



SLOVENIA

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
22 March 2026

ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

17 – 21 November 2025



Warsaw
26 January 2026

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ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report

I. INTRODUCTION

Following an official invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Slovenia to observe the 22 March 2026 parliamentary elections, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 17 to 21 November 2025. The NAM was composed of Kseniya Dashutsina, ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, and Ranko Vukčević, ODIHR Election Adviser.

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

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs for its co-operation and assistance in organizing the NAM. ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elections to the 90-member National Assembly will be held on 22 March 2026. Eighty-eight deputies will be elected under a proportional representation system from eight constituencies, and two deputies representing the Hungarian and Italian national communities under a majoritarian system. The pre-election period is unfolding in a highly competitive and increasingly polarized political environment, marked by intense public debate on several high salience policy issues.

These elections will be held under a largely unchanged legal framework, which most ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. The 2024 amendments granted voting and candidacy rights to persons under guardianship, addressing a long-standing ODIHR recommendation. Most other previous recommendations remain unaddressed, including those concerning decriminalizing defamation, regulating third-party campaigning, enhancing the transparency and integrity of campaign finance, and the effectiveness of electoral dispute resolution. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors underlined that, although there is broad agreement on the need for further reforms, legislative changes are repeatedly postponed due to a lack of cross-party consensus or political will.

The elections will be administered by a four-tier election administration, headed by the State Election Commission (SEC), and includes 10 Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs), 88 District Election Commissions (DECs), and some 3,000 Polling Boards (PBs). The SEC informed the ODIHR NAM that preparations for the elections are underway and within established deadlines. The SEC plans to conduct comprehensive training and issue guidelines on the use of the recently introduced information system for entering and publishing election results ahead of election day. All parties met

by the ODIHR NAM indicated their intention to nominate members to election commissions, although many acknowledged capacity constraints, especially in rural areas. While most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the election administration at all levels, several interlocutors opined that the SEC shows limited initiative beyond the tasks expressly prescribed by law, including voter outreach.

There are some 1.7 million registered voters for the upcoming elections. Citizens aged 18 years or older are eligible to vote. Voter registration is passive and inclusive, and most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of voter lists.

Special polling stations will be available for voters who wish to vote outside their home district or those without a permanent residence in Slovenia. While all polling stations are reportedly accessible, organizations representing persons with disabilities noted that existing Braille ballot frames, as the sole assistive tool, do not ensure fully independent voting for blind voters and may risk compromising the secrecy of the vote.

All citizens aged 18 years or older are eligible to stand as candidates. Candidates may be nominated by political parties or by groups of voters, while independent candidacies are not permitted outside voter-nominated lists. All political parties met by the ODIHR NAM indicated their intention to nominate candidates and did not anticipate difficulties with the registration process.

Women remain under-represented in public and political life. In the outgoing National Assembly, 33 of the 90 members are women, and women hold 7 of the 40 seats in the National Council and 7 of the 21 positions in the Government. The legislation requires candidate lists to include at least 35 per cent of each gender; however, there is no system to ensure alternating placement of candidates. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that, despite the quota, women continue to face structural obstacles to equal political participation. Some also observed that women's electoral prospects may be affected by parties' strategic placement of candidates across districts.

All parties met by the ODIHR NAM expect to campaign without hindrance, using a mix of traditional methods, online, and social network platforms. Many ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that several parties have already engaged in issue-based mobilization prior to the official campaign period, and expressed concerns regarding the unregulated nature of political advertising outside the campaign period. Concerns were also raised about the potential spread of disinformation and manipulative narratives, including risks of foreign interference. While relevant state institutions reported ongoing public-awareness and co-ordination efforts, several interlocutors pointed to constraints stemming from limited mandates, resources and regulatory tools.

Several long-standing ODIHR recommendations related to transparency and oversight of campaign finance remain unaddressed, including the absence of rules on third-party campaigning and the absence of interim reporting prior to election day. Campaign finance is overseen by the Court of Audit (CoA), which reviews reports collected by the Agency for Public Legal Records and conducts audits of all contestants. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors praised the professionalism of the CoA, while also noting persistent challenges in ensuring comprehensive oversight under the current legal framework.

The media environment is diverse and pluralistic, comprising public and private broadcasters, print outlets, and the online sector. Defamation, insult, and slander remain criminalized, contrary to international standards and prior ODIHR recommendations. The legal framework guarantees freedom of expression and requires broadcasters to provide balanced and impartial political coverage.

Following a recent reform, the governance structure of the public broadcaster was reconfigured to strengthen editorial independence, a change welcomed by many ODIHR NAM interlocutors, while others questioned the neutrality of new appointments. Oversight of campaign coverage is exercised by the Ministry of Culture's Inspectorate, but no systematic media monitoring is conducted during election periods.

The mechanism for election dispute resolution is primarily regulated by the election law and provides several avenues for lodging election-related complaints and appeals. ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed overall confidence in the effectiveness of the electoral dispute resolution process and the impartiality of the courts. At the same time, some interlocutors noted broader public debates regarding delays and political contention in judicial and prosecutorial appointments.

The Elections Act provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers. While no nationwide citizen election-observation initiatives are conducted, several civil society organizations focus on specific aspects of the process, such as the conduct of the campaign and its transparency, and participation of minority communities. The law guarantees the presence of candidate lists' representatives at the SEC and ConEC sessions, and to observe through proxies the work of DECs and PBs at all stages of election day proceedings.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high degree of confidence in the legal framework and the impartiality of the election administration and its ability to organize elections professionally and transparently. At the same time, most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed a potential ODIHR observation activity and acknowledged that an external assessment could further improve the electoral process and its transparency. Specific aspects that could benefit from further assessment include implementation of the legislation, the conduct of the campaign, including online, the transparency and oversight of campaign finance, the media environment and its regulatory framework, the preparedness of state institutions to potential hybrid threats, and the participation of underrepresented groups. Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 22 March 2026 parliamentary elections.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Slovenia is a parliamentary republic with legislative authority vested in a 90-member National Assembly (parliament).¹ Executive power is vested in the government headed by a prime minister. The parliament is directly elected for a four-year term, and the president for a five-year term. On 6 January 2026, President Nataša Pirc Musar set the next regular parliamentary elections to be held on 22 March 2026.

In the 2022 parliamentary elections, the Freedom Movement (Gibanje Svoboda, GS), led by Robert Golob, won the majority of votes, defeating the ruling Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS). New Slovenia – Christian Democrats (NSi) placed third, followed by the Social Democrats (SD) and The

¹ The National Council acts as an upper chamber and is elected indirectly for a five-year term and comprises 40 representatives of social, economic, professional, and local interest groups. While it does not itself adopt legislation, the National Council exercises a corrective and oversight function vis-à-vis the National Assembly, including through the ability to propose legislation, request reconsideration of adopted acts and initiate constitutional review procedures.

Left (Levica), both of which experienced a decline in voter support compared to the previous elections.² Voter turnout reached nearly 71 per cent, a significant increase from the 2018 and 2014 elections.³ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors attributed the high participation to the polarized political environment, as well as to a range of civic and party-led efforts to mobilize voters. Following the elections, the GS formed a three-party coalition government with the SD and Levica, and Robert Golob was appointed Prime Minister.

The political landscape remains highly polarized, with heightened rhetoric around several contentious issues, including the rising cost of living, the long-standing challenges in the healthcare system, and debates on public safety and minority rights. In October 2025, the killing of a man in Novo Mesto, reportedly involving Roma individuals, triggered wide media attention and strong political reactions.⁴ Subsequently, the National Assembly adopted the Act on Urgent Measures to Ensure Public Security, which many ODIHR NAM interlocutors viewed as disproportionately affecting Roma and contributing to more divisive public discourse.⁵ Political parties are actively using public debates and recent referendums to position themselves ahead of the March 2026 elections, most notably the 23 November vote on a law proposing the legalization of assisted dying, which was rejected by 53 per cent of voters. Many ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that these dynamics are likely to shape the emerging campaign discourse and contribute to a more polarized and confrontational political atmosphere.

Women remain underrepresented in public and political life. In the outgoing National Assembly, 33 out of 90 members (36.7 per cent) are women, while in the National Council, women hold 7 of 40 seats (17.5 per cent). Within the government, 7 of 21 members (33.3 per cent) are women, and 3 of 9 judges of the Constitutional Court are women. In 2023, the government adopted a Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030.⁶ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that, despite high employment rates among women, institutional support for balancing political responsibilities with family and care obligations remains limited.

The protection of national minority rights in Slovenia, including with regard to political participation, remains robust for the Hungarian and Italian national communities, each of which continues to enjoy constitutionally guaranteed representation in the National Assembly and at local levels. However, participation rights for the Roma community remain limited. Although widely estimated to be numerically larger than the other two constitutionally recognized minorities, the Roma are entitled only to special representation at the local level, through elected Roma councilors in municipalities with significant Roma populations.⁷ Other minorities, including the Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, and

² Several established parties, including the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS), the Party of Alenka Bratušek (SAB), the Slovenian National Party (SNS) and the List of Marjan Šarec (LMS), did not cross the four percent threshold.

³ Turnout in the 2018 and 2014 parliamentary elections was 52.6 and 51 per cent, respectively.

⁴ The incident led to the resignation of the interior and justice ministers and sparked public debate about security, integration, and the position of Roma communities. Several parties have since incorporated themes of public safety, minority accountability, and social cohesion into their narratives.

⁵ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors questioned the constitutionality of the law, and many opined that the timing of its adoption suggested an intention to appeal to certain segments of the electorate and mobilize support ahead of the upcoming elections.

⁶ The [programme](#) includes measures to ensure equal economic independence, eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, promote and ensure a balanced representation of women and men, eliminate gender stereotypes and sexism, as well as inequalities in women's and men's health, and measures to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women in foreign policy and development co-operation.

⁷ According to the Slovenian Government Office for National Minorities, the Roma population is estimated at between 7,000 and 12,000 persons, representing some 0.5 per cent of Slovenia's population.

Serbian communities, which are among the largest ethnic groups in the country, do not enjoy specific collective or political representation rights.⁸

ODIHR has previously observed five elections in Slovenia.⁹ Most recently, ODIHR deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 2022 parliamentary elections. The final report for the 2022 parliamentary elections, issued in December 2022, contains 12 recommendations, including 4 priority ones, for the authorities to improve the electoral process and bring it closer in line with OSCE commitments.¹⁰

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The legislation regulating parliamentary elections is primarily comprised of the 1991 Constitution (last amended in 2021), the 1992 National Assembly Election Act (Election Law, last amended in 2024), and the 2007 Election and Referendum Campaign Act (ERCA, last amended in 2013).¹¹ Slovenia is a party to major international instruments related to democratic elections.¹²

These elections will be held under a largely unchanged legal framework, which most ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. The only substantive amendment since the last elections concerns the granting of voting and candidacy rights to persons under guardianship in 2024, addressing a long-standing ODIHR recommendation.¹³ Most other previous recommendations, however, remain unaddressed, including those concerning decriminalizing defamation, regulating third-party campaigning, enhancing the transparency and integrity of campaign finance, and the effectiveness of electoral dispute resolution. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors underlined that, although there is broad agreement on the need for further reforms, legislative changes are repeatedly postponed due to a lack of cross-party consensus or political will.

Out of 90 deputies of the National Assembly (MPs), 88 are elected under the proportional representation system, and 2 MPs representing the Hungarian and Italian national communities are elected under the first-past-the-post system in two special constituencies. For the proportional contest, Slovenia is divided into 8 constituencies, each further subdivided into 11 electoral districts, with one

⁸ According to the 2002 census, the last census to include ethnic self-identification, the Slovenian population consists of ethnic Slovenians (83 per cent), Serbs (1.98), Croats (1.81), Bosnians (1.1), Italians (0.11), Hungarians (0.32), and Roma (0.17). The methodological [note](#) for the 2021 census issued by the Statistical Office states that the census was conducted entirely on the basis of administrative registers and that certain formerly included data, including ethnicity, are no longer collected.

⁹ See all previous [ODIHR election-related reports on Slovenia](#).

¹⁰ In paragraph 25 of the [1999 OSCE Istanbul Document](#), OSCE participating States committed themselves “to follow up promptly the ODIHR’s election assessment and recommendations”.

¹¹ This framework is complemented by other legislation, including the 1994 Political Parties Act (PPA, last amended in 2023), the 1993 Voting Rights Register Act (last amended in 2024), the 2025 Mass Media Act and the 2005 Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia Act (last amended in 2022).

¹² Including the [1950 European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#), although it has not ratified Protocol 12 to the ECHR, which establishes a general non-discrimination clause, [1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), [1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), [1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), [1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families](#), [1995 Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), [2003 UN Convention against Corruption](#), [2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#), and the [2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#). Slovenia is also a member of the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

¹³ The State Election Commission (SEC) informed the ODIHR NAM that it had not been formally consulted on recent amendments to electoral legislation.

candidate per list running in each district.¹⁴ The 11 seats in each constituency are allocated to lists using the *D'Hondt* method. Mandates are then awarded to candidates based on their relative performance within their district. A candidate list must obtain at least four per cent of valid votes nationwide to qualify for seat allocation. On 9 June 2024, concurrently with the elections to the European Parliament, Slovenia held a consultative referendum on the introduction of preferential voting for elections to the National Assembly. While 70.89 per cent of participating voters supported the proposal, the referendum was non-binding, and the existing electoral system remains unchanged.¹⁵

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election administration operates at four levels, and is composed of the State Election Commission (SEC), ten Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs), including two special ConECs for the election of deputies representing the Hungarian and Italian national communities, 88 District Election Commissions (DECs), and some 3,000 Polling Boards (PBs) established throughout the country and at some 30 diplomatic and consular representations. While most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the election administration at all levels, several interlocutors opined that the SEC shows limited initiative beyond the tasks expressly prescribed by law, including in the area of voter outreach.¹⁶

The SEC, ConECs, and DECs are permanent bodies appointed for four-year terms and formed according to a mixed model.¹⁷ The current SEC was appointed by the National Assembly on 22 November 2024 and took up their four-year term on 17 December 2024. The SEC is composed of a president, a vice-president, five members, and their deputies, and 3 of the 12 members, including deputies, are women. The president and vice-president are appointed from among the judges of the Supreme Court, two members and their deputies from among legal experts, and the remaining members upon the proposal of parliamentary political parties.¹⁸ The administrative operations of the SEC are overseen by the Director of the SEC Secretariat.

The SEC appoints the ConECs and DECs, and the PBs are appointed by the DECs for each election based on nominations from parliamentary parties.¹⁹ Representatives of the political parties met by the ODIHR NAM indicated their intention to nominate members to election commissions at all levels, although most acknowledged limited capacity to ensure full nationwide coverage, particularly in rural areas. The SEC noted that, in previous elections, only around 30 to 40 per cent of PB positions proposed by parliamentary parties were actually filled, requiring the SEC and DECs to appoint

¹⁴ The last boundary redrawing took place in 2021, when the boundaries of 15 electoral districts in 5 constituencies were redrawn to enhance equality of the vote.

¹⁵ In early 2025, members of the National Assembly submitted a [proposal](#) to amend Article 80 of the Constitution, together with a [proposal](#) to amend the National Assembly Elections Act, with the aim of introducing preferential voting.

¹⁶ Some interlocutors also referred to criticism directed at the SEC following the June 2024 European Parliament elections and concurrent national referendums, when the ballot count progressed more slowly than usual, and the number of invalid ballots attracted public attention.

¹⁷ The SEC is responsible for the overall conduct of elections, including the co-ordination and oversight of lower-level commissions, issuance of instructions, and the declaration of final election results. ConECs review and confirm candidate lists and determine election results within their constituencies. DECs designate polling stations, count postal votes, and tabulate results at the district level, and the PBs conduct voting and counting on election day.

¹⁸ In accordance with the National Assembly Act, appointments to the SEC take into account the proportional representation of political parties in the parliament.

¹⁹ Each PB consists of six members: a president, a vice-president, two members, and their respective deputies. Members are appointed considering the proportional representation of political parties in the National Assembly.

additional members from other registered political parties, local authorities, and, where necessary, public servants. According to the SEC, securing a sufficient number of qualified staff in this manner is often challenging.

The SEC informed the ODIHR NAM that it fully implemented the new electronic system for entering and publishing election results during the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, and that the system would be used in all future elections. The system also enables the publication of gender-disaggregated data on election administration bodies, addressing a previous ODIHR recommendation. The SEC plans to conduct comprehensive training and issue guidelines on the use of this information system ahead of election day.

The SEC website provides detailed instructions on voting rights, voting procedures, and alternative voting methods.²⁰ In addition, the SEC distributes official notifications to all voters prior to election day, confirming their polling station and providing basic voting information, as well as informational flyers with the final candidate lists.

According to the SEC, all polling stations are fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities, following a comprehensive assessment initiated in response to a 2017 Constitutional Court decision, which led to the relocation of approximately 400 polling stations. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors voiced concerns that these relocations may have reduced the proximity of polling stations for some voters, particularly in rural areas, or for persons with disabilities who cannot easily facilitate transport to the new polling locations, as well as a lack of information about the changes.

One of the main accessibility measures is the provision of Braille ballot templates as an assistive tool for blind and visually impaired voters, prepared for each constituency, corresponding to the structure of candidate lists. However, organizations representing persons with disabilities met by ODIHR NAM noted that the design of these templates does not allow for fully independent voting and may compromise the secrecy of the vote.²¹ In the past, the SEC piloted and tested several additional accessibility adaptations, but these were not ultimately implemented. The SEC website provides all information in formats suitable for persons with sensory disabilities.

The law provides for several alternative voting methods, including early voting, held on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday preceding election day; mobile voting for ill voters, voters with disabilities; and postal voting, which is available to citizens living abroad, as well as for voters in hospitals, retirement homes, or penitentiaries. When an alternative method is used, the voter's choice is recorded in the voter register to prevent double voting. Special OMNIA polling stations are available across the country for voters without a permanent residence in Slovenia and those voting outside their home district, subject to prior notification at least three days before election day.

Voters registered abroad may vote by mail or in person at a diplomatic or consular representation; those in Slovenia on election day may also request to vote at an OMNIA polling station. Ballot papers are automatically sent by registered mail to voters without a permanent residence in Slovenia.²² Postal ballots from abroad may arrive until noon on the second Monday after election day and are counted

²⁰ The [website](#) is also available in both officially recognized minority languages, Hungarian and Italian.

²¹ In particular, the circular cut-outs marking candidate numbers make these ballots very distinctive. Also, the ballot must be positioned in the template in a precise orientation; if placed incorrectly, voters risk unintentionally invalidating the ballot.

²² If electoral materials are returned undelivered in two consecutive elections, the voter is removed from the automatic postal-ballot distribution list and will no longer receive ballot papers until their address of residence is formally reconfirmed with the authorities.

by the DECs on that day, after which constituency results are updated and finalized. The SEC informed the ODIHR NAM that the statutory deadlines for dispatch and return of postal ballots are not aligned in practice, and that delays in international postal services, experienced in previous elections, may affect voters' ability to return ballots on time.

D. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens of Slovenia aged 18 years or older on election day have the right to vote. The January 2024 amendment to the election law enabled passive and active voting rights to all adult citizens, lifting restrictions on suffrage rights from persons under guardianship due to intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, implementing a long-standing ODIHR recommendation to ensure universal suffrage in line with international standards.²³ As of 12 January 2026, the voter register included 1,689,352 voters, including 113,952 voters registered abroad.

Voter registration is passive and based on the Central Population Register maintained by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The register comprises three types of lists: the general voter list, the list of citizens residing abroad, and the lists of members of the Hungarian and Italian national communities.²⁴ All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the overall integrity of the voter registration process and did not report specific concerns regarding the accuracy of voter lists.

The MoI provides final voter lists to election commissions 15 days before election day, and voters may verify their registration at any time at administrative units, diplomatic representations, or online, or request inclusion if not yet registered.

E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

All citizens of Slovenia aged 18 years or older on election day have the right to stand for election. Political parties are registered by the MoI on the basis of at least 200 citizens' declarations and may nominate lists of candidates. As of November 2025, there are 86 registered political parties, including ten registered in 2025 and 2024.²⁵

Candidates may be nominated only in the constituency of their permanent residence. Candidates can be nominated by political parties or groups of voters.²⁶ Independent candidacies are not permitted outside voter-nominated lists. All parliamentary political parties met by the ODIHR NAM stated their intention to nominate candidates, and expressed confidence with regard to the inclusiveness of the candidate registration process.

²³ This resulted in the addition of 4,424 voters to the voter register. The amendment also introduced the possibility for voters under guardianship to be assisted in voting by a person of their choice, provided that the assistant is not a candidate or a member of a polling board.

²⁴ Inclusion in the voter register for the Hungarian and Italian national communities is active, and once registered, voters remain on that register permanently. Eligibility requires membership in the respective national community. As of 12 January 2026, the lists of the Italian and Hungarian national communities included 2,682 and 5,128 voters, respectively.

²⁵ Most notably, in November 2024, former Foreign Minister Anže Logar, previously a senior member of the SDS, established a new centrist political movement, the Democrats (Demokrati). In December 2024, the leader of the now-dissolved DeSUS, Karl Erjavec, who previously held several ministerial posts, launched the Trust Party (Stranka Zaupanje; SZ). In early 2025, former President of the National Council Marko Lotrič founded the Focus (Fokus).

²⁶ Parties may submit lists in every constituency if endorsed by three members of parliament, or in one constituency if endorsed by at least 50 voters residing there. Two or more parties may also submit a joint list. Groups of voters may nominate a list in one constituency if supported by at least 1,000 voters with permanent residence in that constituency, and each voter may sign in support of only one list.

Each list may include up to 11 candidates (1 per district), and there is no minimum number required. Candidates may run in more than one district if the list includes fewer than 11 candidates. The legislation requires a 35 per cent gender quota on candidate lists of more than 3 candidates, but it does not provide for alternating placement.²⁷ Non-compliance leads to the rejection of the entire list. Most of the parties met by the ODIHR NAM reported having internal mechanisms to promote women candidates, including quotas. Many ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that these efforts are often overshadowed by the strategic placement of candidates across districts, which can significantly influence the electability of individual candidates under the current system.

F. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The official campaign period begins 30 days before election day and ends 24 hours prior to the opening of polls, followed by a campaign silence period. The legal framework guarantees the fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, and expression necessary for the conduct of democratic election campaigns. Election campaigns may be organized by candidates, political parties, their representatives, or third parties, including private persons and legal entities.²⁸ All campaign materials must clearly indicate the entity that commissioned or paid for them.

Campaigning prior to the official campaign period, as well as third party campaigning is not regulated. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that campaign activities have already started, notably through recent public debates and referendums used to promote party platforms, or a high number of billboards which appeared across the country in January 2025 bearing political messages critical of the government.²⁹ Some interlocutors also noted that the lack of distinction between official and campaign activities of the incumbents may undermine the fairness of the process.

Most parties met by the ODIHR NAM expect to campaign without hindrance, using a combination of traditional campaign methods and online tools, including events, posters and billboards, distribution of printed materials, door-to-door outreach, and social-media activity. The campaign is expected to focus on a combination of socio-economic and value-based issues. Public debate is currently dominated by healthcare reform, housing affordability, the cost of living, the economy, migration management, inter-community relations, and energy and environmental policy. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors voiced concerns over the role of the church in the campaign.³⁰

Online campaigning is not explicitly regulated, and the Election and Referendum Campaign Act contains no provisions addressing political advertising on social networks, third-party online messaging, or platform-based campaign expenditures. Slovenia adopted national legislation implementing the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) in 2024, and designated the Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS) as the national Digital Services Co-ordinator (DSC)

²⁷ The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [recommended](#) “amendments to the Elections to the National Assembly Act, which provides for an increase in the representation of each sex on candidate lists of political parties from 35 to 40 per cent, and introducing a zipper system for the first half of each electoral list”. The law does not define “gender” beyond the binary classification used in official registers.

²⁸ Municipalities must designate public spaces under equal conditions and free of charge for the placement of campaign materials. Organizers of rallies are required to notify the competent police station at least 48 hours in advance.

²⁹ According to several ODIHR NAM interlocutors, these posters were linked to a foreign-registered law firm, alleging that a private entrepreneur financed the campaign.

³⁰ During the 2025 referendum campaign on assisted dying, SEC received complaints alleging that representatives of the Catholic Church engaged in organized campaigning, without having registered as a referendum campaign organizer. The complaints were rejected by the SEC on procedural grounds, noting they did not concern irregularities in the work of election bodies or were submitted after the statutory deadline.

to supervise compliance with DSA obligations by online platforms, including transparency of online advertising, and risk-mitigation duties of major online platforms.³¹ AKOS has stated its preparedness to monitor online campaign, but noted that its enforcement capacity remains constrained.

A number of ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about the potential spread of disinformation and manipulative narratives, including risks of foreign interference and hybrid threats aimed at undermining public trust in the electoral process. Several institutions, including the SEC, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Government's Information and Cyber Security Division, the Government Communication Office (UKOM), and the Ministry of Defence, maintain an interinstitutional co-operation framework to exchange information on emerging cyber and information-related threats, initiate public awareness initiatives, and monitor publicly available online information relevant to cybersecurity and disinformation risks.³² The ODIHR NAM was informed that national institutions experience limited co-operation from major social media platforms.³³ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors questioned the preparedness of state institutions to address potential hybrid threats, noting that Slovenia has not previously experienced significant incidents of this nature and that available mechanisms may prove insufficient should the challenge intensify.

G. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Party and campaign finance are regulated by the PPA and the ERCA. Several previous ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to regulating third-party campaigning, enhancing the transparency of online campaign activities, and introducing interim reporting before election day. The Court of Audit (CoA) emphasized that the current campaign-finance framework would benefit from revision to address these shortcomings.³⁴

Political parties that obtained at least one per cent of the valid votes in the last parliamentary elections are eligible to receive annual state funding.³⁵ Both parties and candidates are prohibited from receiving contributions from legal entities or foreign sources. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted, however, that political parties may own companies, which are legally permitted to conduct business, including with foreign entities, and expressed concern that this could allow indirect inflows of funds that fall outside the scope of campaign finance regulation.

³¹ Slovenia has no designated authority responsible for the implementation of the EU transparency and targeting of political advertising regulation, but Ministry of Public Administration takes part in the meetings of the national contact point and publishes the dates of elections and referendums on the web portal of the European Commission.

³² Ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections, UKOM conducted a public-awareness campaign, in co-operation with the Ministry of Digital Transformation, to inform voters about hybrid threats. The campaign provided guidance on identifying manipulative online content, including bots, deepfakes, misinformation, and disinformation, and directed the public to a dedicated section of the government website with explanatory materials, a glossary of key terms, and links to verification tools. UKOM noted that similar activities promoting media literacy are planned ahead of the forthcoming elections, including in co-operation with influencers.

³³ Interlocutors reported holding a co-ordination meeting only with TikTok in October 2025 to discuss joint strategies ahead of the elections.

³⁴ On several occasions, the CoA has submitted draft proposals, primarily to the competent ministry, aimed at addressing identified areas for improvement; however, no legislative amendments had been adopted as of November 2025.

³⁵ Of the total annual subsidy, 25 per cent is distributed in equal shares among all eligible parties, while the remaining 75 per cent is allocated in proportion to the number of votes each party received. For 2025 and 2026, the annual amounts allocated include, *inter alia*: DeSUS (EUR 1,410.00), GS (EUR 9,430.08), NSi (EUR 1,849.92), SD (EUR 10,642.68), SDS (EUR 7,879.08), and the Slovenian People's Party (EUR 1,849.92).

Election campaigns may be financed from public and private sources, including loans. The expenditure ceiling is set at EUR 0.40 per eligible voter in each constituency contested. Individual donations may not exceed EUR 19,700 per contestant, and cash donations are permitted up to EUR 50. In-kind contributions are allowed, and parties may allocate funds from their accounts up to the expenditure ceiling. The ERCA provides for partial reimbursement of campaign expenses from public funds.³⁶

Contestants must open a dedicated campaign account at least 45 days before election day and close it within 4 months after the elections, with any campaign loans repaid 30 days before closure. Within 15 days of closing the account, all contestants submit a financial report to the Agency for Public Legal Records (AJPES).

In accordance with ERCA, the Court of Audit (CoA), which oversees both political-party and campaign finance, audits the compliance of election campaign financing, including the collection and use of funds, as well as the correctness of campaign finance reporting.³⁷ The CoA audits the financial reports only of those campaign organizers eligible for reimbursement, namely those receiving at least two per cent of the vote nationwide, while all other contestants submit reports that are formally reviewed but not subject to full audit. The CoA audits campaign finance only for the official 30-day campaign period, as required by law, and does not review political spending outside this period. The law does not regulate or provide for effective oversight of expenses related to third-party campaigning or campaigning on social networks.³⁸ There are also no interim reporting requirements, at odds with a previous ODIHR recommendation.

The CoA informed the ODIHR NAM that it performs its responsibilities in line with the legislation and noted that campaign finance oversight is a legally mandated activity requiring significant time and resources. As such, this obligation may affect the CoA's capacity to carry out audits selected independently, in line with its broader public-sector audit mandate. The CoA reported being overstretched, with approximately 15 auditors working on political-finance oversight.³⁹ Audit findings must be published online within six months of account closure.⁴⁰ Majority of ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed trust in the CoA and its capacity to effectively oversee campaign finances, but opined that the enforcement mechanism is not efficient due to the long deadlines.

³⁶ Organizers whose lists won seats in the National Assembly are entitled to EUR 0.33 per vote obtained, not exceeding actual expenditures. Those whose lists received at least 2 per cent of votes nationwide or 6 per cent in a constituency are entitled to EUR 0.17 per vote.

³⁷ The CoA informed the ODIHR NAM that co-operation with AJPES functions effectively. Financial reports must include all collected funds, identification of individual donors whose contributions exceed the value of ten average monthly net salaries, information on loan-granting institutions, and a full breakdown of campaign expenditures, including in-kind contributions.

³⁸ According to the CoA, online advertising expenses may only be reviewed if contestants voluntarily include them in their campaign finance reports, as the CoA's mandate is limited to the official 30-day campaign period and requires a financial trail. Activities undertaken before the start of the official campaign period, including political advertising or self-promotion by parties or candidates, fall outside campaign finance oversight and are only reflected in annual party-finance reports.

³⁹ The CoA also noted that the potentially high number of electoral contestants may pose operational challenges.

⁴⁰ Any surplus remaining on the dedicated campaign account after all obligations are settled must be transferred to a humanitarian organization, in accordance with the Humanitarian Organizations Act. In addition, any prohibited donation, including contributions from legal entities, foreign sources or amounts exceeding legal limits, must likewise be transferred to a humanitarian organization within the legal deadline.

H. MEDIA

The media landscape remains diverse and pluralistic, encompassing a range of public and private television (TV) and radio stations, print outlets, and online media. TV continues to be the primary source of political information, with Radio and Television Corporation (RTV) of Slovenia as the public broadcaster and private networks such as *POP TV*, *Kanal A*, *Nova24TV*, and *Planet TV* among the channels with the highest viewership. Leading print outlets include *Delo*, *Dnevnik*, and *Večer*, while weeklies such as *Mladina*, *Reporter*, and *Demokracija* continue to shape political opinion.⁴¹ Internet penetration exceeds 90 per cent, and the influence of online news portals and social networks as sources of political information continues to grow.

Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted the media environment is polarized, and parts of the private media sector are perceived as either having clear editorial leanings or being closely aligned with particular political actors. The 2025 changes to the Mass Media Act introduced enhanced transparency requirements for media ownership and financing, reforms that several ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed as a step toward greater accountability. However, some interlocutors opined that concerns about political influence in the media sector persist.

In 2023, a major reform of RTV Slovenia aimed at strengthening editorial independence and reducing political influence was implemented.⁴² The reform replaced the former Programme and Supervisory Boards with a new Council of RTV Slovenia, in which the majority of members are appointed by civil-society organizations and employees rather than political bodies, and introduced a Managing Board to replace the Director-General. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors viewed these changes as enhancing institutional independence, while others expressed concern that some civil-society organizations involved in the appointment process are perceived as being close to the governing parties. According to RTV Slovenia representatives, the implementation of the reforms and ensuring sustainable funding remain ongoing concerns.

The freedoms of expression and of the press are protected by the Constitution, which also guarantees the right of access to public information. Defamation, insult, and slander remain criminal offences under the Criminal Code, contrary to international standards and prior ODIHR recommendations.⁴³ Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that while these provisions continue to be used in practice, courts tend to exercise greater restraint in recent years.

Coverage of elections in broadcast media is primarily regulated by the ERCA and the Radio and Television Slovenia Act, as well as by the Mass Media Act, which updated the regulatory framework for audiovisual and online media. Broadcasters are required to ensure balanced and impartial coverage and to provide contestants with equal treatment in terms of airtime and paid advertising. The public broadcaster RTV Slovenia allocates free airtime to political parties and candidates based on their results in the previous parliamentary and European Parliament elections, while non-parliamentary parties share one-third of the total time reserved for free presentations. Contestants may also purchase paid political advertisements in both public and private media, and each advertisement must clearly identify the sponsor or payer.

⁴¹ According to the [media registry of the Ministry for Culture](#), there are 2,625 registered media outlets in Slovenia.

⁴² The amendment to the RTV Slovenia Act was approved by parliament in July 2022, confirmed by referendum in November 2022, and entered into force in May 2023 following a Constitutional Court decision.

⁴³ The [2025 European Commission Rule of Law Report for Slovenia](#) notes persisting concerns about SLAPP suits and other forms of pressure against journalists, although it notes that the overall environment for media freedom has improved compared to previous years.

The Inspectorate for Culture and Media within the Ministry of Culture is responsible for media oversight. AKOS acts as the national regulatory authority for electronic communications and audiovisual media services, overseeing television and radio broadcasters. However, AKOS has no mandate to monitor media conduct during election campaigns. The Inspectorate for Culture and Media supervises compliance with provisions of the ERCA, the Mass Media Act, and the Audiovisual Media Services Act, but is severely understaffed, with only two inspectors, and does not conduct systematic monitoring, acting primarily on the basis of complaints. According to both institutions, complaints received by the wrong authority are routinely forwarded to the appropriate body.

I. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The mechanism for election dispute resolution is primarily regulated by the election law and provides several avenues for lodging election-related complaints and appeals. Complaints regarding candidate nomination and registration may be filed with the ConECs by candidates or representatives of candidate lists before the nomination deadline. ConEC decisions may be appealed to the Supreme Court within 48 hours of receipt, and the court must decide within the same timeframe. The SEC may, *ex officio*, annul or amend a ConEC decision on candidate nomination if it finds that the decision was taken in breach of the law.⁴⁴

Complaints concerning voting or counting irregularities at PBs and DECs may be submitted to the relevant ConEC within three days after election day, and must be decided upon within 48 hours. The ConEC may annul results in a polling station or district if irregularities that could affect the outcome are established. The SEC may also annul results in a constituency if it establishes irregularities in the work of a ConEC. While the legal framework provides multiple channels for electoral complaints, voters cannot challenge SEC or ConEC decisions on election results, as these are not considered administrative acts and therefore cannot be appealed to the administrative courts.

Complaints related to the voter register are first reviewed by administrative authorities and may be further appealed to the Administrative Court and, through an extraordinary remedy, to the Supreme Court. A constitutional complaint may be filed with the Constitutional Court against an individual act that has allegedly violated human rights or fundamental freedoms, once all other legal remedies have been exhausted. Such complaints must be lodged within 60 days of receipt of the contested act. The Constitutional Court is not bound by a deadline for rendering a decision.

ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed overall confidence in the effectiveness of the electoral dispute resolution processes and the impartiality of the courts. At the same time, some interlocutors noted broader public debates regarding delays and political contention in judicial and prosecutorial appointments. These concerns were not reported to have directly affected electoral dispute-resolution procedures.

J. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The Elections Act provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers. Organizations may apply for accreditation no later than ten days before election day. The law also guarantees the presence of representatives of candidate lists at the SEC and ConECs. Proxies of candidate lists may observe the work of DECs and PBs at all stages of election day proceedings, provided that their names are submitted to the relevant DEC no later than five days before election day.

⁴⁴ See also the [2025 European Commission Rule of Law Report for Slovenia](#).

No nationwide citizen election observation is conducted. However, several civil society organizations active in governance and human rights informed the ODIHR NAM that they follow specific aspects of the process, such as campaign conduct, transparency initiatives, risks of hate speech, and the position of minority communities. Civil society organizations met by the ODIHR NAM noted that the civic space has improved in recent years, though some ODIHR NAM interlocutors reported isolated instances of hostile rhetoric towards civic actors engaged in politically sensitive issues.⁴⁵

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high degree of confidence in the legal framework, the impartiality of the election administration, and its ability to organize elections professionally and transparently. At the same time, most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed a potential ODIHR observation activity and acknowledged that an external assessment could further improve the electoral process and its transparency. Specific aspects that could benefit from further assessment include implementation of the legislation, the conduct of the campaign, including online, the transparency and oversight of campaign finance, the media environment and its regulatory framework, the preparedness of state institutions to potential hybrid threats, and the participation of underrepresented groups. Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 22 March 2026 parliamentary elections.

⁴⁵ The [2025 European Commission Rule of Law Report for Slovenia](#) also notes continued improvements in the civic space and reduced pressure on civil society compared to previous years, while also highlighting instances of public hostility towards some organizations.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Ambassador Božena Forštnarič Boroje, Director General for Multilateral Co-operation
Tadeja Forštner Perklič, Head of the Department for International Organizations
Aleša Sovinc, Department for International Organizations

State Election Commission

Peter Golob, President
Maja Baškovič, Deputy of the President
Mitja Šuligoj, Member
Mitja Breznik, Member
Janez Pogorelec, Deputy Member
Igor Zorčič, Director of the Secretariat
Karolina Lužar, Deputy Director for Organization and Conduct of Elections
Lara Valič, Senior Adviser on public relations
Eva Lukančič, Adviser

Ministry of the Interior

Alenka Colja, Head of Population Registration and Public Documents Division
Matej Loparič, Population Registration and Public Documents Division
Irena Tiselj, Population Registration and Public Documents Division
Kristina Miklavčič Magajna, Head of Public Assembly and Weapons Division
Iva Knap, Public Assembly and Weapons Division

Ministry of Public Administration

Mateja Prešern, Director General of the Directorate for Local Self Government, NGOs, and Political System
Petra Zemljčič, Transparency, Integrity and Political System Division
Anja Hostnik, Transparency, Integrity, and Political System Division
Eva Černigoj, International Co-operation Service

Constitutional Court

Sebastian Nerad, Secretary General
Gregor Janžek, Advisor to the Constitutional Court
Vesna Božič Štajnpihler, Head of Analysis and International Cooperation Department

Court of Audit

Luka Ramovš, Supreme State Auditor
Maša Železnik, Deputy of the Supreme State Auditor

Human Rights Ombudsman

Miha Horvat, Deputy Ombudsman

Culture and Media Inspectorate

Aleksander Vidmar, Inspector and Senior Counselor
Skender Adem, Secretary at the Media Directorate

Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS)

Mark Pohar, Deputy Director

Martin Hari, Head of Digital Services Department

Tomaž Gorjanc, Head of Electronic Media Department

Anže Zorman, Head of Content Control Department

Mateja Grmek, Sector Secretary, Supervision of Compliance with the Audiovisual Media Services Act and the Mass Media Act

Government Communication Office

Andrej Savelli, Communication and Social Media Team

Public Broadcaster – RTV Slovenija

Polona Fijavž, Managing Editor of News and Current Affairs

Ksenja Tratnik, Managing Editor of New Media

Boštjan Anžin, Head of News Programs Integration

Political Parties⁴⁶

Lucija Tacer Perlin, MP, Freedom Movement

Matej Zupanc, Secretary General, Levica

Marko Gruden, Project Manager, New Slovenia – Christian Democrats

Blaž Pavlin, Organizational Secretary, New Slovenia – Christian Democrats

Aleš Hojs, Vice President, Slovenian Democratic Party

Luka Goršek, Vice President, Social Democrats

Živa Živković, Secretary General, Social Democrats

Media

Grega Repovž, Editor-in-Chief, Mladina

Civil Society

Filip Dobranič, Today Is a New Day Institute; Voice of the People Initiative

Barbara Rajgelj, Project Lead, Legal Network for the Protection of Democracy

Katarina Bervar Sternad, Director, Legal Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment

Sebastjan Kamenik, President, Slovenian Disability Rights Association

Sonja Pungertnik, President, Association of Societies of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia

Štefan Kušar, Secretary General, Association of Societies of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia

International Community⁴⁷

Representatives of diplomatic missions of France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Serbia, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

⁴⁶ The ODIHR NAM offered meetings to all parliamentary political parties.

⁴⁷ The ODIHR NAM extended an invitation to representations of all OSCE participating States resident in Slovenia.