



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

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT ROUNDTABLE "ELECTIONS 2025: WHAT SHOULD THE CEC DO TO IMPROVE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION?"

9 July 2024

- I am delighted to join you all to this important roundtable discussion. I would like to extend a special greeting to the State Election Commissioner, Mr. Celibashi, and to the representatives from the Central Election Commission. We are also honoured to have representatives from political parties, civil society, and several embassies and international organizations with us today.
- Today's roundtable discussion is focused on improving the election administration. We are very happy to support the Central Election Commission in their initiative to call this event, as we fully share the view that this is the right time for all relevant stakeholders to discuss and share their views on this important topic.
- The OSCE Presence in Albania remains dedicated in its commitment to supporting democratic processes and electoral integrity in Albania. We believe that a transparent, inclusive, and well-administered election process is fundamental to the democratic development of the country.
- The administration of elections in Albania has constantly improved from one electoral process to another. This progress has been acknowledged by most of the actors involved in elections, including political parties, civil society, and domestic and international observers. However, there remain areas where further improvements are necessary.
- The primary objective of this meeting is to identify and discuss issues impacting the effective administration of the 2025 electoral process. With the parliamentary elections approaching, it is crucial that we prioritize addressing these concerns in conjunction with ODIHR recommendations to enhance electoral performance.
- Today's discussions are vital as they address the core challenges and opportunities within the election administration framework. Understanding the difficulties encountered, from administrative hurdles to the technological and educational barriers, are essential for continuous improvement. The CEC has shown its willingness to enhance further its operation, and the OSCE Presence in Albania is ready to assist in any way possible.
- We look forward to discussing how public institutions handle denunciations during electoral campaigns and ways to improve reporting, as well as challenges in election administration, electronic voting reliability, CEC monitoring of political party campaigns, and enhancing voter education for minorities and people with disabilities.
- It is through collaboration, open dialogue, and continuous improvement that we can overcome these challenges. The OSCE is here to support and provide technical assistance where needed, fostering an environment of trust and transparency in the electoral process.

- While the Central Election Commission plays a crucial role in election administration, it is important to emphasize that ensuring a free, fair, well-administered and transparent electoral process is not solely its responsibility. Effective election administration is a collective effort that requires the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders, including political parties, governmental institutions, and law enforcement bodies. Each of these actors has a vital role in fostering a democratic environment.
- Even though there are currently proposals on electoral reform, I would like to use this opportunity to call on political actors for an inclusive and timely electoral reform, in order to allow the election administration bodies ample time to successfully implement it. Potential delays in achieving this common goal limits the time for CEC to make the necessary and timely preparations accordingly, thus risking the quality of electoral processes.
- A pressing challenge remains: addressing and effective implementation of the Constitutional Court's decisions, including the one on out-of-country voting. As you are aware, there are no established standards within the OSCE region or OSCE/ODIHR recommendations for regulating out-of-country voting. Thus, it is up to each country to adopt a model that best fits its context.
- However, I must stress that it is essential that any decisions, whether addressing legislative gaps or practical arrangements, emerge from a broad consensus. This consensus must be grounded in thorough assessments and comprehensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including political actors, civil society, and the diaspora community. This approach will allow smooth and uncontested implementation of out-of-country voting thus contributing to increasing the trust of voters in the electoral process.
- The Presence, as a long-standing partner supporting the CEC and other institutions present at this event today, remains committed to supporting your efforts and collaboration in improving election administration and enhancing the integrity of the upcoming electoral processes. Please consider the Presence as one of your closest partners and supporters.
- “Where there is a will, there is a way”, they say. Let us approach these discussions with the will to find solutions and to work together to achieve common goals.
- Thank you all for your attention and participation. I am confident that today's discussions will be productive and will contribute significantly to the advancement of electoral integrity in Albania.
- I look forward to the presentations and to working together to ensure that every voter's voice is heard and respected in a fair and democratic process.
- Thank you.

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