

## **IPA CIS Observers Visited the Republic of Kazakhstan as a Part of the Long-term Monitoring of Early Presidential Elections**

As part of the long-term monitoring of the early presidential elections of the Republic of Kazakhstan, scheduled for June 9, 2019, international observers from the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States visited several regions of the Republic from 14 to 17 May.

Observers from among the leadership, staff and experts of the IPA CIS IIMDD visited the capital of the country – Nur Sultan, cities of Almaty and Shymkent and settlements of the Turkestan region. During the visit, they held meetings with the leadership of the executive authorities of the regions and election commissions at various levels, as well as visited the headquarters of candidates to the post of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

election commissions. At meetings at the headquarters of candidates of the party «Nur Otan» Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev, of the Federation of trade unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan Amangeldy Taspikhov and of the party «Ak Zhol» Dania Aspaeva there were discussed the peculiarities of campaigning in compliance with the principle of equality of opportunities of candidates from different political and social forces of the country, as well as the specifics of working with different social and age groups of voters, in particular with young people. Representatives of all staffs announced their intention to actively use the institution of national observers on the day of voting and spoke about the training conducted for them. They stated that there were no violations of the law during the election campaign at the moment.



On May 14, 2019 the Director of the IPA CIS IIMDD Dmitry Gladey and Head of the Department for branches of the IPA CIS IIMDD Roman Amburtsev visited maslikhat and the City Election Commission of Almaty, as well as met with the leadership of the headquarters of the three presidential candidates. Secretary of maslikhat Kaldybay Kazanbayev informed them in detail about the formation of 562 election commissions of different levels in the city with the participation of representatives of five political parties and public organizations. The Chairman of the City Election Commission Zhanna Asanova drew attention of the observers to the «cascade method» of training of the new composition of election commissions — when trained in the CEC of the Republic of Kazakhstan members of the commissions then act as coaches for the rest of the



On May 15 Dmitry Gladey and Roman Amburtsev in Shymkent met with Deputy akim of the city Gulzhan Kurmanbekova, and the Chairman of the Territorial Election Commission of the city of Shymkent Yerlan Dauylbaev, who told the observers about the current activities of the Commission, in particular the forms and methods of notification of voters. There were also meetings of observers with the leadership of the local headquarters of candidates for the presidency of the Communist people's party of Kazakhstan Zhambyl Akhmetbekov and the party «Nur Otan» Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev, where the parties discussed the details of the election campaign. In the afternoon, the observers went to the city of Turkestan, where they were received by akim of Turkestan region Umirzak Shukeev, held a meeting

with the Chairman of the Turkestan Regional Election Commission Alikbek Umaraliev, and got acquainted with the work of the city headquarters of the candidate from the People's democratic patriotic party «Auy!» Toleutai Rakhimbekov and the regional headquarters of the party «Nur Otan».



On May 16, 2019, a group of observers under the leadership of deputy director of IPA CIS IIMDD Ekaterina Goloulina visited the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan, where they met with members of the CEC Zauresh Baymoldina and Bakhyt Meldeshov. The observers told the CEC representatives about their work in the framework of long-term monitoring of early elections of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in particular, about the performed legal analysis of compliance of the national legislation regulating elections with international democratic standards. In turn, the CEC members informed the observers about the main changes made recently to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, constitutional laws and regulations governing the preparation and conduct of presidential elections, as well as electoral procedures in general. They informed the monitoring group in detail about the completed stages of the election campaign: the nomination and registration of candidates, the formation of territorial and precinct election commissions, the procedure for financing the election campaign from the state budget of the Republic of Kazakhstan and from the personal funds of candidates and donations of citizens. On the same day, observers visited the City Election Commission of the city of Nur-Sultan, where they met with its members headed by Chairman Vladimir Redkokashin and discussed the preparations for the elections, in particular the formation and equipping of election commissions, determining the places for campaigning of candidates and their proxies, creating conditions for persons with disabilities.

On 17 May 2019, the observers visited the headquarters of four registered candidates. A meeting of the monitoring group with the head of the party's faction in the Majilis of



the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan Azat Peruashev and the head of the faction Aigul Zhumbabaeva took place at the election headquarters of the candidate of the Democratic party of Kazakhstan «Ak Zhol» Dania Espaeva. The observers informed them about the work carried out in the course of long-term monitoring, and representatives of the staff told about their activities during the election campaign, as well as noted the highly professional work of the new staff of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the stage of registration of candidates and at the initial stage of the campaign. At the headquarters of the Federation of trade unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan a meeting was held with Sathibalbu Dauletagin — co-head of the election headquarters of the candidate Amangeldy Taspikhov. Representatives of the electoral staff stressed that they support the changes made to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2017–2018. Also, international observers from the IPA CIS met with Ali Bektayev — the head of the election headquarters of Toleutai Rakhimbekov, nominated by the people's democratic Patriotic party «Auy!», who noted that the party did not face difficulties at the stage of nomination and registration of their candidate.

On the same day, the observers visited the election headquarters of the party «Nur Otan», where they had a conversation with the head of the center of legal expertise of the election headquarters of Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev





Yersain Ospanov. Yersain Ospanov spoke about the activities of the election headquarters during the first month of the current election campaign, in particular the formation of territorial headquarters, the registration of proxies and the use of social networking resources in campaigning.

During the meetings, representatives of all four political parties and public associations noted the need for and importance of neutral and depoliticized election observation and expressed the view that international observers play an important role in the upcoming presidential elections.

## Round Table *Democratic Foundations of Local Government* Took Place in Gatchina



On May 31, 2019, a round table *Democratic Foundations of Local Government* was held in Gatchina, Leningrad region, organized by the IPA CIS Standing Commission on Practices of State-Building and Local Government and the IPA CIS IIMDD.

The event was attended by parliamentarians from the Azerbaijan Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan, representatives of seven regions of the Russian Federation, as well as heads and employees of local governments, the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and the Election Commission of the Leningrad region.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee of the House of representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus on State-Building, Local Government and Regulations, Chairman of the IPA CIS Standing Commission on Practices of State-Building and Local Government Leonid Tsuprik and Deputy head of the Secretariat of the IPA CIS Council — Director of IPA CIS IIMDD Dmitry Gladey in their welcoming speeches stressed the importance and the positive effect of such joint events.

Of great interest was the report of the Chairman of the Volgograd city Duma Andrei Kosolapov, who put forward a proposal on the legislative consolidation of the powers of local governments to organize international cooperation at the regional and local levels.

A lively discussion took place around the report of the member of the Committee of the Federation Council of

the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on budget and financial markets Dmitry Shatokhin about the development of the initiative budgeting in the Russian Federation. Representatives of the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan took an especially active part in it.

Chairman of the Election Commission of the Leningrad region Mikhail Lebedinsky presented the practical experience of the region in the organization of the model of territorial public self-government through the institution of prefects. The draft law aroused great interest among representatives of the CIS Member Nations.

In the report of the first Deputy head of the Perm city administration Viktor Ageev, a number of initiatives were put forward to develop model legislative acts for the CIS Member Nations in the field of public-private partnership aimed at reducing barriers for small and medium-sized businesses in the implementation of various forms of partnership with local governments. The universal nature of the problem was confirmed by the report of the Deputy head of the Legal Department of the Apparatus of Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic Chyngyzbek Berdimuratov, devoted to the forms of increasing the investment attractiveness of municipalities and improving the quality of life of citizens through the implementation of investment projects.

The subject of lively discussion was also a number of reports of scientific experts from Moscow State University and members of the Election Commission of the Leningrad region on the formation of representative bodies, transformation of municipalities, forms and features of local elections and referendums.

The Deputy head of the Legal Directorate of the CEC of the Russian Federation — head of the Department for regional legislation on elections and referendums Claudia Borodulina summed up the result of a meaningful and thoughtful exchange of views. While acknowledging the success of the event and the discussion, she thanked the participants for the broad scope of democratic self-government issues and wished them to continue the discussion of the various aspects of the topic in the follow-up activities and conferences organized by the round table participants.

## A Quiz Among Students of Higher Educational Institutions of the IPA CIS on the Electoral Law and the Electoral Process

During May 2019 the universities of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region, the number of branches of the IPA CIS IIMDD and the CEC of the Republic of Kazakhstan held the quiz among the students on issues of electoral law and the electoral process, organized by IPA CIS IIMDD. The quiz was a stage I of the scientific debate devoted to the International day of democracy, which will be held in September 2019 at the site of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS. More than 500 students of higher educational institutions of the CIS countries took part in the quiz.

On 7 May 2019 the Bishkek branch of IIMDD IPA CIS held a quiz on the basis of the Bishkek humanitarian



University after K. Karasaev. The event was attended by students studying democracy and law from five universities of the Kyrgyz Republic: Kyrgyz National University after Zh. Balasagyn, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University after B. N. Yeltsin, Bishkek Humanitarian University after K. Karasaev, Kyrgyz State Law Academy under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyz State University after I. Arabaev. During the quiz, students also got acquainted with the activities of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS and the IPA CIS IIMDD.

On May 18, 2019, the quiz was held in Chisinau, organized by the Chisinau branch of IPA CIS IIMDD in cooperation with the Center for continuous education in the electoral field and the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova. Pavel Kabachenko, Director of the Center, noted that such events contribute to the legal culture of young voters, as well as help them to learn more about the opportunities offered by democracy. The Deputy Chairman of the CEC of the Republic of Moldova Rodica Ciubotaru told the audience about the activities involving young people which are regularly arranged by the CEC and the Center. According to her, it has become a good tradition to hold intellectual games in the field of



electoral law and simulations of election day in the Republican lyceums. In turn, the Director of the Chisinau branch of the IPA CIS IIMDD Yevgeny Stirbu introduced students to the history of the International day of democracy, which is celebrated annually on September 15 and is accompanied by various events, discussions and debates on democracy in order to raise public awareness. The winner of the quiz became a student of the Moldovan State University Victor Solomon.

On May 22, 2019 organized by the Yerevan branch of IIMDD quiz was held at Russian-Armenian (Slavic) University. It was attended by students majoring in «international relations», «regional studies», «management». The winner was Hovhannes Bardakjian.

On May 24, 2019, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with the Association of Universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan held the first round of the National quiz among students of universities of Kazakhstan on electoral law and the electoral process. The peculiarity of this quiz was a wide coverage of universities: national and regional, public and private. In total, 170 students from 29 educational institutions from all regions of the country took part in the testing. Another difference was the use of digital technologies.

According to the test, students of the Republic of Kazakhstan are well versed in the issues of electoral law and the electoral process: 65% of the total number of participants scored more than 30 points out of 40 possible. The best results were shown by Dinara Maratova (Caspian Public University), Mira Lim (Aktobe Regional State University after K. Zhubanov) and Gulnaz Serikkalieva (International Kazakh-Turkish University after H. A. Yassavi).

Also during May 2019, the quiz events were held at St. Petersburg state University, North-Western Institute of management of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President





of the Russian Federation, Leningrad State University after A. S. Pushkin, Russian State Pedagogical University after A. I. Herzen, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University and National Research University «Higher school of Economics».

The winners of the quiz will compose two teams — one of the Member Nations of the IPA CIS and the other — of universities of St. Petersburg and Leningrad region, which will participate in the scientific debate in September 2019.

## Role of NGOs in Social and Political Life of the Azerbaijan Republic Discussed in Baku

On May 16, 2019, the Baku branch of the IPA CIS IIMDD held a round table *Role of NGOs in Social and Political Life of the Azerbaijan Republic* in Baku.

The event was attended by deputies of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic Hikmet Mammadov and Shahin Ismailov, Plenipotentiary representative of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic in the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Aydin Jafarov, members of political parties and public organizations, representatives of the scientific community and the media.

The meeting was opened by the Director of the Baku branch of the IIMDD Elman Imamaliyev. He pointed to the relevance of the topic and noted that the study of the role of public organizations in the life of the country of the Azerbaijan Republic can be useful as an example for the CIS countries, drew the attention of the participants to the fact that the appropriate exchange of experience will contribute to the development of multilateral relations between the States of the Commonwealth and the expansion of cooperation in this area.

Elman Imamaliyev also spoke about the branch's research work on the development of the regulatory framework governing the activities of public associations in the Azerbaijan



Republic, state support for non-governmental organizations in the country, the role of foundations, trade unions, professional associations and political parties in the society. The results of the research were presented to the participants of the round table in the form of a publication in two languages — Russian and Azerbaijani.

In the course of further discussion, different views on the role of NGOs in the socio-political life of the Azerbaijan Republic were expressed. The event ended with an exchange of views and personal experience of participants in this field.

## Representatives of IPA CIS IIMDD Participated in the Final Events of the «Atmosphere» Student Competition

The IPA CIS IIMDD continues to develop working relations with the organizers of the elections of the CIS countries and their subordinate organizations. As part of the expansion of cooperation with the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, Deputy Directors of the IPA CIS Ekaterina Goloulina and Sergey Karavaev on 14–15 May participated in the final of the all-Russia competition among students, graduate students and young teachers on the electoral law and the electoral process «Atmosphere».

The contest was organized by the Russian Center for Training Electoral Technologies (RCTET) under the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. On the eve of the final IPA





CIS IMDD conducted an analysis of nominations and discussed with RCTET replicability of competition in the states — members of the CIS. It was considered appropriate to expand the geography of the competition and to attract participants from the CIS countries.

Representatives of the IPA CIS IIMDD were pleased with the presence of students of the North-Western Institute of management of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation, who previously participated in the international



conference *Young Voters and Candidates: from the Right to Elect to the Right to be Elected*, held by the IPA CIS IIMDD together with the Youth Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS on February 12, 2019.

During the discussion of the finalists' works, Ekaterina Goloulina made a proposal to give the competition the status of international and expand its national representation, which would contribute to the integration of scientific and research approaches of young people in the CIS. The CEC of the Russian Federation accepted this proposal for discussion.