



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
22 May 2011

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

2-4 March 2011



Warsaw
23 March 2011

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 7 February 2011, in accordance with OSCE commitments, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE invited the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) to observe the 22 May parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to the Republic of Cyprus from 2 to 4 March. The NAM included Nicolas Kaczorowski, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Department, Armin Rabitsch, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, and Lusine Badalyan, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the parliamentary elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM was to recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions, election administration, judiciary, as well as with representatives of political parties, media and civil society. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance and co-operation in organizing the visit. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for having taken the time to meet with the mission and sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus (parliament) consists of 56 members elected for five years on the basis of a regional proportional system, with a preferential element. Three representatives with non-voting rights are elected by three constitutionally recognized minority religious groups.

The legal framework governing the parliamentary elections comprises the Constitution, the election law and a number of other legal acts. While the law foresees observers from political parties, it does not provide for the observation by civil society organizations and international observers, contrary to paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

The elections are conducted under the overall co-ordination of the Ministry of Interior with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry serving as General Returning Officer. The second level of the election administration coincides with the six administrative divisions of the country in which District Commissioners are appointed. Presiding Officers are responsible for conducting the elections at polling stations. The election administration is fully composed of civil servants. However, political parties can appoint representatives to each polling station, as well as to the District Office, to follow all stages of the electoral process. Political parties representatives are regularly consulted on the principal aspects of elections.

About 1,300 polling stations will be operating on election day. Voting will take place only in the part of the island under governmental control, though representatives will be elected from all six electoral districts, including for those not controlled by the government.

The Minister of Interior bears overall responsibility for the compilation and revision of the voter lists. Registration and voting are compulsory in Cyprus. The law prescribes a criminal liability for those persons who fail to submit an application for registration in the voter list or fail to notify about the change of address or name. The voter lists are available for public scrutiny during ten days after the completion of district voter lists. Turkish Cypriots residing in government-controlled areas have the right to vote and to be elected. Following the European Court of Human Rights ruling that the blanket prohibition on voting by sentenced prisoners is disproportionate and incompatible with the right to participate in elections, Cyprus amended its legislation in 2006 to provide prisoners the right to vote.

The legislation provides for candidates to run individually or as members of a political party or coalition. A political party or a coalition of political parties nominates candidate lists for each of the six electoral districts. A deposit of 430 EUR is paid for each candidate on the list and by individual candidates. Candidate lists of each constituency are registered by respective District Commissioners.

In February 2011, a law was adopted which requires the formal registration of political parties and attempts to regulate public funding of political parties. Public funding is distributed to parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties. Parliamentary parties are entitled to public funding in proportion to their votes in the last elections. Parties are also allowed to receive private donations. On 3 March the parliament amended the election law to increase the campaign expenditure limit substantially to 30,000 EUR for each candidate. The law does not require full disclosure of sources and amounts of financial contributions and the types and amounts of campaign expenditures, before or after elections. Party and campaign financing was raised as an issue by many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors.

The electoral campaign is largely unregulated. The election law does not specify a date for the official start of the campaign but campaigning is prohibited during the 55 hours before the beginning of voting. Paid political advertisements can only be broadcasted starting from 40 days before election day. Negative advertising is prohibited and opinion polls cannot be published within seven days before election day.

Freedom of speech is protected by the Constitution. The media environment is pluralistic with a wide variety of commercial and public broadcasters as well as print media. By law, all broadcasters should ensure equal and objective treatment towards all candidates. Based on the practice established in Cyprus, broadcasters discuss with political parties a schedule of political debates and programs, as well as the framework of the coverage planned to be given to the candidates. According to law, the coverage of parties is based on their past election results; small and new parties should also receive media coverage. A few political parties expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the way the public broadcaster intends to cover these elections.

Women remain largely underrepresented in executive and legislative bodies. The outgoing parliament includes eight women members. Only one party has a woman as its party leader. All parliamentary parties indicated that they will include women in their candidate lists.

The electoral administration at all levels enjoys broad confidence across the political spectrum. No OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised any concerns regarding the impartiality and professionalism of the election administration and their ability to organize the elections in an efficient and neutral manner. Furthermore, they did not express any specific concerns about the electoral process, including the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation, and did not expect any problems in this regard during these elections. They also underlined the high level of transparency in the elections. In spite of that, most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated they would welcome an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity and considered that such an activity would bring added value. Such an activity would provide an external assessment of the electoral process, which was viewed by interlocutors as beneficial to improve further the conduct of elections in Cyprus.

In such circumstances, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends deploying an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) to specifically look into the issues outlined in this report, such as the implementation of the newly adopted law on political parties, party and campaign financing, the media, as well as the participation of women in political life. The fact that the OSCE/ODIHR has not previously conducted any activity in Cyprus is an additional reason to favorably consider such an OSCE/ODIHR activity.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus (parliament) has 56 members, elected for five years. The head of state is the president, who is elected directly for five years and who is vested with executive power and appoints a Council of Ministers. President Demetris Christofias from the Progressive Party of Working People (*AKEL*) was elected in 2008.

Six political parties were elected to parliament in the May 2006 parliamentary elections. *AKEL* and the Democratic Rally received 31.1 and 30.3 per cent respectively, both parties having 18 seats. Other parliamentary parties are the Democratic Party (*DEKO*) with 11 seats, the Movement for Social Democracy (*EDEK*) with 5 seats, the European Party (*Evroko*) with 3 seats, and the Ecological and Environmental Movement (Green party) with 1 seat.

The OSCE/ODIHR has never followed any election in Cyprus. It however undertook a short Technical Mission before the 2001 parliamentary elections, which recommended not deploying any election related activity “given the high level of confidence by all political participants in the legislation, administration, political and human rights framework for the elections”.¹

B. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The legal framework governing the parliamentary elections primarily consists of the Constitution (adopted in 1960), the Law on Election of Members of House of Representatives (hereinafter, election law, adopted in 1979 and last amended in March 2011), the Law on Civil Registry (adopted in 2002 and last amended in 2010), the Law on Radio and Television

¹ See the report of OSCE/ODIHR 2001 Technical Mission at:
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/cyprus/74832>.

(adopted in 1998 and last amended in 2010), the Law on Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (adopted in 1959 and last amended in 2010), and other laws and regulations.

According to Article 62.1 of the Constitution the number of members of parliament is 50. The Constitution further defines that 70 per cent (35 seats) should be elected by the Greek community and 30 per cent (15 seats) by the Turkish community. The Turkish Cypriot seats remain vacant since 1964, when the Turkish community representatives ceased to participate in the work of the parliament. In 1985 parliament voted to increase the number of seats to 80, with 56 attributed to the Greek Cypriots.

Members of parliament are elected from six electoral districts on the basis of proportional representation with a preferential element. The boundaries of the districts correspond with the six administrative divisions, some of which are not under the control of the government. The number of seats elected from each districts is defined by law and based on the number of registered voters.² Besides selecting a party list, voters may also indicate preferences for particular candidates. The number of preferential votes should not exceed one for every four seats of the constituency. The party leader is automatically elected in case the party gets at least one seat.

Three seats are reserved for the constitutionally recognized religious minority groups, which are Maronites, Armenians and Latins.³ These representatives do not have voting rights and can present their views only on issues concerning their religious groups. Separate voter lists are compiled and special polling stations are established for the election of religious groups' representatives. However, minority religious group members are also included in the general voter lists and can vote for and be elected as 'regular' members of parliament.

According to the Constitution, the Supreme Court serves as an Electoral Court during the electoral period, with all 13 judges sitting at hearings. It deals with the validity of the elections, registration of candidates and any election-related issues. It is the first and final instance for all electoral complaints. On election day, the complaints are filed with and considered by the presiding officers at polling stations, whose decision can be appealed to the General Returning Officer and then to the Supreme Court. During election periods, the Attorney General is considered as the legal adviser of the General Returning Officer and represents the Ministry of Interior at courts.

The election law stipulates who can be present in a polling station and observe election day procedures, including political parties and candidate representatives.⁴ The law however does not foresee international and non-party observation, contrary to paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.⁵ The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that the General Returning

² Nicosia - 21 seats, Limassol - 12 seats, Famagusta - 11 seats, Larnaca - 5 seats, Paphos - 4 seats, Kyrenia - 3 seats. One seat from Nicosia would go to Larnaca pending parliament's vote. Members of parliament are elected from all six districts, even from those not under government control.

³ Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1998; however, it recognizes only minority religious groups and not national minority groups. See Third Opinion of Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities at: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/Table_en.asp#Cyprus.

⁴ The presiding officer, maximum six assistants, a police officer on duty as well as candidates or their representatives.

⁵ Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that participating States "consider the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which

Officer or the District Commissioners may accredit and grant access to polling stations and districts, both for international and non-party observers.

Recent changes to the election law were passed by parliament on 3 March 2011, which did not relate to any fundamental aspect of the elections. The campaign expenditure limit was increased from 855 EUR for each candidate to 30,000 EUR. Other issues have been recently discussed and could be adopted before the elections. These include the possibility to reallocate one seat from Nicosia electoral district to Larnaca district in order to reflect the change in the number of registered voters in those districts. A broad political consensus exists in parliament to introduce this adjustment.

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The parliamentary elections are organized under the overall co-ordination of the Ministry of Interior. Following the announcement of the election date, the Minister of Interior appoints the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry as General Returning Officer, who is responsible for the administration of elections. The Central Electoral Office functions permanently at the Ministry to support the General Returning Officer in his duties. The second level of the election administration coincides with the six administrative units of the country. The District Officers of each of these administrative divisions are appointed as District Commissioners who designate a presiding officer and not more than six assistants for each polling station. About 1,300 polling stations will be operating on election day⁶ and voting will take place only in the part of the Republic under governmental control.

The election administration is fully composed of civil servants. Political parties can appoint representatives to each polling station, as well as to the District Office, to follow all stages of the electoral process. Party representatives are entitled to receive result protocols. Political parties representatives are regularly consulted on the principal aspects of elections.

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that for the second time voting would be organized abroad, in some of the Republic's diplomatic representations. For a polling station to open abroad, at least 50 voters should be registered in the voter lists for each of the six electoral districts in each of the out-of-country polling stations. There are no other alternative means for voters to cast their ballot, such as for instance a mobile voting or absentee voting.

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of election administration bodies. They raised no particular concerns regarding the technical preparations and conduct of these elections.

D. VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

According to the Law on Civil Registry, all citizens who on the day of election are 18 years and older, and who are resident in Cyprus for a period of 6 months before becoming eligible to vote, have the right to vote although article 63.1 of the Constitution continues to stipulate a

elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from (O)SCE participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law".

⁶ Each polling station serves about 500-600 voters.

voting age of 21 years.⁷ Registration and voting are compulsory in Cyprus.⁸ All citizens of the Republic acquiring the right to vote must apply to the District Office for registration within 30 days after becoming eligible to vote. The law prescribes a criminal liability for those persons who fail to submit an application for registration in the voter list or fail to notify about the change of address or name.⁹

The Minister of Interior bears overall responsibility for the compilation and revision of the voter lists. This duty in practice is implemented by the Civil Registry and Migration Department, which periodically revises, computerizes and distributes the voter lists. District Offices are responsible for collecting data, for the compilation and periodical revision of voter lists. Upon the completion of the district voter lists, the District Offices post the lists for public scrutiny for a period of ten days. All voters registered in the voter lists shall be provided with a voting card issued by the District Offices. This voting card is considered as an identification document (ID) for voting purposes and is stamped when a voter casts his/her ballot.

The voter lists are revised four times per year.¹⁰ For the forthcoming parliamentary elections the deadline for registration and closing of the voter lists will be 2 April. In 2006, following the European Court of Human Rights ruling that the blanket prohibition on voting by sentenced prisoners was disproportionate and incompatible with the right to participate in elections,¹¹ Cyprus amended its legislation to provide prisoners the right to vote.

Turkish Cypriots residing in government-controlled areas have the right to vote and to be elected according to the law¹² adopted in 2006, following the decision of the European Court of Human Rights.¹³ According to the Ministry of Interior 486 Turkish Cypriots voters are registered to vote and can exercise their full political rights during the parliamentary elections. They however vote and contest elections for the 56 representatives of the Greek Cypriots community.

⁷ In 1985 the Supreme Court declared a law enacted by the House of Representatives lowering the voting age to 18 as unconstitutional in *President of the Republic v. House of Representatives (1985)* 3 C.L.R 2331 (P) on grounds of incompatibility with Article 63.1 of the Constitution. While the court recognized that the measure was politically desirable and socially beneficial, it rejected the plea that the law could be sustained in virtue of the law of necessity. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that there has not been a complaint on the current legislation establishing the voting age at 18 years.

⁸ A person who did not vote can be liable to a fine not exceeding 340 EUR. The Attorney General informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that provisions on compulsory voting are not enforced, and there have not been recent cases of prosecution for failing to vote or register.

⁹ For not submitting an application a person can be subject to up to six months of imprisonment or a fine of not more than 340 EUR or a combination of both; for failing to notify about the changes in the registration data – to up to one month of imprisonment or a fine of 85 EUR or combination of both.

¹⁰ On 2 January, 2 April, 2 July, and 2 October of each year.

¹¹ *Hirst v. United Kingdom*, no. 74025/01 (6 October 2005), available at www.echr.coe.int.

¹² Law to provide for the temporary regulation of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate by members of the Turkish community with habitual residence in the free areas of the republic, No. 2 (I) 2006.

¹³ *Ibrahim Aziz v. Cyprus* no. 69949/01 (22 June 2004), available at www.echr.coe.int. The applicant, Ibrahim Aziz, was a Cypriot national of Turkish origin living in Nicosia. In 2004, the European Court of Human Rights concluded that the difference in treatment of which the applicant complained resulted from the fact that he was a Turkish Cypriot; it emanated from the constitutional provisions regulating the voting rights of members of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities that had become impossible to implement in practice. The Court considered that this difference could not be justified on reasonable and objective grounds, particularly in the light of the fact that Turkish Cypriots in the applicant's situation were prevented from voting at any parliamentary election. The Court therefore concluded that there was a clear inequality of treatment.

E. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATE LISTS

The legislation provides for candidates to run individually or as member of a political party or coalition. A political party or a coalition of parties nominates candidate lists for each district. The number of candidates included in the lists should be equal to the parliamentary seats in each district. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot, with the leader of the party on the top of the list. Political parties must pay an electoral deposit of 430 EUR for each candidate in the list. Individual candidates pay the same deposit.¹⁴

Candidate lists are registered by the respective District Commissioners while religious minority candidates are registered centrally by the General Returning Officer. The District Commissioners are to register all candidates on 3 May (morning). At a time of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM, all six parliamentary parties had announced their intention to nominate candidates.

F. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

On 25 February 2011, the parliament passed a Law on Political Parties. For the first time there is an attempt to define what a political party is and to establish procedures for the formal registration of parties. Before the adoption of this law, parties were not required to be formally registered. According to the new law, parties should be registered with the Ministry of Interior by submitting a statute and an application for registration. Political parties, which were in parliament at the time the law was enacted, are automatically registered, by submitting their party statute within three months from the time the law entered into force.

Registered political parties in and outside parliament are entitled to receive public funding. The amount of public funding for parliamentary parties is determined in proportion to votes received during the last parliamentary elections. Non-parliamentary parties receive public funding in case that they present candidates for at least half of the parliamentary seats and in two-thirds of the electoral districts.

Parties are also allowed to receive private donations.¹⁵ There is a limit for private monetary contributions: individuals can donate to a political party up to 8,000 EUR, private companies up to 20,000 EUR, and companies listed at the stock exchange up to 30,000 EUR. Parties may accept neither donation nor free-of-charge services from public institutions, municipalities, legal entities established or controlled by the state, foreign companies, and from gambling business.

According to the new law, the Auditor General should audit annually the income and expenditures of political parties. Parties are obliged to publish a summary of their financial accounts in the daily press. For campaign expenditures, they should submit to the Auditor General a report within 45 days after election day. The report of the Auditor General on the results of checking party and campaign financing should be published. In case of violation of the provisions of the Law on Political Parties, the Ministry of Interior, with the approval of the Auditor General, can impose a fine of up to 8,000 EUR on a political party and decrease public funding in case of repeated violations.

¹⁴ The deposit is returned to candidates who receive the number of votes equal to at least one third of the electoral quotient.

¹⁵ Donations can be monetary and material, for instance equipment.

The election law provides regulation on electoral expenses of candidates. As indicated above the campaign expenditure limit was increased to 30,000 EUR for each candidate. The polling agent of the candidate should submit to the District Commissioner a report on the campaign expenses within three weeks after the publication of election results. However these financial reports by candidates are not made public.

All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed the adoption of the law on political parties as there was previously a lack of a clear regulatory framework for party and campaign financing. Some however opined that the law is only a first step to regulate this aspect but does not go far enough. For instance, concerns were expressed that the law does not require full and detailed disclosure of sources and amounts of financial contributions and the types and amounts of campaign expenditures before and after elections.

G. ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA

The election campaign is largely unregulated. The election law does not specify a date for the official start of the campaign. Political parties can start their campaigning any time, but must stop 55 hours before the beginning of voting when all campaign posters must be removed. Opinion polls cannot be published within seven days before election day. In contrast, the law regulates campaigning in broadcast media. Most of OSCE/ODIHR interlocutors indicated that main campaigning is conducted through broadcast media.

Freedom of speech in Cyprus is guaranteed by the Constitution. The media environment is pluralistic with a wide variety of commercial and public broadcasters as well as print media. The main television channels are the public television Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CYBC)¹⁶ and island-wide private broadcasters such as *Mega TV*, *Antenna TV*, *Sigma TV* and others. The print media is self-regulated and has no restriction during the campaign period.

Public television CYBC has its own regulatory framework and operates under the rules and regulations stipulated by the Law on Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation. CYBC informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that it had already held a series of meetings with political parties and agreed on the “code of coverage”, basic principles on how the campaign would be covered. A few political parties expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with the code.

According to the Law on Radio and Television, during the electoral period,¹⁷ all licensed broadcasters should ensure equal and objective treatment towards all candidates.¹⁸ Based on the practice established in Cyprus, broadcasters discuss with political parties a schedule of political debates and programs, as well as the framework of the coverage planned to be given to the candidates. According to the Law on Radio and Television and regulations the coverage of parties is based on the percentage of votes the party received during the previous elections. A provision stipulates that small parties and new parties should not be neglected in that coverage.

¹⁶ CYBC has two TV channels and four radio channels, as well as satellite channel for Cypriots living abroad. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that there are radio programs broadcast in Turkish, Armenian, Maronite and Arabic.

¹⁷ According to Regulation No. 4098, 28.04.2006 of the Cyprus Radio-Television Authority, electoral period shall mean the time period of 40 days before the election day.

¹⁸ Both direct access time or radio-television coverage of speeches by politicians, such as party leaders, ministers, government officials, members of parliament, municipal and communal representatives, and the coverage time devoted to the activity of candidates, parties and their representatives shall be taken into account when applying the criteria for equal treatment. See Regulation No. 4098, point 4.4.

Paid political advertisement shall begin 40 days before the election day and is closely monitored by the Cyprus Radio-Television Authority¹⁹. Each party is allocated a maximum of 100 minutes in total on all TV stations and 60 minutes on all radio stations. Each individual candidate is allocated a maximum of 30 minutes in total on all TV stations and 12 minutes on all radio stations. The broadcaster should ensure clear designation of such programs by announcing that it is a paid broadcast and by separating it from other programs. TV and radio channels are obliged to provide the same financial terms to all candidates. The law prohibits negative advertising.

The Cyprus Radio-Television Authority oversees the operation of private television and radio in Cyprus and ensures the objectivity of the coverage and equal treatment of electoral contestants during the pre-election period. It examines complaints on the content of programs and has the authority to impose sanctions, which may include warnings, fines and the suspension or withdrawal of licences. The Authority can act upon complaint, as well as upon its own initiative. Private broadcasters should submit to the Authority a schedule of political programs, as well as code of ethics agreed with parties. The Authority monitors paid political advertising both in private TV and radio and in CYBC.

H. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The Republic of Cyprus has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985. Based on the provisions of the CEDAW the Government of Cyprus has formulated a National Action Plan, which covers areas, such as law reform, participation of women in political and public life, violence against women, raising public awareness on women's issues, sensitization and gender mainstreaming in the government sector.²⁰

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order is competent for the overall promotion of gender equality and the protection of women's rights. The National Machinery for Women's Rights deals with all matters concerning women, focusing on the elimination of legal discrimination against women and the promotion of real equality between men and women.

However, women remain largely underrepresented in the executive and legislative bodies. In 2006, the CEDAW Committee expressed "concerns about the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted traditional social prejudices and stereotyped attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, the workplace, the classroom, media and other areas of society. The State party's report recognizes these stereotypes as the major obstacle for the advancement of women in Cyprus and as a root cause of women's disadvantaged position in a number of areas, including [...] political and public life. Despite some progress, the Committee remained concerned that despite an increase in candidates, women's participation in public and political life remains low and there has been no significant increase in women elected to office following the general elections held in May 2006."²¹

¹⁹ The Cyprus Radio-Television Authority is an independent regulatory body established under the Law on Radio and Television. It is composed of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and five members, appointed by the Council of Ministers for a six-year term. The Authority is self-financed from licence fees and penalties.

²⁰ See Consideration of reports submitted by States, parties under Article 18 of the CEDAW; Combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of State parties, Cyprus, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm>.

²¹ CEDAW/C/CYP/CO/5, Concluding Comments, paras. 17 and 19, 30 May 2006,

In 2006, 8 women were elected to the parliament (14 per cent), a slight increase compared with the 2001 elections, when six were elected. In the Council of Ministers 2 out of 11 Ministers are women. In the local government the representation of women is similar, with 2 women mayors out of 33 and 20.3 per cent female members of municipal councils.

All parliamentary parties indicated that they plan to include women in their candidate lists. Only one party has a woman as its party leader and intends to have 50 per cent women on its candidate lists.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The electoral administration at all levels enjoys broad confidence across the political spectrum. No OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised any concerns regarding the impartiality and professionalism of the election administration and their ability to organize the elections in an efficient and neutral manner. Furthermore, they did not express any specific concerns about the electoral process, including the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation, and did not expect any problems during these elections. They also underlined the high level of transparency in the elections. In spite of that, most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated they would welcome an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity and considered that such an activity would bring added value. Such an activity would provide an external assessment of the electoral process, which was viewed by interlocutors as beneficial to improve further the conduct of elections in Cyprus.

In such circumstances, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends deploying an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) to specifically look into the issues outlined in this report, such as the implementation of the newly adopted law on political parties, party and campaign financing, the media, as well as the participation of women in political life. The fact that the OSCE/ODIHR has not previously conducted any activity in Cyprus is an additional reason to favorably consider such an OSCE/ODIHR activity.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Michalis Stavrinou, Minister Plenipotentiary, Head of Department of Multilateral Affairs and International Organizations
Natasa Stylianou, Attaché

Ministry of Interior

Lazaros Savvides, Permanent Secretary, General Returning Officer
Demetris Demetriou, Senior Electoral Officer
Marinos Panayides, Director of Technical Services

Press and Information Office

Christos Lambrias, Head of Research, Training and Communications Section

Supreme Court

Petros Artemis, President of Supreme Court

Law Office of the Republic, Attorney General Office

Petros Clerides, Attorney General
Rena Papaeti-Hadjicosta, Senior Counsel

District Office of Nicosia

Argyris Papanastassiou, District Officer of Nicosia
Angelos Georgeiou, Nicosia District Administration

Democratic Party (DEKO)

Georghios Colocassides, Deputy President of the Party

Democratic Rally

Averof Neophytou, Deputy President of the Party, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee
Christos Stylianides, Member of Parliament

European Party (EVROKO)

Demetris Syllouris, President of the Party

European Socialist Party (EDEK)

Nicos Hadjistephanou, Secretary of International Relations Bureau

Green Party

George Perdikes, Member of the Parliament
Nicos Pavlides, Candidate

Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL)

Stavros Evagorou, Member of Parliament, Spokesperson of the Central Committee

Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CYBC)

Themis Themistocleous, Director General
Yiannis Kareklas, Director of News and Current Affairs

Cyprus Radio-Television Authority

Andreas Petrides, Chairperson
Neophytos Epaminondas, Director
Michael Lambrianides, Radio-Television Officer
Litsa Livera, Radio-Television Officer

Union of Cyprus Journalists

Andreas Kannaouros, Honorary President of the Union
Lenia Karatzia, Vice-President of the Union
Zoe Telegrafou, Councilor
Christoforos Papastylianou, Councilor

Peace Research Institute, PRIO Cyprus Centre

Gregory Reichberg, Director
Olga Demetriou, Senior Research Consultant

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

Susanna Pavliou, Director
Christina Kaili, Project Administrator

Coordinating Committee of Karpasia

Nikos Falas, President

European Commission

Androulla Kaminara, Director, Head of the Representation in Cyprus
Eleftherios Hector Eleftheriou, Legal Officer