

## 14<sup>th</sup> European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies took place in the Tavrishesky Palace

The 14th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies on “Operational EMBs for Democratic Elections” took place on 15–16 May 2017 in St. Petersburg in the Tavrishesky Palace—the headquarters of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This event was co-organized by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice



Commission of the Council of Europe), the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

The conference brought together over 130 people, including leaders and representatives of CECs from 28 countries, MPs, representatives of 10 international organizations, such as the European Parliament and the European External Action Service, the Service of Election Observation and Democracy Development in the European Union, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Association of European Election Officials, as well as representatives of various bodies of the Council of Europe, scientists and experts in the field of electoral law.

The Conference focused on ways to ensure functionality of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) as a key element to ensure democratic elections. The key

attention was paid to the work done by EMBs and to their structure. During plenary sessions and in working groups the participants discussed issues of improving the legislative framework of elections and referendums, development of unified standards for their conducting, the role of international observation in providing genuine and transparent elections, as well as the efforts of the Council of Europe related to the cooperation in the electoral field.



At working sessions, the participants exchanged practices and proposals on improving the electoral legislation and electoral practices and on enhancing the understanding of the electoral process by voters. They also analyzed how the authorities responsible for organizing elections could contribute to the improvement of the electoral law.

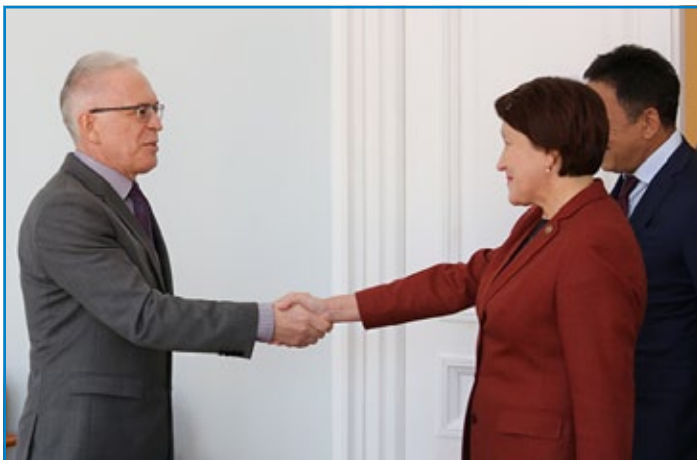


A range of bilateral and multilateral meetings was held in the margins of the Conference, such as the meeting of President of the Venice Commission Gianni Buquicchio with Chairperson of the Central



Commission for Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic Nurzhan Shaildabekova. They discussed issues related to the elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2017, as well as the organization of the voting in the country's past elections and referendums.

Secretary General — Head of the IPA CIS Council Secretariat Alexey Sergeev also met with Ms. Shaildabekova. The parties discussed the plan of further work and preparations for presidential elections in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2017.



In total, Conference featured ten meetings involving the members of the delegation of the CEC of

Russia. In particular, they met with delegations of the Secretariat of the Organization of American States, the Secretariat of the Association of European Election Officials, the Independent Electoral Institute of Mexico, the Superior Electoral Court of Brazil; the Central Election Commissions of Jordan, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Latvia, as well as the Central Commission for elections and referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Also, the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies signed the Memorandum of understanding.

Having summarized the results of the discussions of the working groups, the participants adopted a final document containing recommendations to states participating in the Conference on the improvement of electoral laws.

