



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

DENMARK

EARLY GENERAL ELECTIONS
24 March 2026

ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

4 - 6 March 2026



Warsaw
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ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report

I. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Danish authorities to observe the 24 March 2026 early general elections, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 4 to 6 March. The NAM included Lusine Badalyan, ODIHR Senior Election Adviser and Goran Petrov, ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the pre-electoral environment and preparations for the elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM recommends whether to deploy an ODIHR observation activity for the forthcoming elections and, if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state and local institutions and representatives of political parties, media, civil society, and the resident international community. A full list of meetings is annexed to this report.

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance and cooperation in organising the NAM. ODIHR would also like to thank its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with her constitutional powers, on 26 February, the Prime Minister called early general elections for 24 March. The elections take place in a political environment increasingly shaped by defence and security considerations related to the war in Ukraine and the broader Euro-Atlantic security context. The unicameral parliament comprises 175 deputies elected from Denmark and two each from the Faroe Islands and Greenland, constituent countries of the Kingdom of Denmark. In Denmark, 135 seats are distributed across ten multi-member constituencies. The remaining 40 compensatory seats are distributed to parties to increase the proportionality of the nationwide share of votes received.

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence that the legal framework functions well in practice, although several noted the absence of detailed regulation in areas such as campaign conduct and financing, dispute resolution, and media coverage. Since the 2022 general elections, only limited legislative changes have been introduced, largely technical in nature. ODIHR recommendations from its observation of the 2022 elections remain unaddressed and interlocutors indicated that these recommendations have not been systematically reviewed by the authorities or parliament.

The election administration is highly decentralized, with the Ministry of Interior and Health (MoIH) providing overall coordination, issuing regulations and guidance, and proposing electoral legislation, while municipal authorities administer elections at the district and local levels. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a very high level of trust in the professionalism and integrity of the election administration at all levels, noting that procedures have remained largely unchanged since the last elections. Some interlocutors raised issues regarding access of voters with disabilities to voting independently, including due to the complexity of ballots, lack of braille stencils or electronic ballot readers, and the inconsistent availability across municipalities of accessible polling stations.

Voter registration is automatic and based on the continuously updated civil population register maintained by municipalities. None of the ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the accuracy of the voter register; however, a Greenlandic political party noted the absence of official data on the number of residents of Greenland that are citizens of Inuit origin, which they indicated as limiting transparency. While some interlocutors expressed uncertainty about the timely delivery of polling cards required for voting following a postal service transition, several municipalities indicated that they intend to dedicate additional resources to facilitate the issuance of replacement cards if needed.

All eligible voters may stand as candidates either through political parties or independently. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors described the candidate registration process as inclusive. Political parties represented in the outgoing parliament are automatically eligible to nominate candidates, while non-parliamentary parties and candidates standing individually must collect voter declarations of support. Voters may support only one party and one independent candidate, contrary to international standards and good practice.

Women hold 44 per cent of seats in the outgoing parliament and 8 of 25 ministerial positions in the outgoing government, including the Prime Minister. Women comprise half of the regional councillors and some 37 per cent of municipal councillors. There are no gender quotas for candidate lists and parties generally do not have formal policies to ensure balanced representation, although parties informed the ODIHR NAM that they are incentivized to field many women candidates as this may increase their share of votes.

The official campaign period begins once the elections are called and campaigning is permitted up to and on election day except inside polling stations. The legal framework contains a few provisions regulating campaign activities. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors described the campaign environment as open and conducive to free campaigning. Parties plan extensive outreach through social networks, but the recent platform decisions banning paid political advertisements prompted parties to rely more on organic content. Some interlocutors noted that political discourse online can be more confrontational and that misleading or AI-generated content is increasingly present. Civil society representatives raised some instances of online harassment targeting women politicians and candidates belonging to minority groups. Authorities informed the ODIHR NAM that risks related to foreign interference and online manipulation are monitored through inter-institutional co-ordination and engagement with online platforms.

The legal framework for political party and campaign finance has undergone only limited substantive changes in recent election cycles, most notably the introduction in 2025 of a prohibition on foreign donations. Several ODIHR and GRECO recommendations on political finance remain unaddressed, and some interlocutors considered the framework under-regulated and insufficiently transparent. However, none of the political party representatives met by the ODIHR NAM saw a need to introduce stricter regulation, citing relatively low campaign spending and a generally high level of trust in the political system. Donors above a certain threshold must be disclosed; however, the amounts of donations are not required to be reported and there are no limits on donations or campaign expenditures. Parties must submit annual financial reports audited by private auditors within 12 months. No institution is mandated to oversee party and campaign finance.

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the independence and professionalism of the media, noting that the pluralistic media environment provides voters with a wide range of information sources. Broadcast media are dominated by the public Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and the commercial broadcaster TV2. Media coverage of the campaign is largely unregulated and left to the internal policies of media outlets, and although there are no legal requirements for equitable coverage, many interlocutors considered that the media generally strive to provide meaningful, impartial and

comprehensive coverage. DR and TV2 plan extensive election coverage across television, radio and online platforms, including several televised debates among party leaders. No public institution conducts systematic media monitoring, but interlocutors noted the presence of strong fact-checking initiatives addressing media content.

The legal framework contains limited provisions regulating electoral dispute resolution and prior ODIHR recommendations in this area remain unaddressed. In particular, there is no possibility to appeal administrative decisions during the electoral process, which is not fully in line with OSCE commitments. However, most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence that election authorities would effectively address any issues arising during the election period. After the elections, complaints can be addressed to the parliamentary committee that examines election materials and makes a recommendation to parliament on the validity of the elections. Interlocutors indicated that historically only a limited number of complaints have been submitted and that these have not affected the composition of parliament.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed strong confidence in the electoral process, highlighting the country's robust democratic tradition, the impartial and professional management of elections, and the stability of a legal framework broadly conducive to democratic elections. All interlocutors welcomed international observers, but most considered their presence for these elections unnecessary. The electoral framework has seen minimal changes in recent electoral cycles and remains largely unchanged since the last general elections for which ODIHR deployed an Election Expert Team. Prior ODIHR recommendations remain valid and to be considered by the election authorities and parliament.

Based on these findings, the ODIHR NAM does not recommend deploying an observation mission for the 24 March 2026 early general elections. ODIHR reiterates the validity of its previous recommendations and stands ready to support the authorities through other means, including legislative reviews.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Kingdom of Denmark is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. The *Folketing* (parliament) is a unicameral body comprising 179 deputies, including 175 elected from Denmark and two each from the Faroe Islands and Greenland, constituent countries of the Kingdom of Denmark.

The 2022 early general elections resulted in a total of twelve parties represented in the parliament.¹ A majority coalition government was formed in December 2022 between the Social Democrats, the Liberal Party and the newly established Moderates, marking a cross-bloc governing arrangement between traditional centre-left and centre-right parties. The parliamentary landscape also includes established opposition parties across the political spectrum, as well as newly formed political movements, reflecting a diverse party system.

¹ Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterne*) 50 members; Liberal Party (*Venstre*) 23; Moderates (*Moderaterne*) 16; Socialist People's Party (*Socialistisk Folkeparti*) 15; Liberal Alliance (*Liberal Alliance*) 14; Denmark Democrats (*Danmarksdemokraterne*) 14; Conservative People's Party (*Det Konservative Folkeparti*) 10; Red-Green Alliance (*Enhedslisten – De Rød-Grønne*) 9; Social Liberal Party (*Det Radikale Venstre*) 7; New Right (*Nye Borgerlige*) 6; Alternative (*Alternativet*) 6; Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) 5; Greenland: *Inuit Ataqatigiit* 1, *Siumut* 1; Faroe Islands: *Sambandsflokkurin* 1, *Javnaðarflokkurin* 1. During the parliamentary term, several MPs left their parties, particularly within the New Right and the Danish People's Party, resulting in a number of unaffiliated members and the dissolution of the New Right's parliamentary group.

Since the last election, political debate is increasingly focused on defence, primarily related to the war in Ukraine and the broader Euro-Atlantic security environment. Recent public statements by the President of the United States and other U.S. officials regarding the governance of Greenland prompted diplomatic engagement and further domestic discussion. In line with constitutional powers and the established political practice, on 26 February, the Prime Minister called early general elections for 24 March, seeking a renewed mandate.²

Seventy-nine of 179 MPs of the outgoing parliament are women (44 per cent). Women held 8 of 25 ministerial positions in the outgoing government, including the Prime Minister. According to Statistics Denmark, 50.2 and 35.9 per cent of all regional and municipal councillors that were elected in 2021 are women.³ In August 2025, the Danish government issued a formal apology for the practice of involuntary contraception of Greenlandic women and girls from the 1960s until the early 1990s, a step with political and symbolic implications for Denmark–Greenland relations within the Realm.

ODIHR previously deployed an Election Expert Team for the 2022 early parliamentary elections.⁴ The final report for the 2022 early parliamentary elections, published in April 2023, contains 14 recommendations for the authorities’ consideration to improve the electoral process and bring it closer in line with OSCE commitments.⁵

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 1953 Constitution, the 1987 Parliamentary Election Act (election law), last amended in December 2025, as well as the 2006 Grants to Political Parties Act (last amended in 2025), the 2017 Private Contributions to Political Parties and Publication of Political Parties Accounts Act (last amended in 2025), and the 1998 Media Liability Act (last amended in 2025). Elections of Greenland’s and the Faroe Islands’ MPs to the parliament are each conducted under a separate election law. The election law is complemented by several detailed regulations issued by the Ministry of Interior and Health (MoIH) including related to the ballot design, criteria for ballot validity, arrangements for postal voting, and the distribution of seats.⁶ Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the existing legal framework indicating that it functions well in practice and does not require significant changes, notwithstanding the lack of detailed regulation in some areas such as campaign conduct and financing, dispute resolution, and media coverage.

Since the 2022 general elections, only minor changes were introduced in the election law, mostly related to clarifying the language and harmonizing it with other legislation, and the sole change related to the election process was expanding the advance voting period to commence as soon as the elections are called.⁷ ODIHR NAM was informed that, prior to the calling of elections, parliament discussed possible adjustments to the seat allocation rules to prevent potential overrepresentation of the largest parties, but no agreement has been reached on a specific solution despite broad recognition of the issue.⁸

² Section 32(2) of the Constitution allows the monarch to issue writs for a new election at any time, in practice, this is done on the advice of the Prime Minister.

³ See Statistic Denmark’s [gender breakdown](#) for election officials and women in managerial positions.

⁴ See the previous [ODIHR election reports on Denmark](#).

⁵ 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”

⁶ See the [detailed list](#) of MoIH rules that apply to general elections.

⁷ The election law has also been amended related to MPs’ remuneration and pensions and authorising the Minister of Interior and Health to request Danish election authorities to assist the Ukrainian authorities in organizing their elections, upon their request.

⁸ In 2022, the Social Democrats received one more seat than their vote share would have implied under strict proportionality, due to the interaction of the seat allocation rules for constituency and compensatory seats.

ODIHR recommendations issued after the 2022 general elections remain unaddressed, including on introducing effective legal remedies and judicial review for electoral complaints, removing restrictions based on intellectual disabilities, allowing voters to support more than one party or candidate, clarifying ineligibility criteria based on prior convictions, making campaign materials accessible to people with disabilities, introducing limits on donations and expenditure, regulating third-party campaigning, improving annual financial reporting at all party levels, providing a standardized reporting template, and designating a dedicated oversight institution for party finances. The ODIHR NAM was informed that these recommendations have not been systematically considered by the election authorities or the parliament.

Contrary to OSCE commitments, there are no explicit provisions for citizen or international observation; however, members of the public may be present during voting and counting. In its 2025 guidelines for the election officials, the MoIH noted the established practice of welcoming all domestic and international observers and recommended that municipal election authorities do so in all elections.⁹

C. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The country is divided into three electoral regions, Metropolitan Copenhagen, Zealand–Southern Denmark, and Central and Northern Jutland, which are subdivided into ten multi-member constituencies (MMCs) and further into 92 nomination districts. Of the 175 seats allocated in Denmark, 135 are constituency seats and 40 are compensatory seats. The seats are reapportioned every five years using a formula reflecting totals of both the population and the number of registered voters to an equal extent and, to a lesser extent, the size of the geographical area.¹⁰

Constituency seats are allocated among parties and independent candidates in each MMC using the d’Hondt method, with no threshold (natural thresholds apply). A vote may be cast for a party or for an individual candidate in the party list, with candidate votes also counting for the political party. To qualify for compensatory seats, a party must either obtain at least two per cent of valid votes nationwide, win at least one constituency seat, or obtain in at least two of the three regions a number of votes corresponding to the average number of valid votes needed per constituency seat.¹¹ ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that this system facilitates entry of many smaller political parties in parliament.

Parties nominate candidates for each MMC, and ballots list all candidates nominated by political parties in that constituency. Parties determine the ordering on the ballot, which may follow party preference, alphabetical order, or be determined randomly. In addition, parties may also designate a candidate as the district candidate, who appears first on the ballot in that district. Parties may also establish ranked party lists across the constituency, under which party votes are allocated according to the party’s ranking using a quota system, giving the party strong influence over which candidates obtain seats. In practice, however, most parties do not use this mechanism, and candidates below the top (district) candidate instead compete primarily on the basis of their personal votes, with order on the ballot serving only as an indication. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors described the election system as complex, which may reduce the comprehension by voters as to how votes are translated into parliamentary seats.

⁹ See the MoIH [guidelines](#) for election officials.

¹⁰ In May 2025, one constituency seat from Nordjyllands Storkreds was shifted to Østjyllands Storkreds and one compensatory seat from Sealand–Southern Denmark to Metropolitan Copenhagen.

¹¹ Overall proportional representation is determined using the largest remainder method by comparing the number of seats a party would receive if the country were a single constituency with the number of constituency seats it won. Subsequent calculations determine the regions and MMCs in which compensatory seats are allocated.

D. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election administration is highly decentralised. At the national level, the MoIH has a coordination role, including by issuing regulations to supplement the election law, developing policies and providing legal and technical guidance to municipalities. The MoIH also proposes draft election legislation. The MoIH informed ODIHR NAM that there had been no substantive changes in the election procedures since the last elections. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a very high level of trust and confidence in the professionalism and integrity of the election administration at all levels.

The Election Board is an administrative body tasked primarily with registering political parties and maintaining a list of approved party names.¹² It also decides individual cases on eligibility of Danish citizens temporarily abroad whether to remain on the voter register when municipalities face difficulties determining whether applicants meet the legal criteria.

Elections are administered by municipal authorities, which include the 92 temporary district election committees (DECs) formed by the municipalities, and approximately 1,300 polling station boards. No authority maintains a gender breakdown of election management bodies on the level of the entire country.

DECs have between five and nine members elected by the municipal councils, proportionally to the political representation in the council, while mayors serve as DEC chairpersons *ex officio*. DECs are responsible for the procurement of ballots, collecting and reporting results and organising the recount of votes per party and the count of preferential votes for all candidates. Polling station election bodies, who administer elections on election day, include party-nominated members assisted by several additional volunteers selected by the municipality. Some municipalities also appoint secretarial staff from among municipal employees at polling stations to ensure full adherence to electoral procedures.

The MoIH issues written guidelines and an electoral timetable to support the administrators. Training of municipal and local election officials is organized by municipalities, including through training courses delivered by private providers. Municipal election staff also receive training on the use of the *VALG* digital election administration system. *VALG* is used for managing candidate lists and the creation of ballots, creation of voter list extracts and printing of invitation cards, as well as for the tabulation of the election results redundantly and in parallel with the official tabulation conducted by Statistics Denmark.¹³

In general, ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered election cyber security threats as persistent, but many noted that even critical breaches cannot jeopardize election results, given that voting is fully analog (pen and paper).

ODIHR NAM interlocutors described several measures intended to facilitate voting for persons with disabilities, including generally accessible polling places and specialized equipment such as magnifying glasses and electronic magnifiers and wider voting booths. By law, voters may receive assistance from a person of their choice when casting their vote. Voters with disabilities may apply to vote at a polling station of their choice within the constituency, by requesting re-allocation by 16 March. Some interlocutors noted that the requirement to apply in itself constitutes a barrier that could lead to

¹² The board is appointed by the MoIH and chaired by a judge, and it operates independently in its decisions, while the ministry provides administrative support.

¹³ *VALG* is a digital election administration system developed for the use of election administrators. First deployed during the 2025 local and regional elections, it will replace the old system and be used for the first time in parliamentary elections. According to ODIHR NAM interlocutors, it is perceived as user-friendly by election administrators.

abstentions. Interlocutors also indicated that the accessibility information is not systematically provided across municipalities, which may further limit voters' ability to identify suitable polling locations. Voters with visual impairments may experience difficulties due to the complexity of the ballot, and some cannot vote independently at all, given the absence of braille stencils or other suitable equipment such as electronic ballot readers.

There are limited voter information campaigns on the national level and no voter information campaigns in the media.¹⁴ There are no requirements for election information materials or ballots to be produced in any minority languages and all election information is available only in Danish.

E. VOTER REGISTRATION

Danish citizens who are at least 18 years of age and registered as residents are entitled to vote. Certain citizens temporarily residing abroad remain eligible to vote.¹⁵ By law, persons under full guardianship are disenfranchised.¹⁶ It is estimated that more than ten per cent of the resident population does not have citizenship, and is therefore ineligible to vote in general elections.¹⁷

Voter registration is automatic, and data is extracted from the citizen population register that is continuously updated by municipalities.¹⁸ Voters who move to another municipality after 9 March will remain on the register according to their prior residence. If any errors are found, they can be corrected at any time, including on election day.

Voters may choose to vote in advance at any municipality in the country, starting from calling election through 20 March.¹⁹ Advance voting is also organised at diplomatic missions, military bases, hospitals, prisons, retirement homes and housing facilities for people with disabilities. Persons with disabilities may apply to vote at home by 12 March, or a later date determined by the municipality.

The electoral register is not publicly available for scrutiny by election stakeholders. None of the ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the voter registration process or the accuracy of the voter register in Denmark. However, a representative of a Greenlandic political party noted that the absence of official data on the number of residents of Greenland that are of Inuit origin, reduces transparency of the voter register.

Five days before elections, at the latest, all voters should receive mailed polling cards which include their voter registration information and the address of their polling station. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a level of uncertainty if the cards would be delivered on time, given the recent change from a state-owned to a privately held delivery service. If the voter does not receive the polling card, it can still be printed in the polling station on election day and some municipalities intend to dedicate additional resources to facilitate the issuance of replacement cards if needed.

¹⁴ The parliament maintains an informative website that includes accessibility options.

¹⁵ Including state employees posted abroad, employees of Danish companies working abroad, those working in international organizations or providing development assistance, students studying abroad, persons abroad for health reasons, and citizens who intend to reside abroad for no longer than two years. Citizens who return to Denmark and register their residence in the civil population register up to seven days before election day are added to the voter register.

¹⁶ Article 29 of the Constitution provides that persons deprived of their legal capacity do not have the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Under the Guardianship Act, courts may impose different forms of guardianship; only persons fully deprived of legal capacity lose their voting rights. According to government data, approximately 2,000 persons are subject to full deprivation of legal capacity.

¹⁷ See, for example, a 2023 research [paper](#) as well the [data](#) from Statistics Denmark.

¹⁸ Some 4.3 million voters are registered for these elections.

¹⁹ According to the MoIH, some eight to ten per cent of voters typically vote in advance.

F. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

All eligible voters can stand as candidates nominated either by a political party or running independently. Political parties represented in the outgoing parliament are automatically eligible to nominate candidates. Non-parliamentary parties can participate in elections if they gather 20,182 voter declarations of support, which are valid for 18 months. Individual candidates registering at the level of a nomination district must submit a minimum of 150 and maximum of 200 declarations.²⁰ Contrary to international standards and good practice, voters can sign in support of only one party and one independent candidate.²¹ All ODIHR NAM interlocutors described the candidate registration as inclusive.

For these elections, a total of 12 parties are eligible to be included in the ballot, 11 parliamentary and 1 extra-parliamentary party.²² All but one party informed the ODIHR NAM that candidate lists are compiled by their regional or local branches rather than decided centrally. There are no gender quota requirements, and parties generally do not have formal policies to ensure diverse representation, including equal representation of women candidates. However, all noted that parties are incentivized to field more women candidates as that increases parties' share of votes. Some indicated that they would include persons with disabilities and national minorities, but no specific policies exist in this regard. Some parties described strong efforts to include a high number of young candidates.

Parties have until 13 March to submit candidate lists, to the National Social Appeals Board (NSAB), an agency under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. The NSAB determines the eligibility of all candidates and forwards the lists to the appropriate DEC as soon as possible; if it identifies any errors, the parties are given 12 hours to correct the lists. There are no mechanisms for appealing the decisions of the Electoral Board in terms of eligibility of parties or of the NSAB for denying approval of specific lists of candidates at the time of elections. A complaint to the parliament may be submitted only after elections were concluded.

G. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The official campaign period begins once the elections are called, and campaigning is permitted up to and on election day except inside polling stations. The legal framework contains very few regulations on campaigning, mainly provisions governing the format and placement of outdoor campaign posters and a ban on paid political advertising on broadcast media. While the campaign is relatively short, ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not see it as problematic, and party representatives noted that it is sufficient to reach voters. Overall, interlocutors described the campaign environment as conducive to free campaigning and effective outreach to voters.

The campaign focuses primarily on defence and security issues, as well as domestic policy matters including welfare and public services, retirement and pension policy, the cost of living, and environmental concerns. One party also highlighted immigration levels as a key campaign issue. ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that parties engage in a range of campaign activities, including meetings with voters and outreach through social networks, most notably Facebook and TikTok. However, interlocutors indicated that recent decisions by major online platforms banning paid political advertising have considerably limited the use of targeted and boosted online advertisements. As a result, parties

²⁰ In Greenland, the number of required declarations is at least 100, and in Faroes Islands, at least 150.

²¹ Paragraph 96 of the [2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, Second Edition](#), recommends that “[i]t should be possible to support the registration of more than one party, and legislation should not limit a citizen or other individual to signing a supporting list for only one party”.

²² In Greenland and Faroe Islands, the parties represented in the respective parliaments are eligible to run.

reported adapting their campaigns by relying more on the production of organic content for online campaigning.

Regulation of online campaigning is shaped primarily by EU-level regulation.²³ Authorities informed the ODIHR NAM that they maintain communication channels with major online platforms to escalate cases involving potentially unlawful and harmful online content.

Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that political discourse online is more confrontational than in traditional media or in person, with many posts attracting hostile comments. Some noted that misleading content appears continuously rather than only during elections. Many also noted the growing presence of AI-generated content, particularly targeting sensitive topics such as immigration. Civil society representatives reported that online harassment remains a concern, particularly targeting women politicians through personal or appearance-related attacks, while politicians belonging to ethnic or sexual minorities are particularly exposed to hostile rhetoric.

An Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Foreign Interference coordinates the response of institutions to attempts to influence elections and institutions more broadly. A threat assessment conducted ahead of the elections indicated overall increased risk, including attempts to influence public debate on broader geopolitical developments. Authorities conduct preventive outreach to political parties, candidates, and media organizations, including guidance on identifying disinformation and strengthening digital security. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated that the overall information environment remains resilient due to high levels of media literacy, although misleading narratives and conspiracy-type content have become increasingly prominent. No specific interference efforts linked to these elections were identified and disclosed thus far.

H. POLITICAL AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The legal framework for the financing of political parties includes the 2006 Grants to Political Parties Act and the 2017 Private Contributions to Political Parties and Publication of Political Parties Accounts Act, both last amended in June 2025. However, only a few substantive changes to political party financing were introduced during the last two election cycles. Most notably, in 2025 a full prohibition on donations from foreign citizens not residing in Denmark and foreign entities not registered in the country was introduced.

The ODIHR recommendations following the 2022 general elections related to political and campaign finance remain unaddressed (see also *Legal Background*). Several prior recommendations issued by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) also remain unimplemented.²⁴ Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed the view that the party and campaign financing is under-regulated and non-transparent. However, none of the political party representatives met by the ODIHR NAM saw a need to introduce additional regulation or substantial reforms to the existing party and campaign finance framework, citing relatively low campaign spending and a generally high level of trust in political actors and institutions.

²³ Including the Digital Services Act and the Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising.

²⁴ In its [2022 Second Addendum to the Second Compliance Report on Denmark](#), GRECO noted that of its nine recommendations on transparency of political party funding, four of its prior recommendations were implemented or dealt with, two were partially implemented, and three are yet to be addressed.

Political parties predominantly rely on public funding to finance their political activities and election campaigns.²⁵ The political parties that the ODIHR NAM met with were generally satisfied with the amount of public funding they receive. The rules on eligibility for public funding were adjusted in 2023. While these changes did not affect parliamentary parties, they raised the level of electoral support required for extra-parliamentary parties to qualify for public funding.²⁶ Public subsidies are distributed per vote received.²⁷

The law does not prescribe limits on donations or campaign expenditures. Political parties must disclose the identities of donors who cumulatively contribute more than DKK 25,700 (approximately EUR 3,440), but the law does not require the disclosure of donation amounts. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that transparency requirements can be circumvented by channelling contributions through intermediary organisations, whereby the organisation is reported as the donor while the identities of the original contributors remain undisclosed.

Political parties must submit annual financial reports to the parliament within 12 months after the end of the reporting year. Parties are not required to report campaign expenditures. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that this does not fully ensure the intended level of transparency.²⁸ While the reports are audited by a certified independent auditor selected by the party, despite a prior ODIHR recommendation, no institution is responsible for overseeing party and campaign finance.

I. MEDIA

The media environment is pluralistic and provides voters with a wide range of information sources. Broadcast media are dominated by the public Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and the commercial broadcaster TV2, which operate several national and regional television and radio channels.

Media coverage of the campaign is largely unregulated and left to the internal policies of media outlets. There are no legal requirements for equitable coverage; however, many ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered that the media generally strive to provide meaningful, impartial and comprehensive coverage. The Radio and Television Broadcasting Act bans political advertising in news and current affairs programmes and prohibits television ads containing political messages from the calling of elections until the close of polls. Political advertising in newspapers and online media is unregulated and therefore permitted.

The ODIHR NAM was informed that DR and TV2 plan extensive coverage of the election campaign across television, radio and online platforms. They jointly hosted a debate among all party leaders on 26 February, the day the elections were called. According to DR, its plans include a debate among party leaders shortly before election day, another debate with prospective candidates for prime minister, a final debate on election night, and a series of individual interviews with all party leaders. Election-related television programmes are generally accessible to persons with hearing impairments through

²⁵ Parliamentary groups in the parliament also receive separate public funding to support their parliamentary activities, which is regulated independently from the system of subsidies for political parties and these resources should not be used for other purposes including the electoral campaign.

²⁶ Under the revised framework, political parties are eligible for public funding if they are represented in the parliament or obtain electoral support corresponding to 3.2 parliamentary seats at general elections, 2 seats in regional elections, or 3 seats in municipal elections. Independent candidates who did not get elected qualify if they receive at least 80 per cent of average votes needed to be elected.

²⁷ The annual subsidy in 2026 for each vote received is DKK 40.25 (approx. 5.40 EUR). Parties also receive subsidies from local governments in relation to votes won in regional and local elections.

²⁸ The report must contain the total amounts received by type of donations: public funding, membership fees, donations from private individuals, donations from all organizations (including companies, trade unions, etc), and income from interests.

closed captioning, while only some live content includes sign-language interpretation. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the independence and professionalism of the public broadcaster and other media outlets.²⁹

The 1998 Media Liability Act establishes that the content and conduct of mass media must conform to standards of press ethics. Compliance is overseen by the independent Press Council, which adjudicates media-related complaints with final and binding decisions.³⁰ Membership in the Council is mandatory for media receiving public funding; licensed broadcast media and print media publishing at least two issues per year also fall within its jurisdiction.³¹ According to ODIHR NAM interlocutors, no public institution conducts media monitoring; however, there are strong fact-checking initiatives addressing media content.

J. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The election law contains a limited number of provisions that regulate electoral dispute resolution despite a previous ODIHR recommendation and at odds with the OSCE commitments. There is a general lack of possibilities to appeal administrative decisions before elections. Despite that, ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a general confidence that election authorities will effectively address any issues that arise during the entire election period without the need for a formal complaints mechanism.

After general elections, a temporary committee is established by the parliament to adjudicate electoral complaints and scrutinize the election material before making a recommendation to the parliament regarding the validity of the elections. Formal complaints may be submitted to the MoIH up to one week after the election day, after which the MoIH forwards them to the parliament's election committee along with its opinion on each matter. The ODIHR NAM was informed that, historically, this committee received and considered only a limited number of complaints and that these decisions did not impact the election results and the composition of parliament.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed strong confidence in the electoral process, highlighting the country's robust democratic tradition, the impartial and professional management of elections, and the stability of a legal framework broadly conducive to democratic elections. All interlocutors welcomed international observers, but most considered their presence for these elections unnecessary. The electoral framework has seen minimal changes in recent electoral cycles and remains largely unchanged since the 2022 general elections. Prior ODIHR recommendations remain valid and to be considered by the election authorities and parliament.

Based on these findings, the ODIHR NAM does not recommend deploying an observation mission for the 24 March 2026 early general elections. ODIHR reiterates the validity of its previous recommendations and stands ready to support the authorities through other means, including legislative reviews.

²⁹ A representative of the Danish People's Party criticized a TV2 documentary series following the Minister of Foreign Affairs which was broadcasted shortly before the elections were called, arguing that its timing could influence voters. The broadcaster and producers rejected the criticism, stating that the documentary had been commissioned and scheduled well before the elections were announced.

³⁰ The Press Council informed the ODIHR NAM that, at the time of the visit, it had not received any complaints related to the elections. In 2025, the Council recorded a total of 310 complaints.

³¹ Internet-based media, including online editions of newspapers or broadcasters, may voluntarily register with the Council.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Institutions

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Louise Holmsgaard, Deputy Head of Department of European Neighbourhood
Lars von Spreckelsen-Syberg, Deputy Head of Department of European Neighbourhood
Jesper Leisner, Head of Section, Department of European Neighbourhood
Viktoria Kulmann Juul-Jensen, Student Assistant

Ministry of the Interior and Health

Christine Boeskov, Chief Election Officer
Maria Pasmiyah Hansen Lolle, Election Officer

Agency for Digital Government

Christina Toft Michelsen, Head of the Division for Digital Regulation and Supervision
Jette Plenge Jakobsen, Chief Adviser
Marie Blønd, Special Adviser

Foreign Interference Task-force

Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Preparedness and Resilience and the Danish Resilience Agency

Municipal IT Community (KOMBIT (Common Municipal IT Procurement))

Mikkel Tang Hedegaard, Director of Citizen Services, Climate and Communications
Sanne Klietsch, Head of Citizen Services
Anja Lønbo, Project Coordinator
Søren Stauning, Product Manager, Elections

Statistics Denmark

Annemette Lindhardt Olsen, Senior Advisor

The Electoral Examination Committee

Peter Juel Jensen, MP, Chairperson
Kirsten Normann Andersen, MP, Deputy Chairperson
Niels Henrik Larsen, Deputy Director of Administration, Department of Parliament
Maiken Bork Clausen, Senior Adviser to the Legal Service of the parliament

The Financial Affairs Office of the Parliament

Karsten Lund Jørgensen, Head of Department
Peter Egemose Grib, Senior Adviser

Municipality of Copenhagen

Anita Okkels Birk Thomsen, Head of Office, Management Secretariat and Elections
Mie Kristiansen Andersen, Election Consultant, Management Secretariat and Elections

Political Party Representatives

Søren Bjarke Laugesen, Head of Organisation, Conservative People's Party
Claus Bakkenløkken Bunk, Deputy Head of Organisation, Conservative People's Party

Mark Thorsen, Head of Strategy, Danish Democrats
Kenneth Kristensen Berth, Head of Secretariat, Danish People's Party
Kirsten Normann Andersen, MP, Green Left
Peter Juel Jensen, MP, Liberal Party
Pele Broberg, Chairperson, *Naleraq* Party
Lasse Ryberg, General Secretary, Social Democratic Party

Media Representatives

Press Council

Lisbeth Feldvoss, Head of Secretariat
Latifa Mahdaoni, Senior Adviser

Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR)

Kirsten Marie Svendsen, Head of News

Civil Society Representatives

Danish Institute for Human Rights

Tine Birkelund Thomsen, Department Director, Equal Treatment
Hans Bruun Dabelsteen, Chief Advisor, Equal Treatment

Disabled People's Organizations Denmark

Thorkild Olesen, Chairperson

KVINFO

Henriette Laursen, Executive Director
Mai Rasmussen, Head of Communications

TjekDet

Thomas Hedin, Editor in Chief

Transparency International Denmark

Jesper Olsen, Chairperson of the Board

International Community³²

Representatives of diplomatic missions of Germany, Greece, Moldova, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

³² The ODIHR NAM extended an invitation to representations of all OSCE participating States resident in Denmark.