONG, deployed some 600 observers on election day in Croatia, and observed out-of-country voting in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **Election Day**

The elections took place without incident. In the limited number of polling stations visited by OSCE/ODIHR LEOM observers, voting was conducted in an orderly and transparent manner. Election commissions performed their tasks in a professional manner and adhered to procedures overall, although some minor procedural problems were noted. In some locations, the layout of the polling station did not fully guarantee the secrecy of the vote, while Voting Committees and voters were not always attentive to this part of the process.

Voters belonging to national minorities were given the option to vote for either their regular constituency or for the national minority constituency. Differently coloured ballots were used for the national minority contests and voters chose their constituency in front of Voting Committees. The secrecy of the vote may have been compromised in some instances by the potential ease with which the low number of national minority constituency voters could be identified.

The campaign silence was generally respected by media. The SEC reported five instances of breaches of campaign silence in total, mainly concerning out-of-country voting. The SEC issued statements calling for the cessation of such activities.

Both counting and tabulation appeared to have been conducted in a transparent and efficient manner, which allowed for the prompt announcement of preliminary results by the SEC.

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

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**MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) was deployed to Croatia on 9 November. The mission, led by Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, consists of a ten-member core team of analysts based in Zagreb and six long-term observers deployed to three locations. LEOM members come from 13 OSCE participating States.

The OSCE/ODIHR LEOM wishes to thank the authorities of the Republic of Croatia for the invitation to observe the elections, the State Election Commission for its co-operation and for providing accreditation documents, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration for its assistance. The OSCE/ODIHR LEOM also wishes to express appreciation to other state institutions, election authorities, political parties, candidates, and civil society organizations for their co-operation.

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