

**CONCLUSION**  
**of Observer Team of the Interparliamentary Assembly**  
**of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States**  
**at Elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis**  
**of the Republic of Uzbekistan**  
**December 22, 2019**

On September 20, 2019, in accordance with Article 36 of the Election Code, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decision announcing the beginning of the election campaign for the election of members to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and to local Kengashes (councils).

On September 25, 2019, the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS Member Nations received an invitation from Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to participate in monitoring the preparation and conduct of the next election to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In accordance with the order No 5-rp of November 12, 2019 by Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ilyas Umahanov, Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, was appointed as the IPA CIS Observer Team Coordinator in the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

To monitor the election campaign, a group was formed consisting of 37 international observers from the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly representing the parliaments of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the IPA CIS Council Secretariat. The IPA CIS Council Secretariat staff members and IPA CIS IIMDD experts provided information, analytical, organizational and technical support to the activities of the parliamentarians.

Election observation was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights and Freedoms in the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Chisinau, 2002) and Recommendations for International Observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States on Election and Referendum Observation (St Petersburg, 2011) based on the principles of political neutrality, objectivity, strict observance of electoral legislation and non-interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

## **Legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan Regulating the Holding of Elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis**

The legal basis for elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis is the Constitution, the Election Code, the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Mass Media, On Political Parties, On Funding of Political Parties, On Civic Associations in the Republic of Uzbekistan, On Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies and other normative acts. In accordance with the national legislation, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan is mandated to adopt decisions and other regulations to specify the legal norms in the electoral sphere.

The Election Code that was in effect at the time of the start of the election campaign to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis entered into force on June 26, 2019. Its development was based on an analysis of the experience of past elections, the recommendations of international organizations on the implementation of standards for free and fair elections and the extensive work carried out by the CEC of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the participation of political parties and social movements between 2017 and 2019. The draft bill has undergone an expert review by the Venice Commission that has found its provisions to be generally consistent with international standards in the area of electoral law. The possibility of applying the provisions of the law which entered into force less than four months before the start of the election campaign does not conflict with national legislation. To apply the provisions of the new Election Code in practice, the CEC has adopted more than 15 decisions regulating election-process procedures, including: On Adopting the Regulations Concerning Observers from Political Parties and Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies; On Adopting the Regulations Concerning the Election Campaigning Procedures for Candidates for Deputies to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Regional, District and City Kengashes of People's Deputies; On Adopting the Regulations Concerning Observers from Foreign States and International Organizations Participating in an Election in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The new Election Code has significantly expanded the opportunities for political parties to campaign and organize independent monitoring of elections by increasing the possible number of observers and proxies of candidates for deputies, reduced the threshold of the required number of signatures in support of candidates by half, from 80 thousand to 40 thousand signatures, at the same time allowing each citizen to support at the nomination stage more than one candidate for deputies; it increased political competition by abolishing the 15-seat quota in the Legislative Chamber for the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan. Besides, the new Code has regulated the issues of using modern information technologies and state information resources in the election process: the Election Process Management Information System (EPMIS) and the Single Electronic List of Voters (SELV). Election process participants, focusing on the changes in the legal framework and the country's reforms course, chose a slogan for the current election campaign: "New Uzbekistan, New Election."

In accordance with national legislation, elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage with a secret balloting in 150 single-member constituencies. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who have reached the age of 18 by the day of the elections have an active electoral right. Citizens declared legally incompetent by a court of law and those sentenced to imprisonment for grave or particularly grave crimes do not take part in the voting.

Following the analysis of Uzbekistan's electoral legislation governing elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis to ascertain its conformity with international standards for democratic elections, the IPA CIS observers note that national legislation generally conforms to international democratic standards. It ensures the organization and conduct of parliamentary elections supported by a system of independent electoral bodies based on universal, equal and direct suffrage and secret balloting, respect for the rights of citizens and their associations exercised during the elections and transparency of the election process at all its stages.

### **Administrative and Organizational Support of Elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis**

The preparation and holding of elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis is done by election commissions, forming in Uzbekistan a united system that includes: the Central Election Commission; regional, sub-regional and city election commissions; district election commissions; precinct election commissions.

The Central Election Commission operates on an ongoing basis. District election commissions are formed by the Central Election Commission at least 70 days before the election date based on nominations by the Jokarghy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and regional and Tashkent city Kengashes of people's deputies. Precinct election commissions are formed by district election commissions at least 40 days before the election date from among the candidates nominated by citizens' self-governing bodies, public associations, enterprises, institutions and organizations and whose nominations have been approved at meetings of district and city Kengashes of peoples' deputies.

For the preparation and conduct of the 2019 election campaign, the Republic of Uzbekistan established 12 regional election commissions, as well as the election commissions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the city of Tashkent; 150 district and 10,306 precinct election commissions; and 55 foreign polling stations were opened on the territory of Uzbekistan's diplomatic and consular missions in 38 foreign states that were registered at 12 district election commissions of Tashkent. The election commissions at all levels were formed within the time frame prescribed by law and in compliance with the legal norms. Approximately 180 thousand people were involved in the work of the election commissions at all levels and, in accordance with the recent amendments to the Election Code, their work was paid for the first time from the budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In the period preceding the election announcement date, the CEC engaged academics and experts to develop a number of variable training courses with sets of

methodological and reference materials, taking into account the functions of different categories of election process participants: chairmen and deputy chairmen; secretaries and members of district and precinct election commissions; representatives of mass media and public organizations. In September–December 2019, in accordance with the eight-stage schedule, a series of workshops and trainings were organized utilizing the cascade learning approach widely used in the IPA CIS Member Nations to train various categories of election process participants in all regions and districts of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Faculty of Uzbekistan’s universities and training centres were involved in the training. Information technology specialists taught election commissions members of all levels to work with the SELV and EPMIS software suites.

To raise awareness among the Uzbek citizens of the recent changes in the electoral legislation, their rights and obligations, and to increase electoral activity, the CEC announced a month of electoral legislation awareness raising in the period from October 20 to November 20, 2019, during which various public outreach events were held in ministries and agencies, educational institutions and production facilities in Uzbekistan. An important aspect of the awareness raising was to promote understanding of the need to voluntarily and consciously observe ethical norms during the campaign and election monitoring.

Executive bodies and local authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan have made a great progress in supporting the campaign activities of political parties (by providing premises for meetings with voters, rallies, places for political advertising, etc.) and in providing material and technical support for the work of district and precinct election commissions, including with regard to work with the SELV. By December 1, 2019 all polling stations were connected to the Internet. During the current election campaign, the EPMIS and SELV were utilized for the first time at the national level. All district election commissions were equipped with situation centres to collect, process, summarize and transmit the information coming live from polling stations.

The IPA CIS observers note the significant efforts of the CEC of the Republic of Uzbekistan and an almost full coverage of all election process participants in terms of information, reference and methodological materials; ensuring open access to legal, campaign and educational information about elections, political parties and the course of the election campaign.

During the preparation for the election, the CEC published 143,000 “workbooks” for members of precinct election commissions; 22,000 copies of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan; 25,000 copies of the Election Code; 22,000 copies of collected laws and regulations governing the election procedure in the Republic of Uzbekistan and more than 1 million posters calling to take part in the elections in the Uzbek, Karakalpak and Russian languages. These documents and various information and statistical materials about the course of the pre-election campaign were made available to the voters on the CEC website. Voters were able to verify the accuracy of their personal data and could promptly inform the CEC and other election commissions about violations in the preparation for the election on a special hotline. CEC Chairman Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov held regular press

conferences where he covered the main stages of the pre-election process and voting preparation.

The Central Election Commission ensured international coverage of the progress of the election campaign. As part of the preparation for the election, the CEC leadership held regular meetings with international observers and press conferences for foreign journalists. The English version of the CEC website provided prompt updates on preparation for the election and decisions taken by election commissions at all levels. The Central Election Commission accredited more than 100 foreign journalists to cover the preparation for and conduct of the voting.

The registration stage of political associations entitled to nominate candidates for deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis ended on October 18, 2019 with the successful completion of the procedure by all five political parties that had applied for registration. At the nomination stage of candidates for deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, the CEC registered 747 candidates, including those nominated by: the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Business People – the Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party (150); the Adolat Social Democratic Party (149); the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan Milliy tiklanish (150); the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (149); and the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan (149).

The total number of citizens eligible to vote in the election on December 22, 2019 is 20,516,710. In accordance with national laws, the CEC decided to print half a per cent more ballots than the total number of voters (20,619,000 ballots) to avoid the risk of their shortage in the event of citizens voting at a place other than the place of registration. Voters were able to use ballots printed in one of the languages they considered their native: Uzbek, Karakalpak or Russian. The required number of ballots in each language in a constituency was determined on the basis of an analysis of the national composition of the voters registered in the constituency with the help of the SELV and information received from regional executive bodies. All ballots were delivered to polling stations no later than three days before the early voting date and three days before the election date, respectively, as prescribed by law.

To allow the disabled persons to vote, almost all polling stations in Tashkent and in the regions that were monitored during the short-term monitoring phase were equipped with ramps or lifts allowing access to the voting room, special booths for people with limited mobility and overlays on ballot cards printed in Braille. Wherever it was not possible to access the polling premises without assistance, volunteers were available on polling stations on election day.

The measures taken by the CEC, state and local authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan ensured that the election campaign was conducted in an open and politically competitive environment. Voting transparency was ensured thanks to the large-scale engagement of national observers representing political parties, candidates’ proxies and citizens’ self-governing bodies. In total, on the election day more than 70,000 people were accredited as observers in election commissions of all levels.

The election to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis was monitored by 825 CEC-accredited international observers representing 41 foreign states and nine

international organizations. The CIS observer mission included 182 observers from eight countries, the IPA CIS team – 37 observers from seven Member Nations.

Observation of the preparation and conduct of the December 22, 2019 elections has demonstrated that all the measures provided for in the Programme of Basic Measures for the Election of Deputies to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and Deputies to Local Kengashes were carried out within the established time frame and in strict compliance with the electoral legislation.

The IPA CIS international observer group notes the significant work carried out by the CEC, state and local authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure the free expression of the will of every citizen and the openness and availability of information about legal, organizational and political aspects of the election campaign based on pluralism. Thanks to the efforts of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, well-organized election process played a special role in achieving information and political openness.

### **Campaign Period**

In accordance with national legislation, the candidates for the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis began their campaigns on November 18 and completed them on December 20, 2019.

The key features of the campaign period of the current election campaign, which is held for the first time based on the provisions of the new Election Code, were:

1) increased competition between political parties and their candidates in each of the 150 constituencies, due to the increased ability of political parties to nominate candidates for deputies and an increased number of political actors thanks to the establishment of the Ecological Party on the basis of the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan;

2) greater opportunities for the media to cover the campaign phase of the election process and for political parties, to disseminate election programmes and candidate messages, and production of demo reels addressed to different target audiences;

3) during the campaign, application of new ways to attract supporters, in addition to the traditional ones, such as live debates of political party representatives and candidates for deputies on national television, online campaigning by party bloggers, promotion of party programmes and individual candidates through online channels and work with target online audiences;

4) combining campaigning and awareness-raising projects, such as holding large-scale events, including open-air political party rallies in all regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and organizing patriotic contests.

Candidates for deputies and their nominating political parties have fully enjoyed their legal right to campaign in printed and electronic media of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Pre-election materials were published where it was allowed by law with the active assistance of regional and local authorities. Voters were provided with the information about candidates and about the polling station address and the time of

its operation on election day. Excerpts from candidates' election programmes were posted on the CEC website. National, regional and local printed and electronic media regularly informed citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan of the progress of the preparation for the election, covering in detail the work of the CEC and district and precinct election commissions and the activities of the executive authorities to ensure favourable conditions for the citizens to express their will. Within the time frame established by law, national print media published information about electoral congresses of political parties and their nominations to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis. During the campaign period, biographies and election programmes of the candidates registered in constituencies were published in regional and local newspapers. In the course of the election campaign, international observers from the IPA CIS did not establish any facts of impeding access to mass media for political reasons or interference by state (local) authorities.

Also, based on the monitoring results, there were no violations of the campaign financing procedure established by law, which requires pre-election campaigns to be financed exclusively from the funds specifically allocated from the state budget to registered candidates.

Between December 12 and 18, 2019 voters could exercise the right to early vote at all polling stations in the Republic of Uzbekistan and abroad. Given the number of citizens registered to vote at foreign polling stations and the limited capacity of voting facilities, mobile polling stations were set up along with permanent polling stations at diplomatic and consular missions to accommodate the voters located outside the Republic of Uzbekistan. For instance, at the early voting stage, 57 additional mobile polling stations had been set up along with eight stationary ones in the Russian Federation. A total of more than 147 thousand voters took part in the early voting, including 59,266 in the Republic of Uzbekistan and 87,807 at polling stations abroad.

### **Long-Term Monitoring**

As part of long-term monitoring from November 30 to December 3, 2019, the IPA CIS IIMDD staff members and experts from among the members of the IPA CIS international observer team made a working visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

During the visit, meetings were held at the Central Election Commission, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in the headquarters of the five political parties and the district and precinct election commissions of Tashkent.

Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov, Chairman of the CEC, informed the monitoring group members about the work of election commissions of all levels in preparation for the voting on December 22, 2019 and about a set of training programmes implemented together with academics and expert practitioners to improve the professionalism of the members of election commissions and other election process participants. During their visit to two district and four precinct election commissions in Tashkent, observers received detailed information concerning the efforts to specify voter lists and concerning the readiness of polling stations in the Republic of

Uzbekistan and at diplomatic missions abroad to conduct early voting starting December 12, 2019.

During the meeting with Sodiq Safoyev, First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the activities of the legislative branch of the Republic were discussed concerning the improvement of electoral legislation and monitoring of compliance practices in this area; the openness of the discussions of the draft Election Code at the stage of its development; the possibility to submit proposals to be included in the final version of the bill; the importance of the upcoming election for the successful development of the reforms launched in the country.

On December 1–2, 2019, observers held meetings in Tashkent at the election headquarters with the leaders of all five political parties that had nominated their candidates for deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis. Election team managers and staff shared their views on the election campaign and spoke about election congresses, the adoption of party programmes and election programmes of individual candidates and about campaign strategies of their parties. During the meetings no comments were made to the CEC and subordinate commissions. The representatives of political formations defined the current election campaign as clearly competitive, open and providing ample opportunities to gather support through direct campaigning and utilizing the capabilities of the media and the Internet.

During the visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan as part of long-term monitoring, the IPA CIS observers had the opportunity to learn first-hand about the details of the process of raising public awareness about the upcoming elections. The monitoring demonstrated that the CEC and the subordinate election commissions of the Republic of Uzbekistan had efficiently used all statutory forms of engaging citizens to bring them to the polling stations and inform them about the voting procedure. These included: publication of campaign materials in periodicals and special election editions; placement of advertising posters and billboards in public places; broadcasting of information messages and promotion videos on digital billboards, in transport buildings and public transport; broadcasting messages and information videos about the upcoming elections on television and radio and on the Internet on the websites of the CEC and provincial, city and district election commissions in the Uzbek, Karakalpak and Russian languages.

### **Short-Term Monitoring**

A total team of 37 IPA CIS international observers consisting of parliamentarians from seven Member Nations, heads and staff members of the IPA CIS Council Secretariat and experts of the IPA CIS IIMDD had been monitoring the election campaign to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the final stage, including the voting day, from December 19 to 22; 27 members of the international observer team monitored the elections in Tashkent, 10 members of the team monitored foreign polling stations in Baku, Minsk, Bishkek and St Petersburg.

As part of short-term monitoring, the IPA CIS Observer Team held a number of meetings with election process participants on December 20–21, 2019.

On December 20, 2019, during their visit to district election commission No. 141, IPA CIS observers got acquainted with voter list compilation and correction; ensuring voter awareness about the date and place of voting, as well as about candidates on the district's ballot; training members of district and precinct election commissions; the observers assessed the level of technical equipment of the situation centre and the readiness of the equipment and members of precinct election commissions to work with state information resources. A. Riskulov, chairman of the district election commission, gave detailed explanations of all stages of preparation for the election and about the advanced technologies used for voter registration (SELV).

During their visit to precinct election commissions Nos. 219 and 141 in Tashkent, the observers reviewed the preparation of polling stations for election day. They checked whether polling station premises were ready for voting and, in particular, the observers made sure that there were elements of barrier-free environment at the polling stations that allowed people with disabilities to vote. The observers noted the full material and technical readiness of precinct election commissions to conduct voting. Lists of voters registered at the polling station and information materials about candidates for deputies in the given constituency were placed for information purposes in a publicly accessible place. No violations were found in the activities of the district and precinct election commissions during the voting preparation stage.

At a meeting with Ulugbek Vafayev, Deputy Chairman of the Central Council of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the IPA CIS international observer team reviewed general information about the party's programme, the internal party procedure of selection and nomination of candidates for deputies, information about the availability of party candidates in all 150 constituencies and about the work of party structures during the election campaign. The meeting participants were shown samples of printed campaign materials and video clips broadcast on TV and the Internet. Party representatives answered the observers' questions about the withdrawal mechanism for candidates for deputies at the election preparation stage. Ulugbek Vafayev praised the CEC for its work during the development of the new Election Code and during the organization of the current election campaign and reported no violations of the rights of candidates from the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan during candidate registration and pre-election campaign. He said that the party paid great attention to mainstreaming of women in political life and praised the innovations in the Election Code regarding the establishment of a quota for women candidates. Among the party's election candidates, 40 per cent were women.

At the meeting in the office of the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan Milliy tiklanish, Deputy Chairperson of its Central Council Ms Mukhamedjanova told the observers about the renewal of the party leadership and overall party strategy before the election, changing the selection system of candidates for deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and making it possible for the youth to enter the political arena. She noted that Milliy tiklanish leveraged such innovations as

active campaigning with the use of modern information and communication technologies, counter-campaigning using political cartoons of competing parties, targeted work with different working-youth groups and university students. The party gave considerable thought to protecting the interests of visually impaired or blind voters; the election programme was printed in Braille for them. Ms Mukhamedjanova noted that the CEC and other election commissions follow closely and impartially the requirements of the electoral laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan governing the activities of election organizers during the pre-election period.

The observers met with Boriy Alikhanov, Chairman of the Environmental Party of Uzbekistan, at its election headquarters. He shared his views on the work of the Central Election Commission and district election commissions during the collection of signatures to support the party's admission to the elections and during the registration of party candidates. According to him, the party had no difficulties in holding public events in Uzbek cities and its party policy papers were published in the print media in a timely manner. Representatives of the election headquarters of the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan raised no comments regarding the CEC or its subordinate commissions.

On December 21, 2019, members of the IPA CIS international observer team, headed by the Team Coordinator Ilyas Umahanov, visited the Central Election Commission where they met with its Chairman Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov. He informed the observers about the large-scale work that Uzbekistan's authorities carried out in 2017–2019 to improve the electoral legislation and adopt the country's first-ever Election Code on June 26, 2019: during the development of the Code, the electoral legislation of more than 50 countries was studied, consultations were held with experts from CIS countries and a number of international organizations; during the discussion of the draft Election Code, more than a thousand proposals and amendments had been received that were reflected in the adopted document. Mirzo Ulugbek Abdusalomov talked about the CEC's efforts to introduce modern information and communication technologies in the election process and its preparations to use such technologies in the current election campaign, which resulted in 99 per cent of polling stations in Uzbekistan now having Internet access. During this election campaign, an experiment is being conducted to provide live video monitoring. To this end, 60 polling stations located in various regions of Uzbekistan have been equipped with video surveillance systems (web cameras), making it possible to monitor the voting process remotely. Video feed is provided by the Central Election Commission Information Centre. The CEC Chairman gave a detailed overview of the cascade training of members of election commissions of all levels, which included 180 thousand people during the pre-election period, as well as the CEC's cooperation with national and international media in covering all stages of the election process. From September 20, 2019 until the end of the campaign period on December 20, 2019, the electoral commissions of the Republic of Uzbekistan published more than 2,000 reports on the preparation of the election in print and electronic media. During the same period, the pre-election events of political parties and candidate speeches were covered by the Uzbek and international media more than 35,000 times. Each of the five political parties taking part in the elections held at

least 200 rallies and other pre-election events in communities throughout the country. Focus was given to enabling national and international observers to monitor the election process; the number of such observers in these elections is the highest-ever for Uzbekistan: the CEC registered 825 international and more than 70,000 national observers.

In response, Ilyas Umahanov, Coordinator of the IPA CIS Observer Team, informed about the team's long-term monitoring work and shared his first impressions about the short-term monitoring of the preparation for the election; he also told in which regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and in which foreign countries the IPA CIS observers would work on the election day. In conclusion, according to the established practice, the CEC Chairman was provided with copies of Conclusion on Compliance of the Legislation Regulating the Elections for the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan with International Election Standards and Report of the Expert Group on the Long-Term Monitoring of the Preparation and Holding the Elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The visit to the Central Election Commission concluded with a press conference attended by the members of the Uzbek and foreign media.

In the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, observers met with Alisher Kurmanov, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs, External Economic Relations, Foreign Investment and Tourism. He stressed the fundamental nature of changes in the political system of Uzbekistan, the active role of legislative branch in the implementation of reforms in the country, the strengthening of the role of parliament in the system of state authorities, as well as the importance of international election monitoring to further improve the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the electoral sphere.

The IPA CIS Observer Team concluded the series of meetings with the heads of election headquarters of political parties with a meeting with the Aktam Khaitov, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Political Council of the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Business People – the Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party. He commended the Election Code, speaking about his party's major role in the development of the code and praising the efforts of regional and local authorities to prepare for voting at polling stations.

The IPA CIS Observer Team notes that all Uzbek meeting participants defined online campaigning, transfer of various kinds of information and coordination of national observers and proxies as a fully-fledged organizational and information resource that has become a regular practice of the election process and requires special regulation.

The monitoring group members observed the progress of early voting at four foreign polling stations: in the Azerbaijan Republic (Baku), the Republic of Belarus (Minsk), the Kyrgyz Republic (Bishkek) and the Russian Federation (St Petersburg) and made sure that the polling stations were fully prepared for voting, observation, vote counting by district election commissions and informing the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan of the voting results.

On December 22, 2019, the day of the election to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, the IPA CIS international observers were present at various stages of the voting process, from the opening of polling stations to the vote counting by precinct election commissions. In total, the observers monitored the election and vote counting at 12 district election commissions and 145 polling stations in Tashkent and in Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand and Syrdarya regions, as well as at foreign polling stations in Baku, Bishkek, Minsk and St Petersburg.

On the election day, the leadership of the IPA CIS international observer team met with Cayetana De Zulueta Owtram, head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the CIS representatives, having noted the national specificities of the new Election Code, stressed that it provided an opportunity to hold elections in accordance with international standards and characterized the period during which the election campaign was held as a time of high expectations and great hopes. They also noted a high level of organization of the election and a constructive nature of the political competition, when campaigning is based not on the shortcomings of an opponent's programmes but on defending one's own advantages and when party programmes address the real issues of the voters. Ms De Zulueta Owtram in turn agreed with the assessment of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan given by the IPA CIS Observer Team and stressed the importance of elections for successful reforms in the country. In addition, the meeting participants provided statistics about observer group composition and monitoring geography.

All polling stations visited by observers in the regions where the monitoring was carried out opened in accordance with the electoral laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan not later than 8 AM local time. Voting procedures were carried out in strict accordance with the electoral laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Every voter had the right to equal and unimpeded access to the polling station in order to exercise his or her right to vote. Voting was carried out in properly equipped booths, which ensured respect for the secret ballot principle and the requirement that no outside influence on voters' choice was permitted.

None of the polling stations visited by international observers showed instances of interference in the work of election commissions by administrative authorities or law enforcement agencies.

Observers from candidates, political parties and public organizations attended all the polling stations monitored on the election day, December 22, 2019. Foreign monitoring missions representing international organizations and individual states actively participated in the monitoring. At the time of their visit to polling stations, they made no substantive remarks concerning the organization and conduct of the voting procedure.

When monitoring the voting, the IPA CIS observers noted some technical shortcomings that were not systematic and did not affect the outcome of the election.

**Based on the monitoring results, the IPA CIS Observer Team notes that the electoral legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan has provided the**

necessary conditions for democratic elections and respect for the rights of all election participants.

With the establishment of representative quotas, law has provided ample opportunities for women to participate in the election campaign.

People with disabilities were able to exercise their right to vote.

During the preparation for the election to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, election commissions operated according to national legislation and based on the principles of transparency and openness.

Election campaigning was conducted in an atmosphere of calm, resulting in a constructive discussion among the election participants. Candidates to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis were given equal access to print and electronic media.

Observers draw attention to the increased online campaigning activity of a largely constructive nature during the current election campaign and openness and availability of all possible sources of information.

During the organization and conduct of the election, public authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan ensured respect for the status of international monitoring missions and assisted them in the exercise of their mandate.

Thus, according to the conclusion of the IPA CIS international observers, the election to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on December 22, 2019 was held in accordance with the rights and freedoms of all election participants and in line with the universally recognized democratic principles and norms for the organization and holding of free and fair elections and international obligations of the Republic of Uzbekistan to protect the rights and freedoms of all election participants.

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K. Taisayev

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G. Isimbayeva

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E. Goloulina

S. Jurayev

Tashkent, December 22, 2019