

**IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS ON DEMOCRACY SUPPORT
AND ELECTION OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES**

DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

OF 7 FEBRUARY 2019

THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

- having regard to Rule 115 and Rule 212(4) and (5) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to Annex V to the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure, which lays down the powers and responsibilities of the standing committees,
- having regard to the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union adopted by the Conference of Presidents on 29 October 2015,
- having regard to the Conference of Presidents decision of 16 May 2007, by which the European Parliament endorsed the Declaration of principles for international election observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers,
- having regard to the Conference of Presidents decision of 5 March 2015, by which the European Parliament endorsed the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, drawn up under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
- having regard to the decision of 14 June 2010 by the European Parliament's Bureau to establish a joint-Network of Sakharov Prize winners and Members of the European Parliament with a view to promoting the defence of the human rights worldwide,
- having regard to the decision of 12 December 2011 by the European Parliament's Bureau to establish a Directorate for Democracy Support within the Directorate-General for External Policies, as well as its decision of 9 May 2012 on the structure and the competences of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) and the endorsement of that decision by the Conference of Presidents on 16 May 2012,
- having regard to paragraph 9 of the Declaration by the High Representative on Political Accountability, annexed to the European Parliament legislative resolution of 8 July 2010 on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service¹,
- having regard to Parliament's resolution of 7 July 2011 on "EU External Policies in favour of democratisation",

¹ OJ C 351, 2.12.2011, p.471

- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2013 on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (based on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy),
- having regard to the section entitled "EU policies to support democratisation and elections" of the European Parliament's resolution of 12 March 2015 on the "Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, and the European Union's policy on the matter 2013",
- having regard to the section entitled "Supporting electoral processes and enhancing the rule of law, independence of the judiciary and impartial administration in third countries" of the European Parliament's resolution of 17 December 2015 on the "Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, and the European Union's policy on the matter 2014",
- having regard to the section entitled "Support for democracy and elections, and election observation missions " of the European Parliament's resolution of 14 December 2016 on the "Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015",
- having regard to the section entitled "Addressing democracy support challenges and activities" of the European Parliament's resolution of 13 December 2017 on the "Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, and the European Union's policy on the matter 2016",
- whereas, because of the increasingly significant election observation role being played by the European Parliament, a specific procedure should be established to govern the sending of such delegations,

HAS DECIDED:

A. DEMOCRACY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

Article 1 - General competences

Without prejudice to the competences of, and full cooperation with, the standing bodies (committees and delegations), and under the supervision and political guidance of the Conference of Presidents, the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) shall conduct and oversee the European Parliament's activities in the area of democracy support.

In particular, the DEG shall be responsible for all Parliament activities related to election observation.

It shall also be responsible for democracy support activities in the following areas:

- pre-election activities and the continued follow-up of observed elections;
- support for parliamentary democracy, including capacity-building for the Members and staff

- of third country parliaments;
- activities in connection with the Sakharov Prize Network and Human Rights related actions;
- parliamentary mediation, facilitation and dialogue activities.

Democracy support activities shall be carried out, as far as possible, in a manner that is coherent with, and complementary to, third countries' electoral cycles, under a Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach (CDSA). The CDSA builds upon the premise that democracy support should be provided in the form of comprehensive assistance, to parliament-related players, through a variety of activities undertaken ahead of and after elections.

Article 2 - General procedures

With regard to election observation, the DEG shall draw up a six-monthly programme of election observation delegations and shall submit it to the Conference of Presidents for endorsement, in accordance with the specific procedure laid down in Article 10.

With regard to the democracy support activities referred to in Article 1, the DEG shall submit an annual work programme to the Conference of Presidents for endorsement. The annual work programme shall focus on a limited number of priority countries and regions, up to a combined maximum of six per year, and on a limited number of thematic activities linked to Sakharov Prize and Sakharov Prize Network, human rights, mediation and dialogue, pre and post-election activities.

With a view to implementing the annual work programme, the DEG shall appoint a lead Member for each priority country or region. The DEG may also appoint a lead Member for specific areas linked to the thematic activities referred to above.

When relevant for the implementation of an activity related to a priority country, region, or to thematic areas, requests for authorisation for outgoing missions and for high-level conferences to be held on the European Parliament's premises shall be submitted by the DEG Co-Chairs to the Conference of Presidents at least four weeks prior to the activity concerned.

In the area of mediation, the DEG Co-Chairs may also submit requests, including urgent requests, to the CoP to mandate a Member or Members, to act as an envoy or mediator or to authorise the establishment of a Jean Monnet Dialogue with a third country, under the guidance of a lead Member or Members.

Article 3 - Competences with regard to Election Observation, Pre- and Post-election activities

The DEG shall review all aspects relating to the planning, organisation and evaluation of European Parliament election observation delegations as laid down in section B. It shall maintain procedures and practices for close cooperation with the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), the European External Action Service and the European Commission, in particular with regard to the selection of the priorities for EU election observation missions (EOMs) and with regard to appointments of Chief Observers. It shall also streamline cooperation with other international organisations observing elections within the framework

of International election observation missions (IEOMs), such as the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The DEG shall take all necessary measures throughout the electoral cycle in order to carry out parliamentary electoral dialogues consisting of targeted pre-election activities with parliaments and parliament-related actors as well as activities to follow-up election observation.

The parliamentary electoral dialogues shall take the form of election-related discussions between a limited number of Members, including the former Chief Observer and/or DEG lead-Member, and relevant parliamentarians, political leaders and other relevant actors in the country being observed. The Dialogues shall focus on issues surrounding the preparations for the incoming election or on the implementation of the recommendations of previous election observation missions.

Where appropriate, the DEG may also establish appropriate cooperation with all competent EU bodies and international organisations in this field.

Article 4 - Competences with regard to capacity-building activities with third country parliaments

The DEG shall establish and monitor capacity-building activities for the members and staff of third country parliaments, in particular those of neighbourhood and pre-accession countries, with particular emphasis on the Western Balkans.

Capacity-building activities shall take the form of study visits, fellowships or parliamentary conferences and seminars with a view to exchanging parliamentary best practices. The activities shall be implemented by Members and, when relevant, Parliament's services, involving Political Group staff, where appropriate. The activities may take place in the three places of work of Parliament, in Member States or in the given priority third country or region.

Article 5 - Competences with regard to Human Rights Actions

The DEG shall support and monitor all actions and events related to human rights, including Human Rights actions and the Sakharov Prize network activities, while the policies and their content would remain the competence of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and its Subcommittee on Human Rights.

Human Right actions shall include *inter alia* actions to raise awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to help human rights defenders; support for Sakharov Laureates, including the facilitation of their participation in meetings of European Parliament and in events promoting the spirit of the Prize in Member States and international fora, and Sakharov Fellowship. The focus of Human Right actions shall be on providing human rights-related capacity building to parliaments and civil society.

Article 6 - Competences with regard to Mediation, Facilitation and Dialogue

The DEG shall support and monitor mediation, facilitation and dialogue activities in third countries and regions, that aim to prevent conflict and to develop a political culture of dialogue and consensus-building, without prejudice to the competences of the standing bodies (committees and delegations).

These activities shall include support to Members mandated as envoys or mediators, the provision of training sessions and the organisation of activities which strengthen parliamentary and political parties' conflict prevention and mediation capacities, as well as targeted programmes such as the Young Political Leaders programme and the Jean Monnet Dialogues.

The Jean Monnet Dialogues for peace and democracy shall be a platform for mediation, and for the facilitation of dialogue between political stakeholders of a third country. Each Jean Monnet Dialogue shall be set up as a process, led by a Member or Members, consisting of a cycle of preparatory activities, leading to focussed meetings and their follow-up that enable parliaments and/or political parties to build consensus and to resolve concrete issues.

Article 7 - Composition

The DEG is responsible for the political oversight of all the activities of the Directorate for Democracy Support. The DEG shall consist of 15 members, including representatives of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development, and interparliamentary delegations.

It shall be co-chaired by the Chairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Development. Both shall be Members of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group, as well as the Chair of Conference of Delegation Chairs.

The seats shall be allocated by the Conference of Presidents, following the election of Parliament and the setting up of political groups and standing bodies (committees and delegations). The composition of the DEG shall reflect the composition of Parliament.

Furthermore, the European Parliament Vice-President or Vice-Presidents with responsibilities linked to the mandate of the Group and the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights should be ex officio permanent Members. However, should a vote appear necessary, the ex officio Members shall not have a right to vote except if a Member from their own group has given up his or her seat, in exchange.

B. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS GOVERNING ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATIONS

Article 8 - General provisions for Chief Observers of EU Election Observation Missions

The Chief Observer is the Member of the European Parliament responsible for leading EU Election Observation Missions. The role of Chief Observer shall be carried out without prejudice to the role holder's rights and responsibilities as a Member of the European Parliament.

In line with the Declaration by the VP/HR on Political Accountability², the DEG shall be consulted by the High Representative on the identification and planning of EU Election Observation Missions (twice a year) and on the appointment of EU Chief Observers (on a case-by-case basis). When submitting recommendations with a view to appointing EU Chief Observers, the DEG should follow the criteria for the appointment of Chief Observers set out in Annex I.

The Chief Observer and the European Parliament election observation delegation shall maintain close contact and close relations throughout their mandates, in particular concerning their respective assessments of the electoral process. The Chief Observer shall keep the DEG and other relevant bodies of the European Parliament, informed about the EU Election Observation Mission's work, findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as about any follow-up mission undertaken in a Chief Observer capacity.

The DEG shall charge the Chief Observer with the task of following up the implementation of the recommendations, assisted by the relevant parliamentary committees and standing delegations.

Article 9 - General provisions for election observation delegations

The European Parliament may decide to send delegations to observe elections or referendums being held in third countries.

European Parliament election observation delegations shall aim to strengthen the legitimacy of the national election or referendum process, to increase public confidence in the electoral process, in particular by ascertaining whether all the election procedures are conducted in the most proper and most transparent manner possible, and, through its presence, to provide more effective human rights protection and, where appropriate, to contribute to conflict resolution or post-conflict stabilisation of the State structure.

The Conference of Presidents shall authorise each election observation delegation on the basis of a request from the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group.

Only official election observation delegations, authorised by the Conference of Presidents, shall be permitted to carry out election observation on behalf of the European Parliament

² OJ C 351, 2.12.2011, p.471

and to make representations about its official position.

Article 10 - Authorisation procedure for election observation delegations

The DEG shall draw up a six-monthly programme of election observation delegations which are likely to be of significant interest to the European Parliament and shall submit it to the Conference of Presidents for information in time to be taken into account at the various stages in the budgetary procedure (adoption of Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure and Parliament's first reading of the budget).

When drawing up the six-monthly programme of election observation delegations, the DEG shall bear in mind the indicative number of five countries for every six-month period or ten countries per year, with the possibility of an additional two countries per year in exceptional cases.

Within the limits of the financial framework laid down by the Bureau, the DEG shall submit to the Conference of Presidents specific requests for authorisation to undertake election observation delegations which are duly justified on the basis of the criteria set out in Article 11. Where the electoral system of the country concerned provides for the possibility of a second ballot, the request submitted by the DEG shall in principle also include observation of this second ballot.

Any request to send an election observation delegation shall be sent to the Conference of Presidents in good time before the scheduled date of the election, so that the Conference of Presidents may take its decision sufficiently in advance of the date of the elections concerned.

Article 11 - Criteria for election observation delegations

When taking a decision on requests for authorisation to undertake an election observation delegation, the Conference of Presidents shall take account of the following criteria:

- where the elections or referendums are being held at national level with a view to establishing, restoring or consolidating democracy;
- where the country organising the election or referendum invites the European Union to send an observation mission (EU-EOM) or where the European Parliament is expressly invited to do so, within the framework of an IEOM;
- where there is compliance with minimum democratic standards (universal suffrage, freedom to stand for election, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and movement, reasonable access to the media for all parties);
- where security conditions are adequate.

Election observation delegations may not be authorised where the dates for such delegations coincide with those of European Parliament part-sessions. However, the Conference of Presidents may grant derogations on the basis of a reasoned opinion from the DEG. As a general rule, and in line with the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament participating in election observation delegations, the delegation is expected to be present from the first briefing to the final press conference.

No official European Parliament election observation delegations may be organized in countries where no long-term observation mission is present. In exceptional circumstances the Conference of Presidents may decide to ensure a Parliament presence during elections in a particular country in the form of an ad hoc delegation.

Article 12 - Membership of election observation delegations

Election observation delegations shall be made up of Members only, accompanied by staff from the Secretariat and from the political groups of the European Parliament. No other person may be a member of or accompany such a delegation.

Save where otherwise decided, an election observation delegation shall consist of seven members appointed by the political groups in accordance with the rolling d'Hondt system, which shall also apply to the non-attached Members. When appointing Members participating in election observation delegations, the Political Groups of the European Parliament should follow the criteria for the appointment of Members in European Parliament election observation delegations, set out in Annex II.

When electing the Chair of an election observation delegation, Rules 204 and 208 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

In order to avoid sending small delegations which might not be representative of the make-up of the European Parliament, three members shall be considered the minimum required for an election observation delegation. Election observation delegations shall be made up of Members from at least two different political groups and two different nationalities. On the basis of a screening carried out by the departments responsible, the Chair of the DEG shall inform the Conference of Presidents if the participation threshold has not been met. Should this be so, the delegation may be cancelled.

In order to establish closer links between election observation delegations and relevant parliamentary committees and standing delegations, the political groups should select members for election observation delegations from amongst the parliamentary committees and standing delegations responsible for the country concerned. If this gives rise to problems, the political groups may propose other Members to participate in the delegation concerned.

As a general rule, where the decision to observe elections involves attending a second round, the same members shall preferably be sent to observe both ballots with the same specific tasks, if any. Members planning to take part in an election observation delegation shall therefore ensure that they will be available for a second round if one is held.

The Chair of an election observation delegation shall, as a rule, have previous experience as a member of a Parliament election observation delegation or as Chair of an EU-EOM.

Every Member appointed to take part in an election observation delegation shall sign, immediately upon appointment, the "Code of Conduct for participants in European Parliament election observation delegations" in Annex III and the joint "Code of conduct for International Election Observation Missions (IEOM)" in Annex IV, and shall strictly abide by their respective provisions.

Article 13 - Activities of election observation delegations

Members appointed to take part in an election observation delegation shall participate fully in the entire work of the delegation, from the first briefing to the final press conference.

Members participating in an election observation delegation for the first time shall attend a briefing on election observation delegations.

Election observation delegations shall arrive in the country where elections are taking place two to three days before the date of the election. Members shall arrive sufficiently far in advance and shall not plan their departure for the day of the election.

Members of election observation delegations shall follow the agreed programme in its entirety (including briefings, debriefings and scheduled meetings with the authorities, political parties, election officials, NGOs etc).

Members shall play an active role on the day of the election, attending polling stations and observing the opening, voting, closing and counting.

Members shall refrain from publicly commenting on the organization of the elections, the candidates or political issues before the press conference at which the preliminary statement is issued.

Members may explain the nature of the election observation delegation and its activities. On all other matters related to the election observation, they shall refrain from making comments to the public or the media before the Joint Press Conference and shall refer the media or other interested persons to:

- the Press Conference held jointly with the International or EU-EOM shortly after Election Day,
- the Chief Observer,
- the Chair of the European Parliament election observation delegation, in the case of IEOMs.

At the end of its visit, the Chief Observer and the Chair of the European Parliament election observation delegation shall report to the relevant bodies of the European Parliament.

As a rule, the Chief Observer and the Chair of the European Parliament election observation delegation shall be invited by the DEG, the relevant parliamentary committees or standing delegations to report back at the earliest opportunity.

Article 14 - Relations with long-term election observation missions

Election observation delegations shall always work in the framework of long-term missions (EU- EOMs, OSCE/ODIHR, others), as follows:

- In the case of EU-EOMs, Parliament election observation delegations shall be fully integrated and shall present their views on the electoral process and Parliament's position at a joint press conference.

- In the case of elections held in OSCE member countries, Parliament election observation delegations shall be integrated as fully as possible into the framework of an international election observation mission and shall issue a joint statement at the end of the process.
- Parliament election observation delegations shall abide by the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, endorsed by the European Parliament on 16 May 2007.

Nevertheless, Parliament shall always maintain its independence of judgement and its capacity to act as a political institution.

In the exceptional case of an election observation delegation being sent, pursuant to Article 11(3), to observe an election where there is no organisation running long-term observation (i.e. an EU-EOM or OSCE/ODIHR mission), the delegation shall refrain from delivering a comprehensive assessment of the election. The credibility of such assessments requires a more comprehensive and long-term observation effort than the resources of a Parliament election observation delegation, present for only two or three days in the country, permit.

Article 15 - Final provisions

Articles 11, 13, 17, and 23 of the measures laid down in the implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the European Union adopted by the Conference of Presidents on 29 October 2015 shall apply to election observation delegations.

This Decision shall replace the Decision of the Conference of Presidents of 13 September 2012 on the “Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group and implementing provisions governing election observation missions”.

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption by the Conference of Presidents.

ANNEX I

Criteria for the Appointment of Chief Observers for EU Election Observation Missions

The following criteria should be taken into account by the Political Groups when proposing a Member of Parliament as EU Chief Observer during EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOMs):

- Having previous experience as an EU EOM Chief Observer, a Member of an European Parliament delegation integrated into an EU EOM or, in the OSCE area, an International Election Observation Mission.
- Showing the highest level of impartiality and having neither involvement in the political life of the host country nor economic or financial interests there, either of which potentially representing a conflict of interest or having a detrimental impact on the mission.
- Possessing appropriate language skills. This requires being fluent in the main languages used for international communication in the host country.
- Preferably, being a member of the Committees on Foreign Affairs or on Development.
- Having relevant experiences with project implementation in the field of democratisation, if possible in the region concerned.
- The nomination of a Member coming from a recent colonial power (post World War II) of the host country should preferably be avoided.
- Not having the nationality of the country observed³.

³ This criterion does not apply if the member can prove that he/she does not have voting rights in the country observed.

ANNEX II

Criteria for the appointment of Members in European Parliament election observation delegations

The following criteria should be taken into account by the Political Groups of the European Parliament when nominating members to participate in European Parliament election observation delegations:

- Showing the highest level of impartiality and having neither involvement in the political life of the host country nor economic or financial interests there, either of which potentially representing a conflict of interest or having a detrimental impact on the mission.
- Possessing appropriate language skills. This requires being able to communicate in the main working languages of the EOM.
- Preferably, being a member of the EP's external relations committees/sub committees.
- Preferably, having relevant experiences in the field of democratisation, and having closely followed developments in the region concerned.
- Committing to follow the full programme of the European Parliament Delegation in line with the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament participating in election observation delegations. Political groups should refrain from appointing a member who has breached the Code of Conduct on a previous occasion.
- Not having the nationality of the country observed⁴.

With regard to the respect of the Code of Conduct and the interpretation of the above-mentioned criteria, the DEG Co-Chairs, in coordination with the Chair of the European Parliament election observation delegation, reserve the right to take all appropriate measures.

⁴ This criterion does not apply if the member can prove that he/she does not have voting rights in the country observed.

ANNEX III

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARTICIPANTS IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATIONS

Introduction:

International election observation is widely accepted around the world. It is conducted by intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations and associations in order to provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the nature of election processes for the benefit of the population of the country where the election is held, and for the benefit of the international community.

When the European Parliament participates in election observation, its delegation must be integrated into the framework of a long-term observation mission, as organised by partners of recognised capacity such as the EU-EOMs, OSCE/ODHIR and others.

This Code of Conduct sets out general principles within Parliament on how to conduct election observation missions. It is complementary to the Code of Conduct of International Election Observers endorsed by the European Parliament on 16 May 2007.

Members who are appointed to a European Parliament election observation delegation must subscribe to and abide by this European Parliament Code of Conduct, as a prerequisite for taking part in election observation delegations.

General principles:

Members of the European Parliament are bound by the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, which was endorsed by the European Parliament on 16 May 2007 and which lays down the following general rules of conduct:

- Respect Sovereignty and International Human Rights.
- Respect the Laws of the Country and the Authority of Electoral Bodies.
- Maintain Strict Political Impartiality at All Times.
- Respect the Integrity of the International Election Observation Mission.
- Do Not Obstruct Election Processes.
- Provide Appropriate Identification.
- Maintain Accuracy of Observations and Professionalism in Drawing Conclusions.
- Refrain from Making Comments to the Public or the Media before the Mission speaks collectively.
- Cooperate with Other Election Observers.
- Maintain Proper Personal Behaviour.

Specifically,

1. Members shall maintain strict political impartiality during all the work of the Delegation.
2. The Members designated shall participate fully in the entire work of the Delegation, from the first briefing to the final press conference.

- Constituent and preparatory meetings will be held prior to departure and all delegation members should attend.
 - European Parliament delegations shall arrive in the country where elections are taking place in due time for the first briefing, and shall not leave until after Election Day.
 - The Chair of the European Parliament delegation or a designated member shall attend the final press conference.
 - Members of European Parliament delegations shall follow the agreed programme (including briefings, debriefings and scheduled meetings).
 - Members planning to take part in an election observation delegation shall ensure that they will be available for a second round of voting if one is held.
3. Only Members are entitled to take part in an election observation delegation, accompanied by staff from the Secretariat and from the Political Groups of the European Parliament. No other person may be a member of or accompany a delegation.
 4. Members participating in an election observation delegation for the first time should attend a briefing on election observation delegations.
 5. Members shall play an active role on Election Day itself, attending polling stations and observing the opening, voting, closing and counting of ballots.
 6. Members may explain the nature of the observation delegation and its activities. On all other matters relating to the election observation delegation, Members should refrain from making comments to the public or the media before the Joint Press Conference and should refer the media or other interested persons to:
 - The Press Conference held jointly with the International or EU Election Observation Mission shortly after Election Day,
 - The Chief Observer,
 - The Chair of the European Parliament election observation delegation.

PROVISIONS IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS CODE OF CONDUCT:

In the event of a serious breach of this code of conduct,

- The DEG Co-Chairs, in coordination with the Chair of Parliament's Delegation, have the authority to exclude the Member concerned from the Delegation.
- By analogy with Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the Delegation may, acting by a majority of votes, terminate the holding of office of the Chair of the Delegation, where it considers that he or she has been guilty of serious misconduct.
- The Chair of the Political Group concerned (the Bureau in the case of the Non-attached Members) will be informed and the Member concerned may be subject to the "Measures to be taken in the event of non-compliance with the standards or conduct of Members" (Rules 165 and 166 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament).

- The Member may be excluded from taking part in election observation delegations for the duration of the parliamentary term.

Date _____

Print Name _____

Signed _____

ANNEX IV

Code of conduct for International Election Observation Missions (IEOM)

1. The International Election Observation Mission is composed of delegations coming from the following organisations: OSCE/ ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. The rules of conduct and behaviour defined within the present code shall be respected by members of the IEOM. The work of each IEOM starts at the opening of the first joint meeting and ends at the closure of the post-electoral press conference.
2. Members of IEOM shall follow the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, being a part of the “Declaration of principles for international election observation”. It includes the following general rules of conduct:
 - Respect the sovereignty of the host country and international human rights instruments
 - Respect the laws of the country and the authority of electoral bodies
 - Maintain strict political impartiality at all times
 - Respect the integrity of the IEOM
 - Do not interfere in election processes
 - Maintain accuracy of observations and professionalism in drawing conclusions
 - Refrain from making comments to the public or the media before the IEOM speaks collectively
 - Cooperate with other election observers
 - Maintain proper personal behaviour.
3. Members of the IEOM shall respect the sovereignty, the laws and regulations of the host country, including showing sensitivity for the host-country’s culture and customs, and maintain a respectful attitude toward election management bodies charged with administering the electoral process and other relevant national authorities.
4. Members of the IEOM shall respect and protect the integrity of the international election observation mission. Members of the IEOM must maintain strict political impartiality at all times in the host country. They must not express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to national authorities, political parties or candidates or in relation to any contentious issues in the election process. They must not wear or display any partisan symbols, colours, banners or accept anything of value from political competitors.
5. Members of the IEOM shall refrain from engaging in public activities which could appear to interfere in the electoral process or could be considered as partisan, including meetings with national authorities and/or political actors outside the official programme of the IEOM.
6. Members of the IEOM shall declare any actual or potential conflicts concerning any economic, commercial or financial interests on a professional, personal or family level in the country concerned. They shall also declare their membership of friendship groups

within their national parliaments with the country concerned.

7. Members of the IEOM shall respect in the conduct of their duties within the IEOM the modus operandi for election observation endorsed by their respective organisations.
8. Members of the IEOM shall participate fully in the work of the IEOM: they shall arrive in the country where elections are taking place sufficiently in advance in order to follow the entire programme and attend all required meetings, briefings and debriefings.
9. Members of the IEOM shall respect the deployment plan and all other arrangements and instructions provided. On election day, they shall attend polling stations, observe the opening, voting, closing and counting of ballots, and inform their respective delegations of their conclusions based on their personal observations or clear facts and evidence.
10. Members of the IEOM may ask questions of election officials, political party representatives and other observers inside polling stations and may answer questions about their own activities, as long as they do not obstruct the election process. In answering questions they should not seek to influence the election process. They may ask and answer questions of voters but shall not ask them how they voted. They may bring irregularities, fraud or significant problems to the attention of relevant election management bodies, unless this is prohibited by law, and shall do so in a non-obstructive manner.
11. The IEOM members' judgments must be based on the highest standards for accuracy of information and impartiality of analysis, distinguishing subjective factors from objective evidence, significant from insignificant factors and identifying patterns that could have an impact on the integrity of the election process.
12. Members of the IEOM must refrain, until after the press conference, from engaging in public statements or comments to the media, interviews, press conferences or communications via social networks, other than general remarks regarding the nature, role and activities of the observation mission.
13. Members of the IEOM shall maintain proper personal behaviour, exercise sound judgment in personal interactions and observe the highest level of professional conduct at all times. They should not take unnecessary or undue risks for themselves and/or others and should follow safety and security recommendations.
14. In the event of a breach of the present code of conduct, the member concerned shall be subject to the rules and procedures of the organisation in whose delegation he/she is participating in the International Election Observation Mission.