



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

# REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

11 October 2015

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

14 - 17 July 2015



Warsaw  
28 July 2015

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**REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION  
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**OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Following an official invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Belarus to observe the 11 October 2015 presidential election and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 14 to 17 July. The NAM included Ms. Tatyana Bogussevich, OSCE/ODIHR Acting Deputy Head of Election Department, Senior Election Adviser, Mr. Vladimir Misev, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser, and Mr. Andreas Baker, Director of Elections for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and preparations for the presidential election. Based on this assessment, the NAM should recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming election, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information, the Supreme Court, the House of Representatives of the National Assembly, the Presidential Administration, and the Central Election Commission, as well as with potential presidential candidates, representatives of political parties, media, civil society, and international community in Minsk. A list of meetings is included as an annex to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its assistance and cooperation in organizing the NAM. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and to share their views.

**II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On 30 June, the House of Representatives set the date of the presidential election for 11 October. The president is elected by direct popular vote for a five-year term in a two-round majoritarian contest. In order for the election to be valid, over 50 per cent of all registered voters must take part.

The overall legal framework has been assessed in previous elections as not adequately guaranteeing the conduct of elections in line with OSCE commitments and international standards. Despite welcome post-electoral engagement and the stated openness on the part of authorities to consider OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, amendments introduced to the election legislation after the 2012 elections did not address some of the key recommendations. The absence of sufficiently detailed procedures for open and transparent count and tabulation, and the lack of a requirement to publish preliminary and final results with a breakdown to polling stations continue to pose a problem, which was invoked by some of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors. Among other changes, the November 2013 amendments banned acts of disruption, cancellation or postponement of elections and referendum. A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns regarding the potential use of this provision.

The election is administered by the CEC, Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) and Precinct Election Commissions (PEC). While the CEC is a permanent body, TECs and PECs are temporarily appointed by regional or local authorities. Positively, political parties and public associations have the right to nominate at least one third of TEC and PEC members, and no more than one third of the members can be state employees. However, several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns that the lack of clear regulations on the formation of election commissions, including the criteria for the nomination and appointment of commission members, might result in imbalanced TEC and PEC membership in favour of the government.

Belarusian citizens over 18 years of age by election day with residence within a precinct are eligible to vote. Citizens deemed mentally incompetent by a court, as well as those in pre-trial detention or serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the crime, are denied the right to vote. Voter registration is passive, voter lists are compiled for each precinct by the relevant local administrations and no centralized voter register exists. While OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors at the CEC expressed general confidence in the integrity of the voter registration system, some of the potential candidates shared more critical views on this issue.

Belarus-born citizens above the age of 35 with a permanent residence in the country for the last ten years are eligible to stand as candidates. Presidential candidates are nominated by initiative groups. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has registered 8 initiative groups out of 15 that submitted applications, including the initiative groups of the incumbent President and of two women candidates. Currently, the initiative groups are collecting 100,000 voters' support signatures and candidates should be registered by the CEC by 15 September. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors highlighted the importance of the equality of opportunities for all candidates to collect signatures in an unobstructed and free manner and expressed hope that such conditions would be created.

The electoral campaign starts the day the CEC registers the candidates. Local authorities are obliged to allocate space for posting campaign materials and venues for campaign events on an equal basis for all candidates. Most of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that the pre-election environment has thus far appeared to be less restrictive for potential candidates. However, some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed reservations as to whether candidates would be able to campaign freely and on a level playing field, in particular referring to the misuse of administrative resources, intimidation practices, and the obstruction of campaign activities during previous elections. A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns regarding the human rights situation, notwithstanding the release of several political prisoners in 2014.

For campaigning, candidates can use their own resources, citizens' and legal entities' contributions, paid to election funds. While the majority of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed the recent changes in the legislation that increased donations and spending limits, and prolonged the period for funds collection to start prior to candidate registration, concerns were raised regarding the actual financial contributions from citizens and legal entities to all candidates due to potential pressure and intimidation of donors.

The media landscape includes a wide range of national and local television and radio broadcasters, as well as a number of print media outlets. State owned media dominate the media landscape and the state controls the distribution networks. Nevertheless, there are some media that constitute alternative sources of information, including the Internet. The Electoral Code envisages free airtime for candidates on state television and radio, and free space in state-funded

print media. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors commented that the overall media environment has deteriorated in the recent years due to intimidation, detentions, defamation lawsuits and administrative sanctions imposed on journalists and media outlets. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media expressed concerns on several occasions over the recently amended legal framework for the media and the restrictive measures used against freelance journalists.

Any person has the right to lodge a complaint against decisions of all levels of election commissions. Decisions relating to the appointment of members of PECs and TECs can be appealed to a court at the appropriate level, and appeals to the Supreme Court against some types of CEC decisions are envisaged. The legal framework does not have provisions for challenging final election results in court.

The Electoral Code provides for observation of the electoral process by a wide range of stakeholders and observers may attend election commissions' sessions and observe voting procedures. However, the Electoral Code does not allow observers to be present during signature verification for candidate registration, to review the voter lists, and to observe the transfer of results protocols from PECs to TECs. Several citizen observer groups declared their intention and some have already launched observation activities. A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the ability of the civil society to operate freely, citing pressure on civil society activists.

Most of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors emphasized the need for an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity for the presidential election. Representatives of state institutions stressed the intention to conduct the electoral process transparently, in adherence to international standards for democratic elections, and welcomed observation by the OSCE/ODIHR. Other interlocutors requested that the OSCE/ODIHR deploy a sizeable mission to cover all stages of the electoral process, with a particular emphasis on the work of the election administration, signature collection and candidate registration, campaign, media, and election day procedures, including the vote count and tabulation of results.

Based on the findings in this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission for the upcoming presidential election. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR will request the secondment by OSCE participating States of 40 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 400 short-term observers to follow election day procedures, including voting, counting, and tabulation of results.

### **III. FINDINGS**

#### **A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Belarus has a strong presidential system, governed by the president who has extensive powers, including the authority to dissolve the lower and upper houses of parliament, to issue presidential decrees which have the force of law when the legislature is in recess, to declare a state of emergency or to impose martial law. The president appoints the prime minister and the government, as well half of the judges of the Constitutional Court, and has the power to dismiss any of them. Furthermore, the president is empowered to appoint and dismiss the judges of all other courts, including the Supreme Court.

The party system in Belarus is weak, notwithstanding the number of parties registered. The majority of the 15 registered parties support the President and the political opposition to the incumbent is not represented in the parliament. The most recent, 2012 parliamentary elections resulted in only five representatives being elected from political parties. Amendments to several laws related to activities of political parties and public associations as introduced in February 2014 were, according to interlocutors in state institutions, intended to simplify the procedure for registration of public associations. In particular, the requirement of securing regional representation in order to be registered was lifted and public associations were allowed to become political parties, provided they did not receive state or foreign financial support up to six months prior to the transformation. According to the Ministry of Justice, 42 public associations were registered since January 2015. Nevertheless, several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that repeated efforts by some public associations to register were unsuccessful. Despite several applications, no new parties have been registered since 2000.

A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns regarding the human rights situation, notwithstanding the release of several political prisoners in 2014. The June 2015 UN Human Rights Council report concluded that the rights to freedom of assembly and association have been further restricted and that widespread disrespect for human, civil and political rights continued. The report also noted that compared to previous years fewer persons were incarcerated for long periods of time in retaliation for their political activities; however, a former presidential candidate has remained imprisoned since 2011.<sup>1</sup>

The OSCE/ODIHR has previously assessed six elections in Belarus; most recently, the 23 September 2012 parliamentary elections. In its report the OSCE/ODIHR concluded that “many OSCE commitments including citizens’ rights to associate, to stand as candidates, and to express themselves freely were not respected, despite some improvements to the electoral law. While there was an increase in the number of candidates put forward by parties, prominent political figures who might have played a role in this contest remained imprisoned or were not eligible to register due to their criminal record. The field of contestants was also constricted by arbitrary administrative actions, leading to a limitation of choice for voters. The elections were not administered in an impartial manner and the complaints and appeals process did not guarantee effective remedy.”<sup>2</sup>

## **B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

The election is overall regulated by the Constitution and the Electoral Code. The Constitution guarantees universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot. The legal framework is supplemented by the Law on Mass Media, the Law on Mass Events, relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offences, the Civil Procedure Code, and resolutions issued by the Central Election Commission (CEC). Belarus is a party to major UN instruments related to the holding of democratic elections. It is also an associate member of the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and a member of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).<sup>3</sup>

The most recent, June 2015 amendments to the Electoral code were made due to changes that occurred in different acts relating to prohibition of funding from foreign sources. The November 2013 amendments to the Electoral Code extended the period for campaign funds collection by

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<sup>1</sup> [See all UN Special Rapporteur’s reports on Belarus.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [See all previous OSCE/ODIHR reports on Belarus.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Belarus has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

giving the possibility for potential presidential candidates to open a bank account once an initiative group is registered, raised the private donations cap and the spending limit for presidential campaigns, and allocated state funding to Precinct Electoral Commissions (PEC) to print information materials about all candidates. These amendments also banned acts of disruption, cancellation or postponement of elections and referendum, a change which according to the authorities was introduced due to the ratification of the Convention on the Standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights, and Freedoms in the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>4</sup> A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns regarding the potential use of this provision.<sup>5</sup>

The overall legal framework has been assessed in previous elections as not adequately guaranteeing the conduct of elections in line with OSCE commitments and international standards. Despite welcome post-electoral engagement and the stated openness on the part of authorities to consider OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, amendments introduced to the election legislation after the 2012 elections did not address some of the key recommendations.<sup>6</sup> The absence of sufficiently detailed procedures for open and transparent count and tabulation, and the lack of a requirement to publish preliminary and final results with a breakdown to polling stations continue to pose a problem, which was invoked by some of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors.

The president is elected by a direct popular vote for a five-year term in a two-round majoritarian contest. In order for the election to be valid, over 50 per cent of all registered voters must take part. In case none of the candidates wins more than 50 per cent of all votes cast, including 'invalid ballots' and votes 'against all', in the first round, the second round takes place within two weeks after election day. In case of an invalid election, the repeated election also requires a turnout of 50 per cent.

### C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election is administered by the CEC, 153 Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) and about 6,225 PECs, including some 45 PECs abroad. While the CEC is a permanent body and has been appointed for a five-year term in 2011, TECs and PECs are temporarily appointed by regional or local authorities.

Under the Constitution and the Electoral Code, the president appoints six of the twelve members of the CEC, including the chairperson, and can dismiss all of its members. The other six

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<sup>4</sup> Article 9.8 of the CIS Convention states that "persons and bodies whose activities are aimed at falsification of counting of votes, of the outcomes of voting and of the results of elections, at hindrance to citizen's free execution of his/her voting rights and freedoms, including those in the form of boycott or appeals to boycott the election, refusal to execute the election procedures or election actions should be prosecuted according to the law." Prior the ratification of the Convention and the adoption of this amendment in November 2013, the law prohibited calls for a boycott only on the day of the election.

<sup>5</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR EOM for the 2010 presidential election noted that the election night was marred by detentions of most candidates, and hundreds of citizens, among them journalists, human rights activists and other civil society representatives. Authorities explained at the time that a number of participants in 'unsanctioned activities' have been sentenced by the courts to administrative arrests and fines, in addition to which criminal proceedings have been initiated on the grounds of 'mass disturbances'.

<sup>6</sup> In 2013, in following paragraph 24 of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Document, in which OSCE participating States have committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations," Belarus has invited and hosted the OSCE/ODIHR on two occasions to discuss previous recommendations and planned amendments. Subsequently, no requests for a formal legal review of the draft or adopted amendments were made.

members of the CEC are appointed by the upper house of the Parliament. Each registered presidential candidate is entitled to appoint one member with an advisory vote to participate in CEC sessions. The vice-chairperson and the secretary are elected from amongst the membership at the first CEC meeting. Only the chairperson and the secretary are permanently employed. The CEC informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that it has already prepared training materials and has started conducting training for lower-level election commissions. Voter education and information spots will be broadcast on state television. Measures are also being undertaken to facilitate voting by the visually impaired.

Positively, political parties and public associations have the right to nominate at least one third of TEC and PEC members, and no more than one third of the members can be state employees. According to the CEC, it has adopted a decision in line with which local authorities will need to provide written explanations in cases of rejection of candidates from parties or public associations as members of election commissions. While this was noted as a positive development, several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns that the lack of criteria for nomination and appointment of commission members might result in imbalanced TEC and PEC membership, in favour of the government, as noted in previous OSCE/ODIHR reports.

#### **D. VOTER REGISTRATION**

Belarusian citizens over 18 years of age by election day and permanently or temporarily residing within a precinct are eligible to vote. Citizens deemed mentally incompetent by a court, as well as those in pre-trial detention or serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the crime, are denied the right to vote.

Voter registration is passive. Voter lists are compiled for each precinct by the relevant local administrations and no centralized voter register exists above the level of PECs. PECs are tasked with verifying and updating the lists by conducting door-to-door checks. Voter lists can be updated until the end of voting. Voters are added to supplementary lists provided that they present a valid passport with confirmation of residence within the precinct. The legislation lacks provisions to make voter lists publicly available and to prevent multiple voter registration. While the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors at the CEC expressed general confidence in the integrity of the voter registration system, some of the potential candidates shared more critical views on this issue. According to them, door-to-door checks are not regularly conducted and in some polling stations approximately 30 per cent of the voters are registered on election day.

#### **E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION**

Any citizen born in Belarus who is above the age of 35 and who has lived permanently in the country for the last ten years is entitled to stand for office. Presidential candidates are nominated by initiative groups of no fewer than 100 eligible voters. The Electoral Code provides that not later than 85 days before elections the list of members of the initiative group should be submitted to the CEC by the potential candidate.<sup>7</sup> Each initiative group is required to submit no less than 100,000 signatures in support of a prospective candidate to the respective TECs. Nomination of candidates begins 80 days and ends 50 days before election day. Registration of candidates is carried out by the CEC and begins 35 days and ends 25 days before election day, i.e. on 15 September for this election.

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<sup>7</sup> The documents can also be submitted by a representative of the potential candidate.



Each voter can put his/her signature in support of several potential candidates. Within 15 days of the deadline for the submission of signatures, the TECs have to verify the authenticity and the number of support signatures. However, the signature collection and verification process is poorly regulated and the Electoral Code does not set out a clear procedure on the selection and verification of signature samples. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors highlighted the importance of the equality of opportunities for all candidates to collect signatures in an unobstructed and free manner, and further stated that the dynamics of the election campaign might be determined by the level of inclusiveness of this process, having expressed hope that the corresponding conditions would be created.

The CEC has registered 8 initiative groups out of 15 that submitted applications, including the initiative groups of the incumbent President and of the two women candidates. According to the CEC, all rejected applications were due to failure to meet the registration criteria such as the number of signatures to register an initiative group, citizenship requirements of signatories or potential candidates, or due to a criminal record of a potential candidate.<sup>8</sup>

## F. CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The electoral campaign starts the day the CEC registers the candidates. Local authorities are obliged to allocate space for posting campaign materials and venues for campaign events on an equal basis for all candidates. Most of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that the pre-election environment has thus far appeared to be less restrictive for potential candidates, who intend to campaign through meetings with voters, door-to-door visits, rallies and distribution of printed campaign material. However, some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed reservations as to whether candidates would be able to campaign freely and on a level playing field, in particular referring to the misuse of the administrative resources, intimidation practices, and the obstruction of campaign activities during previous elections.

Candidates can open bank accounts for funds collection once their initiative group is registered and contributions can be made only through bank transfers.<sup>9</sup> Candidates can use their own funds, private citizens' and legal entities' contributions. The spending limit for a candidate is 9,000 'basic units' (approximately EUR 115,000).<sup>10</sup> In addition, state funding is provided for printing of uniform information material, containing biographical data for all candidates, which will be distributed through the PECs. The CEC assessed the provision positively as ensuring equality among contestants; however, potential candidates shared concerns that information on them is compiled by the CEC without consultation. While the majority of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed the increased donations and spending limits and the prolonged period for funds collection, concerns were raised regarding the actual financial contributions from citizens and legal entities to all candidates due to potential pressure and intimidation of donors.

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<sup>8</sup> The application of the initiative group of Nikolai Statkevich, presidential candidate during the 2010 election who is currently in prison, was rejected. According to the CEC secretary, the application was rejected based on Article 60 of the Electoral Code which states: "nominated as candidates for the position of the President of the Republic of Belarus or for deputies may not be citizens who have no right, in conformity with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, to occupy positions in the state bodies and other state organizations in connection with their conviction." The representatives of the group announced an intention to appeal the CEC decision to the Supreme Court. <http://belapan.by/archive/2015/07/20/789752/>

<sup>9</sup> According to the Electoral Code, bank accounts can only be opened in *Belarusbank*. During the previous elections, candidates were entitled to open bank accounts only after their registration, which left only a short period of time for funds collection and campaigning.

<sup>10</sup> During the previous elections the limit was 3,000 'basic units'.

Candidates are obliged to submit income and expenditure reports to the CEC, which has an overall responsibility for campaign finance oversight, during the campaign period and a final report within five-days after the election day. According to the CEC, investigative measures can be launched and sanctions imposed if a candidate exceeds campaign limits by 20 per cent.

## G. MEDIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression and prohibits censorship. However, these rights are constrained by the national legislation which limits journalists' rights. Defamation continues to be criminalized. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors commented that the overall media environment has deteriorated in the recent years due to intimidation, detentions, defamation lawsuits, and administrative sanctions brought against journalists and media outlets. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media expressed concerns on several occasions over the recently amended legal framework for the media and the restrictive measures used against freelance journalists.<sup>11</sup>

The media landscape includes a wide range of national and local television broadcasters, as well as a number of print media outlets.<sup>12</sup> State owned media outlets dominate the broadcast and print media sectors and the state controls the distribution networks. Nevertheless, there are some media that constitute alternative sources of information.

The Ministry of Information is the main media regulator and has the authority to suspend the work of a media outlet and to initiate its closure on a variety of grounds, including the dissemination of "inaccurate information that might cause harm to state and public interests" and the "distribution of information which fails to comply with the reality."<sup>13</sup> According to the December 2014 amendments to the Law on Mass Media, media regulations are applicable also to online media and outlets that will receive two or more warnings from the Ministry of Information can be suspended without court authorization.<sup>14</sup> The most recent July 2015 amendments to the Law on Mass Media require all individuals or legal entities which distribute print media to register with the Ministry of Information.

The Electoral Code envisages free airtime for candidates on state television and radio, and free space in state-funded print media. The CEC established a Media Supervisory Council, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Information and composed of state officials and media representatives, which has responsibility to consider media-related complaints during the campaign. Media monitoring is not envisaged. Representatives from the state media that the OSCE/ODIHR NAM met with confirmed their intention to comply with the regulations of the Electoral Code and CEC regulations and to provide all candidates with equal opportunities to campaign.

## H. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Any person has the right to lodge a complaint against decisions of all levels of election commissions in its sphere of responsibility and to the prosecutor's office, as the body responsible for supervising the implementation of the law within the executive branch of the

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<sup>11</sup> [See OSCE Representative of Freedom of Media statements on Belarus.](#)

<sup>12</sup> According to the recent statistics provided by the Ministry of Information, there are 1,568 print media, 273 broadcast media, and 9 news agencies.

<sup>13</sup> Article 49 of the 2009 Law on Mass Media.

<sup>14</sup> According to the Ministry of Information, 30 warnings have been issued since January 2015.

government. Decisions relating to the appointment of members of PECs and TECs can be appealed to a court at the appropriate level, and appeals to the Supreme Court against some types of CEC decisions are envisaged. CEC decisions can be appealed to the Supreme Court for cases related to: the denial of candidate registration, the denial of registration of an initiative group, the recognition of withdrawal by a candidate without a reasonable excuse, and the invalidity of elections in connection with insufficient turnout. The legal framework does not have provisions for challenging final election results in court.

## **I. ELECTION OBSERVATION**

The Electoral Code provides for observation of the electoral process by a wide range of stakeholders, including candidate proxies, public associations, political parties, citizens' groups, labour unions, media, as well as international observers. Observers may attend election commission sessions and may observe early voting and election day. However, the Electoral Code does not stipulate that observers must be given direct and effective access to key aspects of the electoral process, including the right to be present during signature verification for candidate registration, to review voter lists, and to observe the transfer of results protocols from PECs to TECs. While observers are permitted to familiarize themselves with polling station results protocols, the law does not stipulate that observers are entitled to receive certified copies of these protocols.

Several citizen observer groups declared their intention and some have already launched observation activities. Among others, the most visible are the campaigns "Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections", which is a joint activity of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and the Human Rights Center "Viasna", and the campaign "Right to Choose-2015", which unites several political parties and movements. In addition, several international organizations declared their intention to observe the election. A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the ability of the civil society to operate freely, citing pressure on civil society activists.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Most of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors emphasized the need for an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity for the presidential election. Representatives of state institutions stressed the intention to conduct the electoral process transparently, in adherence to international standards for democratic elections, and welcomed observation by the OSCE/ODIHR. Other interlocutors requested that the OSCE/ODIHR deploy a sizeable mission to cover all stages of the electoral process, with a particular emphasis on the work of the election administration, signature collection and candidate registration, campaign, media, and election day procedures, including the vote count and tabulation of results.

Based on the findings in this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission for the upcoming presidential election. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR will request the secondment by OSCE participating States of 40 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 400 short-term observers to follow election day procedures, including voting, counting, and tabulation of results

## **ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS**

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Ms. Alena Kupchyna, Deputy Minister  
Mr. Denis Sidorenko, Director of Department for European Cooperation  
Mr. Oleg Anisimov, Counsellor

### **Ministry of Justice**

Ms. Alla Bodak, Deputy Minister

### **Ministry of Information**

Mr. Vladimir Matousevich, Deputy Minister

### **Presidential Administration**

Mr. Valery Mitskevich, Deputy Head

### **Central Election Commission**

Ms. Lidia Yermoshina, Chairperson  
Mr. Nikolai Lozovik, Secretary

### **Supreme Court**

Mr. Valery Kalinkovich, First Deputy Chairperson

### **House of Representatives**

Mr. Petr Shikshnyan, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Commission on State Building, Local Government and Regulations  
Ms. Galina Filippovich, Member of the Standing Commission on State Building, Local Government and Regulations  
Ms. Anna Levitskaya, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Commission on International Affairs

### **State Newspaper “Sovetskaya Belorussia”**

Mr. Pavel Yakubovich, Editor-in-Chief

### **National State Television and Radio Company**

Mr. Marat Markov, Deputy Chairperson

### **Potential Candidates**

Ms. Tatyana Korotkevich  
Mr. Sergey Kalyakin  
Mr. Sergey Gaidukevich  
Mr. Anatoli Lebedko

### **Civil Society**

Mr. Oleg Gulak, Chairperson, Belarusian Helsinki Committee  
Mr. Ales Bialiatski, Chairperson, Civil Society Organization “Viasna”  
Mr. Vladimir Labkovich, Civil Society Organization “Viasna”  
Ms. Liudmila Petina, Chairperson, “Woman’s Independent Democratic Movement”  
Mr. Alexander Sosnov, Expert, Independent Institute for Social-Economic and Political Studies

**Media**

Andrei Alexandrov, Deputy Director, News Agency “Belapan”  
Andrei Bastunets, Chairperson, Belarusian Association of Journalists  
Iosif Seredich, Editor-in-Chief, Newspaper “Narodnaya Volya”

**Diplomatic Community**

H.E. Ambassador Stefano Bianchi, Italian Embassy  
Mr. Lauri Pullola, Head of Finish Liaison Office  
Mr. Michal Chabros, Head of Political-Economic Section, Polish Embassy  
Mr. David Spires, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy  
Mr. David Cognet, Political Section, French Embassy  
Mr. Zoltan Szegedi, Consul, Hungarian Embassy  
Ms. Magda Pospiskova, Minister-Councillor, Slovak Embassy  
Mr. Martin Giese, First Secretary, Political Section, German Embassy  
Mr. Gints Serafinovics, Second Secretary, Latvia  
Mr. Sergey Nozhkin, Political Counsellor, Embassy of the Russian Federation  
Ms. Monika Bland, Head of Political and Economic Section, US Embassy  
Ms. Renata Wrobel, Second Secretary and Political Officer, Delegation of the European Union to Belarus