



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

# REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 22 MARCH 2026

### ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|              |                                                             |           |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>I.</b>    | <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>                              | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>II.</b>   | <b>INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>               | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>III.</b>  | <b>BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT .....</b>               | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>IV.</b>   | <b>LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM.....</b>            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>V.</b>    | <b>ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.....</b>                         | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>VI.</b>   | <b>VOTER REGISTRATION .....</b>                             | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>VII.</b>  | <b>VOTING METHODS.....</b>                                  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>VIII.</b> | <b>CANDIDATE REGISTRATION .....</b>                         | <b>10</b> |
| <b>IX.</b>   | <b>ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.....</b>                              | <b>12</b> |
| <b>A.</b>    | <b>ONLINE CAMPAIGN .....</b>                                | <b>13</b> |
| <b>X.</b>    | <b>CAMPAIGN FINANCE.....</b>                                | <b>16</b> |
| <b>A.</b>    | <b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE .....</b>                         | <b>16</b> |
| <b>B.</b>    | <b>DISCLOSURE AND OVERSIGHT .....</b>                       | <b>17</b> |
| <b>XI.</b>   | <b>MEDIA .....</b>                                          | <b>18</b> |
| <b>A.</b>    | <b>MEDIA ENVIRONMENT .....</b>                              | <b>18</b> |
| <b>B.</b>    | <b>LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.....</b>                  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>C.</b>    | <b>MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN .....</b>                 | <b>21</b> |
| <b>XII.</b>  | <b>ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION .....</b>                    | <b>22</b> |
| <b>XIII.</b> | <b>CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION .....</b> | <b>23</b> |
| <b>XIV.</b>  | <b>ELECTION DAY.....</b>                                    | <b>24</b> |
| <b>XV.</b>   | <b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>                                | <b>25</b> |
| <b>A.</b>    | <b>PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>                       | <b>25</b> |
| <b>B.</b>    | <b>OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>                           | <b>26</b> |
|              | <b>ANNEX I: FINAL ELECTION RESULTS .....</b>                | <b>28</b> |
|              | <b>ABOUT ODIHR .....</b>                                    | <b>29</b> |

**SLOVENIA**  
**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**  
**22 March 2026**

**ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report<sup>1</sup>**

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Slovenia, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 22 March 2026 parliamentary elections. The ODIHR EAM assessed the compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations, and standards for democratic elections, as well as with national legislation.

The elections unfolded in a pluralistic environment, with fundamental freedoms respected and an overall high public trust in the process and public institutions, but they took place against a backdrop of persisting political polarization and were marked by developments related to alleged illicit recordings and investigations into possible electoral interference with foreign involvement. Voters were offered a spectrum of distinct political alternatives and benefited from diverse sources of information, enabling an informed choice.

The electoral legal framework is comprehensive and generally provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections. Recent reforms strengthened several aspects of media regulation and removed restrictions on voting rights of persons under guardianship, in line with past ODIHR recommendations. At the same time, a number of long-standing ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including the criminalization of defamation, gaps in campaign finance regulation and transparency, and shortcomings in the electoral dispute resolution framework.

The 88 members of the National Assembly are elected for a four-year term under a proportional representation system with a four per cent threshold. Two additional members, representing the Hungarian and Italian national communities, are elected in separate constituencies under a majoritarian system. The absence of periodic review requirements, at odds with electoral good practice, has contributed to considerable differences in the size of electoral districts, which were last redrawn before the 2022 parliamentary elections.

Despite commitments to gender equality and the presence of women in some high-level state roles, women's overall political participation and representation remain below parity, particularly in some elected and appointed positions and party leadership. During the campaign, women were less visible in leadership roles, and those active in public life, including journalists, faced gender-based stereotyping, sexism, and harassment, including online. Broader structural barriers, including the challenges of reconciling political and public engagement with family and care responsibilities, as well as reported gaps in support mechanisms, continue to constrain women's equal and effective participation in political and public life. Positively, following a previous ODIHR recommendation, improvements were noted in the collection and publication of gender-disaggregated data.

The election administration, comprising four tiers of election bodies led by the State Election Commission (SEC), enjoyed high stakeholder confidence in its integrity and professionalism. However, certain aspects of its work raised questions, including inconsistent or delayed publication of some acts and session minutes, and the frequent use of correspondence sessions, which may reduce transparency and are meant to remain exceptional. Moreover, voter education was limited, which may

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<sup>1</sup> The English version of this report is the only official document. An unofficial translation is available in Slovenian.

have a particularly negative effect on the informed electoral participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Voter registration is passive and based on the population register, with separate lists for voters in-country, abroad, and for members of the two national communities, and opportunities for voters to verify and correct their records. Some 1.7 million voters were registered, and stakeholders had confidence in the integrity and accuracy of the voter lists.

A variety of voting methods is provided to meet the needs of different voter groups and enhance access to the process. Among other methods, early voting was conducted efficiently; however, the establishment of some polling stations outside the prescribed electoral districts gave rise to controversy and highlighted the need to review the framework and its implementation to ensure coherence between legal provisions and administrative practice.

Candidate lists could be put forward by political parties and groups of voters, subject to signature support requirements. The inclusive registration process resulted in 1,179 candidates from 17 political parties, including 519 women (44 per cent), some standing in more than one district. All lists met and exceeded the obligation to have no less than 35 per cent of women and men. Six candidates representing the Hungarian and Italian national communities, all men, were also registered. One coalition unsuccessfully challenged its non-registration before the Supreme Court.

The campaign was dynamic, with contestants prioritizing direct voter contact but also leveraging media debates, print materials, podcasts, and social media for wider outreach, although concerns were raised about social media increasingly serving as a conduit for polarizing and aggressive rhetoric. Political debate was largely substantive, with social welfare and economic issues particularly prominent, but with limited attention to issues of equality and inclusion. The law does not regulate the involvement of public officials in campaigning, and in practice, instances of overlap between official functions and campaigning were observed, blurring the distinction for voters between governance and party activities.

Alertness to risks related to the online domain increased as elections neared, leading to the activation of national co-ordination mechanisms and the establishment of formats for engagement with major social media platforms. Digital resilience frameworks were tested by a range of challenges, including the spread of misleading content and incidents involving contestants' social media profiles, culminating in the dissemination of allegedly illicit audio and video recordings involving public figures through anonymous online sources, followed by investigations into possible foreign involvement. These developments brought into focus questions as to whether digital protective mechanisms were deployed in a timely manner, the level of institutional and public awareness of available tools, and overall preparedness to address digital threats.

The campaign finance framework is comprehensive overall and benefits from oversight by the highly regarded and trusted Court of Audit, despite its continued operation under resource constraints. At the same time, campaign finance reforms appear to receive limited policy prioritization, with several long-standing gaps remaining unaddressed, including the absence of provisions on interim reporting, pre-campaign and third-party spending, instances of which were noted in these elections. These shortcomings limit transparency and accountability and constrain the effectiveness of oversight.

The media environment is diverse and pluralistic, underpinned by legislation that had been strengthened by recent reforms, including changes to the governance of the public broadcaster, reinforcing its editorial independence, media ownership transparency rules, and protection against strategic litigation. The media provided contestants with broad opportunities to present their views, contributing to voters' ability to make an informed choice. At the same time, concerns persisted

regarding external influence in the media sector, limited transparency in tracing ultimate beneficiaries of media ownership, and reports of journalist harassment. In addition, ambiguities in media oversight arrangements during elections affect their effectiveness.

The participation of voters with disabilities has been supported by several measures, including a high level of compliance of polling locations with physical accessibility requirements and the provision of assistive tools. However, insufficient attention was given to the provision of accessible information and targeted voter education, and support mechanisms provided did not enable fully independent use for blind voters. Limited attention by political parties to accessible communication, together with the absence of clear accessibility benchmarks for broadcasters, further constrained access to information, affecting this group's full and informed participation.

National minority rights provide for parliamentary and local representation of the Italian and Hungarian communities, and local-level representation of the Roma community. Electoral participation of Roma as candidates and voters remained limited. Broader concerns related to social inclusion and public attitudes towards the community continued to affect its effective participation.

The election dispute resolution framework provides limited grounds for lodging complaints and appeals, namely based on voter and candidate registration and voting irregularities. A limited number of complaints were filed with the election administration, courts, and oversight bodies, including regarding candidate registration, early voting, and alleged election day irregularities, and none were upheld. Key shortcomings persist in regulations pertaining to complaints and appeals, including a lack of clarity regarding procedures for appealing election results, the absence of expedited deadlines for administrative dispute proceedings, and the role of the parliament in the validation of its own mandates remains a concern.

The law provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers and for the presence of candidate list representatives and proxies in electoral bodies and polling stations, respectively. While a limited number of international observers were present, no nationwide citizen election observation was conducted, reportedly due to overall trust in the electoral process.

In line with the ODIHR methodology, the EAM did not conduct a comprehensive and systematic observation of electoral proceedings but visited a limited number of polling stations. Election day proceedings observed were transparent and generally well-organized. However, instances of inconsistent application of procedures were noted, including with regard to the protection of personal data, distinction between assisted and family voting, and elements of the counting and tabulation process, pointing to possible gaps in training. Preliminary and final results were published within legal deadlines and in a detailed manner, contributing to the transparency of the process.

This report offers recommendations to support efforts to bring elections in Slovenia fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations focus on introducing periodic reviews of electoral district boundaries, clarifying the framework for early voting arrangements, strengthening the separation between public office and campaigning, enhancing transparency and accountability of campaign finance, and providing inclusive and accessible voter education for diverse groups. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities with addressing the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

## II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Slovenia, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) from 4 to 26 March 2026.<sup>2</sup> The ODIHR EAM was led by Helga Stevens and consisted of four experts, all of them women, drawn from four OSCE participating States. The EAM was based in Ljubljana and visited the municipalities of Domžale, Grosuplje, Litija, and Škofja Loka.

The ODIHR EAM assessed compliance of the elections with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as with national legislation. In line with ODIHR's methodology, the EAM did not undertake a systematic or comprehensive observation of election day proceedings, but visited a limited number of polling stations.

The ODIHR EAM wishes to thank the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) and the State Election Commission (SEC) for their co-operation and assistance. The ODIHR EAM also expresses its appreciation to other state institutions, the judiciary, election commissions, political parties, candidates, the media, civil society, academia, the resident diplomatic community, and other interlocutors for sharing their views.

## III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Slovenia is a parliamentary republic with legislative authority vested in a parliament, the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*), consisting of 90 members, and a 40-member National Council which acts as an upper chamber and is elected indirectly for a five-year term from among representatives of social, economic, professional, and local interest groups.<sup>3</sup> Executive power is exercised by the government headed by a prime minister. The president is directly elected for a five-year term. The elections to the National Assembly were called by President Nataša Pirc Musar on 6 January 2026.

The political environment remained highly polarized after the 2022 elections.<sup>4</sup> The governing coalition faced public and political debate regarding its performance and stability, including frequent ministerial turnover, internal disagreements, and several political controversies. In the period leading up to the 2026 elections, political discourse focused on expectations for the government to deliver on its programmatic commitments and address long-standing socio-economic issues, including health care, housing, and the rising cost of living.

National minority rights in Slovenia include specific political participation guarantees for the Hungarian and Italian national communities, including representation in the National Assembly and at the local level. The Roma community is also constitutionally recognized, with local representation

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<sup>2</sup> See previous [ODIHR election reports on the Republic of Slovenia](#).

<sup>3</sup> The National Council does not itself adopt legislation but exercises a corrective and oversight function vis-à-vis the National Assembly, including through the right of legislative initiative, the ability to request reconsideration of adopted acts, and the authority to initiate constitutional review procedures.

<sup>4</sup> Following the 2022 parliamentary elections, the Freedom Movement (*Gibanje Svoboda*, GS; 41 mandates), the Social Democrats (SD; 7 mandates), and The Left (*Levica*; 5 mandates) formed a center-left coalition government, with Robert Golob (GS) as Prime Minister. Two other parties, the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS; 27 mandates), the governing party prior to the elections, and New Slovenia – Christian Democrats (NSi; 8 mandates), also entered parliament as opposition.

rights.<sup>5</sup> Other ethnic groups are not afforded specific political representation rights.<sup>6</sup> In October 2025, the killing of a man in Novo Mesto, reportedly involving a Roma individual who remained in detention at the time of the elections, prompted strong public and political reactions. Subsequently, the National Assembly adopted the Act on Urgent Measures to Ensure Public Security (so-called Šutar's Law). Certain provisions of this law raised concern among some national and international bodies and were seen by Roma organizations as contributing to further stigmatization and negative perceptions of the community.<sup>7</sup>

Despite a commitment to gender equality at legislative and policy levels, women's political participation and representation remain below parity.<sup>8</sup> Women held 33 of 90 seats (36.7 per cent) in the outgoing parliament and 35 per cent of local council mandates, but were less represented among mayors (11 per cent) and in the National Council (17.5 per cent). Women were also appointed to approximately one-third of ministerial and state secretary positions in the outgoing government.<sup>9</sup> Only two parties in these elections, the Left and the Spring (*Vesna*) that ran in a coalition, were co-led by women, and only a few parties met by the ODIHR EAM mentioned internal policies and efforts aimed at promoting gender equality in party structures and leadership. At the same time, several prominent state leadership positions were held by women.<sup>10</sup> Women's equal participation continues to be constrained by stereotypical perceptions of gender roles, tendencies to relegate women to assistive functions, and insufficient support for balancing public engagement with family and care responsibilities.

#### IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are governed by the 1991 Constitution (last amended in 2025), the 2006 National Assembly Election Act (hereinafter Election Act, last amended in 2024), the 2007 Elections and Referendum Campaign Act (ERCA, last amended in 2013), the 1992 Act Establishing Constituencies for the Elections of Deputies of the National Assembly (last amended in 2021), the 1994 Political Parties Act (PPA, last amended in 2023), the 2013 Voting Rights Register Act (last amended in 2024), and other relevant legislation, including legislation governing the media.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> According to the Government Office for National Minorities, the Roma community is estimated at between 7,000 and 12,000 persons, representing some 0.5 per cent of the overall population.

<sup>6</sup> According to the 2002 census, the last to include ethnicity data, the population consists of ethnic Slovenians (83 per cent), Serbs (1.98 per cent), Croats (1.81 per cent), Bosnians (1.1 per cent), Hungarians (0.32 per cent), Roma (0.17 per cent) and Italians (0.11 per cent). The May 2024 [Act on the Exercise of Cultural Rights of the National Communities of the Former Yugoslavia](#) recognized the right of these communities to develop their identity, preserve culture and cultural heritage, as well as the right to use their mother tongue and alphabet, including in media content they create.

<sup>7</sup> On 13 February 2026, the Human Rights Ombudsperson [requested](#) Constitutional Court review of Article 8 of the Act; the review was pending as of the time of writing. Earlier, the European Commission was [reported](#) to have called on Slovenia "to ensure that the enforcement of this law does not disproportionately affect any community, nor create new vulnerabilities for those already at risk". European Roma organizations, including the [Roma Foundation for Europe](#) and [ERGO Network](#), and local Roma associations [expressed](#) concerns about the law's effects.

<sup>8</sup> The [National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030](#) includes, among others, measures to ensure gender equality, eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, promote balanced representation, and eliminate gender stereotypes and sexism. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality [2025 Gender Equality Index](#), Slovenia ranked 18<sup>th</sup>, below the EU average, while demonstrating the weakest performance in the domain of "power". The [2024 CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 40](#) recommends parity between women and men in decision-making systems.

<sup>9</sup> Women accounted for 7 of 21 ministers (33.3 per cent) and 17 of 42 state secretaries (40 per cent).

<sup>10</sup> Including the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly, and one of the three Deputy Prime Ministers. There were 3 women among 9 judges of the Constitutional Court and 13 of 26 judges of the Supreme Court.

<sup>11</sup> The 2006 Administrative Disputes Act (last amended in 2023), the 1994 Constitutional Court Act (last amended in 2025), and the 2008 Criminal Code (last amended in 2024) are also applicable.

Slovenia is party to major international and regional instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.<sup>12</sup>

The legal framework regulating parliamentary elections is comprehensive and generally conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. Positively, in January 2024, the Election Act was amended, removing previous restrictions on voting and candidacy rights of persons under guardianship due to intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, in line with a long-standing ODIHR recommendation.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the 2025 amendments to the Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia (*RTV Slovenia*) Act changed the appointment method of the board of the public broadcaster, partially addressing a prior ODIHR recommendation. However, a number of ODIHR recommendations remain to be addressed, including those related to the decriminalization of defamation, regulation of third-party campaigning, transparency and integrity of campaign finance, and the effectiveness of electoral dispute resolution.

Out of 90 deputies of the National Assembly, 88 are elected under a proportional representation system, while 2 members of the parliament (MPs) representing the Hungarian and Italian communities are elected in special constituencies under a first-past-the-post system. For the proportional contest, Slovenia is divided into 8 constituencies, each subdivided into 11 electoral districts.<sup>14</sup> The law prescribes that deputies should be elected from districts with approximately the same number of residents. The boundaries of districts are defined by law, without a requirement for regular revision.<sup>15</sup> During these elections, at odds with good electoral practice, the number of citizens per district deviated by more than 15 per cent from the average district size.<sup>16</sup>

*To ensure the equality of the vote, consideration should be given to introducing a requirement for periodic revision of district boundaries in a transparent process, which involves broad public consultations.*

Seats are allocated through a two-tier system. First, mandates are distributed within constituencies using a quota based on the total number of valid votes divided by the number of seats plus one. The

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<sup>12</sup> The [1950 European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#), although Slovenia has not ratified Protocol 12 to the ECHR, which establishes a general non-discrimination clause, [1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#), [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 a member of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

<sup>13</sup> According to the Ministry of the Interior [data](#), this resulted in the addition of 4,424 voters to the voter register. The amendment also introduced the possibility for such voters to be assisted in voting by a person of their choice, although broader supported decision-making mechanisms were not introduced.

<sup>14</sup> Boundaries were last reviewed in 2021, when 15 electoral districts in 5 constituencies were redrawn to enhance equality of the vote.

<sup>15</sup> Section 2.2 vii of the Venice Commission's [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) (Code of Good Practice) recommends that constituency boundaries be reviewed periodically, at least every ten years, "taking account of the opinion of a committee, the majority of whose members are independent; this committee should preferably include a geographer, a sociologist and a balanced representation of the parties and, if necessary, representatives of national minorities".

<sup>16</sup> Based on the data provided to the ODIHR EAM, the deviation from the average number of citizens per district exceeded 15 per cent in 48 out of 88 districts, including, for example 53 per cent (35,768 citizens) in district 5002 Celje 1, 50 per cent (35,131 citizens) in 1010 Kamnik, 43 per cent (33,620 citizens) in 7001 Šmarje pri Jelšah, 41 per cent (33,164 citizens) in 3003 Ljubljana Vič-Rudnik, and 37 per cent (32,094 citizens) in 6003 Novo Mesto 2. Section 2.2 iv of the Venice Commission's [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) states that "the permissible departure from the norm should not be more than 10%, and should certainly not exceed 15% except in special circumstances (protection of a concentrated minority, sparsely populated administrative entity)".

remaining seats are allocated at the national level using the *D'Hondt* method to ensure overall proportionality. Candidates receive mandates based on their share of votes in their respective districts. Candidate lists must obtain at least four per cent of valid votes nationwide to qualify for seat allocation.

On 9 June 2024, concurrently with European Parliament elections, Slovenia held a consultative, non-binding referendum on the introduction of preferential voting for elections to the National Assembly. The proposal was supported by 70.89 per cent of participating voters. Despite several attempts made since the referendum, the required two-thirds parliamentary majority to amend the electoral legislation has not been reached.<sup>17</sup>

## V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election administration operates at 4 levels: the SEC as the central election management body, 10 Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs), including 2 for the Hungarian and Italian national communities, 88 District Election Commissions (DECs), and 2,987 Polling Boards (PBs) across the country and at 29 diplomatic and consular representations abroad. Most ODIHR EAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the integrity of the election administration and its ability to organize elections professionally.

The SEC, ConECs, and DECs are permanent bodies appointed for four-year terms. Nevertheless, they operate primarily during election periods and, with the exception of the SEC chairperson and deputy chairperson, members are remunerated only during this time. This arrangement may affect institutional continuity, particularly at the national level, as many components need to be prepared well ahead of elections.<sup>18</sup> The SEC is appointed by a simple parliamentary majority and consists of a chairperson and deputy chairperson self-nominated from among Supreme Court judges, two members from among legal experts, and three members nominated by parliamentary groups, taking into account the proportional representation of political parties; all members have deputies. Currently, three of the 12 SEC members are women, including the deputy chairperson.

The SEC appoints mid-level bodies, each comprising a chairperson and three members, with deputies, following a mixed composition model combining judges, legal experts, and party nominees. Each ConEC and DEC also has a secretary and two deputies, appointed by the SEC mostly from public administration staff involved in operational preparation, but with no decision-making powers. Following a previous ODIHR recommendation, gender-disaggregated data on the composition of mid-level election bodies was published. Women constituted 51 per cent of ConECs members and 58 per cent of DEC members.<sup>19</sup>

PBs are established by DECs for each election and consist of a chairperson and two members, with deputies. Members are appointed primarily based on nominations from political parties, with priority given to parliamentary parties according to their level of representation following the last parliamentary elections, with ties resolved by lot. Other parties and local communities may also nominate members and actively use this opportunity, and if nominations are insufficient, members are appointed from the public administration. The law requires the overall composition of PBs to

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<sup>17</sup> In 2025, members of the National Assembly submitted proposals on two occasions to introduce preferential voting, together with broader changes to the electoral system, including the abolition of electoral districts, the introduction of 18 electoral units, and an increase in the number of MPs from 90 to 92, which would require a constitutional amendment; however, these proposals did not receive the necessary support.

<sup>18</sup> The SEC's administrative operations are conducted by the full-time employed Director and the staff of the Secretariat.

<sup>19</sup> See the SEC [information](#).

ensure political plurality. Gender-disaggregated data on PB compositions was not published, although it was collected and provided upon request. Women constituted 62 per cent of the overall members.

The SEC adopted decisions during regular and so-called “correspondence sessions”.<sup>20</sup> Notifications of sessions were typically published on its website only the evening before, and minutes were to be approved at the subsequent sessions and then published. In practice, this was not always followed, and the minutes of the last four pre-election sessions had not been published even after election day. During the electoral period, the SEC held 15 sessions, including 6 in-person sessions and 9 correspondence sessions, although their use should remain exceptional.<sup>21</sup> Correspondence sessions were mainly used for technical and administrative matters, such as the appointment and dismissal of commission members, accreditation procedures, and other procedural decisions. In-person sessions were generally reserved for more substantive issues, including the adoption of key instructions, handling of candidate lists and electoral disputes, accessibility measures, early voting arrangements, and the accreditation of major international observer groups. The SEC adopts different types of acts; however, not all are made public, and there are no clear rules governing their publication.<sup>22</sup>

*To enhance transparency and safeguard trust, the State Election Commission should ensure the timely publication of session minutes, limit the use of correspondence sessions to exceptional circumstances and clearly regulate the grounds for their use, and establish clear rules for the publication of all its acts.*

While some efforts were made to improve the accessibility of voter information, these remained limited. The SEC website provides general information on voting rights, procedures, and alternative voting methods, including some content in sign language. However, it is not fully compliant with accessibility standards, while, according to the SEC, a new website is under development.<sup>23</sup> Ahead of election day, the SEC distributed official notifications and candidate lists to voters, for the first time including QR codes linking to audio information. The Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) also published information in an easy-to-read format, but on the SEC website, it was available only via a link to a Word document, limiting usability.

No voter education campaigns were conducted, despite a previous ODIHR recommendation. According to ODIHR EAM interlocutors, the absence of targeted voter information and education efforts may have a particularly negative effect on the participation of persons with disabilities, with elements of the electoral process, such as information formats, polling station design, and the overall sensory environment, continuing to pose barriers, particularly for persons with psychosocial, intellectual, or cognitive disabilities. During these elections, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality called for improved accessibility, but these requests were not met.<sup>24</sup> Other vulnerable groups, including Roma communities, may also benefit from targeted voter education for informed participation.

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<sup>20</sup> In practice, “correspondence sessions” are conducted through an exchange of emails among members.

<sup>21</sup> Article 17, paragraph 2 of the SEC’s Rules of Procedure prescribes that “commission sessions are generally held as regular sessions, while correspondence sessions are convened exceptionally”.

<sup>22</sup> According to the Rules of Procedure, these include regulations, resolutions, rules, decisions, instructions, guidelines, positions, opinions, and recommendations, as well as decisions on individual matters.

<sup>23</sup> In 2023, the SEC website was [assessed](#) as partially compliant with the Act on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications, which was adopted in accordance with [EU Directive 2016/2102](#) on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. Currently, the SEC website only partially complies with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG).

<sup>24</sup> See 6 March 2026 Advocate of the Principle of Equality [recommendations](#) regarding the accessibility of electoral materials, voter information in adapted formats, and guidance for electoral authorities. In February 2026, a group of civil society organizations (CSOs) and experts called on the SEC and other authorities to clarify and ensure the effective accessibility of elections for persons with disabilities following the 2024 legal changes, highlighting persistent gaps in accessible information, procedures, training, and the protection of voting rights.

*The election administration, political parties, and civil society should strengthen voter education efforts throughout the electoral cycle. In consultation with civil society organizations, the State Election Commission could develop and implement proactive, inclusive voter education campaigns, ensuring that information is accessible in multiple formats (including easy-to-read, sign language, and audio), widely disseminated beyond digital platforms, and tailored to reach different groups of voters, including persons with disabilities, persons belonging to Roma communities, youth and first-time voters.*

## VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens aged 18 years or older on election day have the right to vote. Voter registration is passive and based on the Central Population Register maintained by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), except for the Hungarian and Italian national communities. In addition to being included in the general register, members of these communities can also proactively register as voters for their set-aside seats; once registered, the voter remains on that list permanently.<sup>25</sup> The register comprises four types of voter lists. As of 6 March 2026, the general voter list included 1,579,804 voters with permanent residence in Slovenia, the list of citizens residing abroad included 115,392 voters, and the lists of members of the Hungarian and Italian national communities included 5,173 and 2,706 voters, respectively.

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, and online, or request inclusion if not yet registered. On election day, persons not included in the voter list but registered as residing on the territory of the polling station or in a specific country abroad, may obtain a special certificate from a local administrative unit that allows them to vote. Only 53 certificates were issued during these elections. All ODIHR EAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the overall integrity of the voter registration process and did not report any specific concerns regarding the accuracy of voter lists.

## VII. VOTING METHODS

The law provides for diverse and inclusive voting methods as alternatives to in-person voting on election day, with safeguards to prevent multiple voting by recording the chosen method in the voter register.

Early voting for voters with permanent residence in Slovenia lasted for three days, and there is no requirement to provide justification.<sup>26</sup> The law prescribes for early voting polling stations to be located within the respective electoral district. However, the SEC has traditionally allowed exceptions, permitting DEC to establish them outside their district and to open more than one location, reportedly to increase access to early voting and improve its organization, considering factors such as geography, transport accessibility, parking, and voter familiarity with the location. In practice, 98 early voting polling stations were established, including 24 outside their districts in 7 out of 8 constituencies. This practice was unsuccessfully challenged by the SDS (see *Electoral Dispute Resolution*). The SEC stated that essential elements of voting, such as voter identification, accurate voter lists, vote secrecy, and proper counting, were not affected and considered location an

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<sup>25</sup> Voters included in the national community lists are also included in the general voter list.

<sup>26</sup> A total of 81,705 voters cast their vote during the early voting period (4.8 per cent of those who voted).

organizational matter.<sup>27</sup> This practice deviated from the letter of the law, indicating a need to clarify the approach in law or practice to ensure certainty and consistency.<sup>28</sup>

*To strengthen legal certainty and public trust, the approach to determining the location of early voting polling stations should be clarified. This could involve a review of the law and related practice, with a view to reconciling legal requirements with operational considerations and, where appropriate, allowing for clearly regulated administrative flexibility.*

Each DEC also establishes special OMNIA polling stations, which allow voters who will be outside their home district on election day to vote, provided they notify the competent DEC at least three days in advance and indicate where they intend to vote.<sup>29</sup>

Mobile voting is available on a limited scale in exceptional situations, primarily for voters unable to come to a polling station due to illness, upon request submitted at least three days in advance and supported by a medical certificate.<sup>30</sup> Two polling station members visit the voter on election day, and the ballot is placed in an envelope to ensure secrecy. Some ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that the medical certificate requirement limits access for persons with disabilities.<sup>31</sup>

Voters in detention, hospitals, or social care institutions may vote by post if they notify the DEC at least ten days before election day, with similar provisions for persons with disabilities.<sup>32</sup> Those unexpectedly detained or hospitalized after this deadline may still vote by post if they notify the DEC at least five days in advance. However, some interlocutors expressed concerns that this deadline is still too early and may leave certain voters without the opportunity to vote.

Voters registered abroad may vote by post or in person at diplomatic or consular representations. To save time before the finalization of candidate lists, blank ballot papers, without candidate names, were sent by post to voters abroad. The SEC confirmed that ballots reached all countries before the end of February; however, their subsequent delivery to voters depended on national postal services, which in some cases may have caused delays. To be valid, postal ballots from abroad must be sent by 19:00 on election day and received by noon on the second Monday after election day. Postal ballots are counted by the DEC's on that day, after which constituency results are updated and finalized.

## VIII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Candidate lists may be put forward by political parties or groups of voters.<sup>33</sup> Parties may submit lists in every constituency if supported by signatures of at least three MPs. Alternatively, party lists can be put forward in one constituency if a list was determined by party members permanently resident in the respective constituency and endorsed by at least 50 voters residing there, or if a list is supported by 100 constituency voters. Two or more parties may submit a joint list. Candidate lists put forward by groups of voters require signatures from 1,000 constituency voters. Hungarian and Italian minority

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<sup>27</sup> See the SEC's [press statement](#) regarding the SDS complaint about early voting.

<sup>28</sup> After election day, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality [initiated](#) an *ex officio* procedure to assess whether the opening of a single early voting location in Ljubljana constituted indirect discrimination based on a place of residence, as some voters were at a disadvantage compared to those who could vote early within their own districts.

<sup>29</sup> A total of 88 OMNIA polling stations were created in 55 places allowing 10,044 persons to vote.

<sup>30</sup> A total of 530 voters registered for mobile voting.

<sup>31</sup> In its 2020 decision, the Constitutional Court stated that although the law links this form of voting to illness rather than disability, it should be interpreted to also include persons with disabilities.

<sup>32</sup> A total of 4,153 voters applied for postal voting. Persons with disabilities may also opt for permanent postal voting by notifying the SEC and submitting proof of disability; this registration remains valid until withdrawn.

<sup>33</sup> Parties can be established by at least 200 citizens. As of March 2026, 87 political parties were included in the register maintained by the MoI, including several new parties registered in 2024-2025.

candidacies need to be supported by 1.5 per cent of the voters of their respective communities.<sup>34</sup> At odds with international good practice, both voters and MPs may support only one candidate list.<sup>35</sup>

Citizens aged 18 years or older have the right to stand for election. Candidates may run on only one list and in one constituency. Each constituency list may include no more than 11 candidates, with an obligation for the nominating parties to indicate the district for each candidate.<sup>36</sup> If the list includes fewer than 11 candidates, candidates may run in a maximum of 2 districts.

During the candidate nomination period, 18 lists were submitted to the respective ConECs.<sup>37</sup> Ahead of the deadline, the SEC published registered lists of 17 political parties with 1,179 candidates (163 standing in multiple districts).<sup>38</sup> One coalition, the Coalition of the United Nation – United Slovenia and the Party of the Slovenian Nation, unsuccessfully challenged before the Supreme Court the non-registration of its candidate lists (see *Electoral Dispute Resolution*). Overall, the candidate registration process was inclusive and did not raise any specific concerns among ODIHR EAM interlocutors.

Parties' approaches to including youth candidates varied, with just under 14 per cent of candidates under 35 years and an average age of 52 years across lists. The ODIHR EAM was informed of three candidates with self-declared or known disability and a limited number of Roma candidates.

Lists must meet the legal requirement of 35 per cent representation of each gender at the constituency level as a precondition for registration.<sup>39</sup> While the requirement is widely seen positively, it has thus far not proven sufficient to drive progress toward parity in parliamentary representation.<sup>40</sup> Positively, all lists not only met but exceeded the legal requirement, and there were a total of 519 women (44 per cent) standing across candidate lists, with variation across parties.<sup>41</sup> Under the current electoral system, women's chances of winning seats depend largely on their nomination in "winnable" districts.<sup>42</sup> A total of 33 women (36.7 per cent) gained seats in the National Assembly in these elections, fewer than were elected to the outgoing parliament (36 women, 40 per cent).

*The impact of gender candidate list requirements should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that it effectively contributes to achieving parity in the representation of women, as aspired by international standards. Political parties should consider identifying and addressing barriers to women's participation, including by reviewing internal practices and conducting gender audits.*

<sup>34</sup> Section I.1.3.ii of the [Code of Good Practice](#) provides that "the law should not require collection of the signatures of more than 1% of voters in the constituency concerned".

<sup>35</sup> Paragraphs 96 and 196 of the [2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) recommend that "legislation should not limit a citizen [...] to signing a supporting list for only one party".

<sup>36</sup> Although lists may in principle contain only one person, independent candidacy outside of lists is not permitted.

<sup>37</sup> The law provides a three-day period to correct any errors or omissions, if identified by the ConECs.

<sup>38</sup> Two candidates representing the Hungarian community and four representing the Italian community, all of them men, were also registered.

<sup>39</sup> For lists with two or three candidates, at least one candidate of each gender must be included.

<sup>40</sup> The 2023 [CEDAW Concluding Observations](#) on the seventh periodic report of Slovenia recommended increasing the gender quota requirement to at least 40 per cent. Unsuccessful legislative amendment attempts to introduce preferential voting also included a proposal for 40 per cent quota based on a zipper system in the upper half of the list.

<sup>41</sup> The fewest women candidates, 37.5 and 39.8 per cent, respectively, were included across the lists of Solution - Pensioner's Party Velenje Slovenija (*Rešitev - Stranka Upokojencev Velenje Slovenija*) and of the New Slovenia – Christian Democrats, Slovenian People's Party, FOCUS of Marko Lotrič coalition, while Unity (*Sloga*) and the Pirate Party of Slovenia were the only parties to ensure gender parity across their candidate lists, with 54.5 and 50 per cent, respectively. Gender-disaggregated data on candidate lists was not publicly available.

<sup>42</sup> [Analysis](#) by the Women's Lobby of Slovenia indicated that parties generally did not place incumbent women MPs in less "winnable" districts (i.e. where the party is less likely to secure a seat) and, in some cases, nominated them in more favourable ones, signaling recognition of their performance and expertise and enhancing their visibility).

## IX. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

The fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, and expression are constitutionally guaranteed. The official campaign period begins 30 days before election day and ends 24 hours before the opening of polls, followed by a campaign silence period, which also includes the publication of opinion polls.<sup>43</sup> Early campaigning and third-party involvement are not specifically regulated (see *Campaign Finance*). Campaigns may be organized by candidates, parties, their representatives, and other natural and legal persons. All campaign materials must include information on the entity that commissioned and paid for them. Contestants are granted equal and free-of-charge access to municipal poster space and must remove all campaign materials within 15 days after election day. Oversight and enforcement related to campaign conduct are institutionally fragmented and depend on the specific campaign aspect involved.<sup>44</sup>

Election legislation does not ensure separation between regular governance activities and campaigning and the prevention of misuse of public resources for electoral purposes, which is not in line with international good practice.<sup>45</sup> While legislation and codes of ethics for public officials emphasize impartiality, acting in the public interest, and avoiding conflicts of interest, there are no provisions or guidelines on the permissible involvement of public officials in campaigning or on distinguishing between official and candidate roles for incumbents.<sup>46</sup> The ODIHR EAM observed instances of officials campaigning intermittently with public duties, including blurred public communication about activities in official and candidate capacities.<sup>47</sup> Some interlocutors also raised questions about income support measures adopted in the months leading up to and during the campaign, perceived by some as campaign-related.<sup>48</sup>

*To ensure a clear separation between campaigning and public functions, the legal framework should clearly define permissible activities by public officials during campaigns and be supported by practical guidance. Consideration could also be given to regulating the use of public resources and*

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<sup>43</sup> The MoI duty service [reported](#) receiving 236 reports of alleged campaign silence infringements, with 47 of them passed on for investigation, primarily related to campaigning through SMS and social media.

<sup>44</sup> These include the Inspectorate for Internal Affairs, the Inspectorate for Culture and Media, the Agency for Communication Networks and Services, the Court of Audit, municipal inspection services and wardens, as well as police and prosecutorial authorities.

<sup>45</sup> Provisions against the use of public resources are limited to those on the use of public buildings and budgetary resources for campaigning. Paragraph 4.2 of the ODIHR and Venice Commission 2016 [Joint Guidelines on Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes](#) requires the law to “provide for a clear separation between the exercise of politically sensitive public positions, in particular senior management positions, and candidacy”, and paragraph 1.3 requires the law, “to state that no major announcements linked to or aimed at creating a favourable perception towards a given party or candidate should occur during campaigns”.

<sup>46</sup> Integrity-focused provisions are included, among others, in the [Law on Integrity and Prevention of Corruption](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Officials in Government and Ministries](#). In its 2019 decision [Up-135/19, U-I-37/19](#), para 40, the Constitutional Court noted that “state and local authorities must remain neutral with respect to the electoral contest and must therefore not allow the use of budgetary resources for electoral purposes [...]”.

<sup>47</sup> For example, the 24 February visit by the Prime Minister Robert Golob to the Central Slovenia region was presented as a government visit in an official [press release](#), while posts on Mr. Golob's and GS's Facebook [profiles](#) framed it as part of the party's campaign, featuring the campaign bus and meeting with supporters. The 11 March visit by the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Sport, Matjaž Han, to Maribor University was presented in the Ministry's Facebook [post](#) as a ministerial field visit, while the [SD website](#) framed it as a party president and candidate activity. During the 18 March opening of a tunnel in Karavanke, the Minister of Infrastructure, Alenka Bratušek, was [introduced and spoke](#) in her ministerial capacity, while the same event was presented on GS's [webpage](#) and Facebook [post](#) as a party achievement, referring to her as both minister and candidate.

<sup>48</sup> This included the introduction of a winter bonus (November 2025), a higher than usual annual increase of a minimum monthly wage (January 2026), and an extraordinary additional increase to pensions (March 2026).

*the timing of major income support measures and publicly funded initiatives during campaign periods.*

The campaign was pluralistic and dynamic with a diverse range of contestants representing distinct political and ideological positions, but was also charged and marked by disruptive practices.<sup>49</sup> Contestants campaigned freely, prioritizing direct voter contact through field visits and street campaigning, but also engaged in media debates and used billboards, posters, and leaflets, as well as podcasts and social media. Political debate was largely substantive and programme-based, focusing on social welfare and economic issues, but was largely driven by the positions and exchanges of the two largest political forces. The final campaign phase was dominated by developments related to alleged illicit recordings involving high-level officials and other public figures, and investigations into possible electoral interference with foreign involvement.

Most parties developed campaign programmes; however, few explicitly addressed gender equality, inclusion of minority communities, and persons with disabilities. Some ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted the predominant presence of men in visible campaign roles, with women actively involved but often less visible. OPDs and equality bodies expressed regret over only minimal political and campaign information adapted for persons with different disabilities.<sup>50</sup> Efforts by contestants to reach out to Roma were reported by Roma organizations as limited, with occasional negative and stigmatizing references to the community, whose electoral awareness and participation remained low.

#### A. ONLINE CAMPAIGN

Campaigning on social networks is not explicitly regulated, but the broad statutory definition of campaigning, covering all political advertising and other forms of political propaganda aimed at influencing voters' decisions, has been interpreted as applicable to campaigning online, in particular regarding campaign silence, accountability for paid advertising, and restrictions on certain speech.<sup>51</sup> The 2025 Mass Media Act introduced transparency rules for digital content creators ("influencers"), including obligations to disclose commercial interest and comply with rules on advertising, harmful content, and the protection of minors. Despite these rules, some stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of editorial moderation and the presence of hidden advertising and disinformation in influencer content.

The Digital Services Act (DSA), applicable across the EU since February 2024, has been implemented through a dedicated national act.<sup>52</sup> It designated the Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS) as the Digital Services Co-ordinator (DSC) responsible for

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<sup>49</sup> On two occasions, dead animals were hung over GS's billboards and a doll seemingly resembling the Prime Minister was found hanging by the neck in a park. Tires of a bicycle of a party *We, Socialists! (Mi, socialisti!)* were slashed while distributing campaign leaflets. Several parties across the political spectrum noted widespread campaign poster defacement but typically did not report such cases to the police. The Inspectorate for Internal Affairs informed the ODIHR EAM that it was investigating four reports related to campaign posters.

<sup>50</sup> Only four parties' campaign websites included accessibility features. Upon OPD requests, some parties provided programmes in easy-to-read format but did not circulate them widely. Sign language interpretation was mostly absent during candidate appearances but was provided during the 20 March CSO voter mobilization event in Ljubljana.

<sup>51</sup> The January 2026 [guidance for campaign organizers](#) developed by the MPA in co-operation with several oversight bodies clarified that advertising on social networks also constitutes an electoral campaign. It acknowledged that the law does not explicitly regulate campaign silence online, but stressed that the rules applicable to poster campaigns, as one of explicitly regulated campaign forms, are applied by analogy to these cases. The guide therefore underscored that new content online can be posted until the start of campaign silence and that, in line with the Court of Audit prior positions, spending on online advertising needs to be reflected in campaign finance reports.

<sup>52</sup> See [Act on the Implementation of the EU Regulation on the Single Market for Digital Services](#) of March 2024.

overseeing the application of the DSA and supervising intermediary service providers established in Slovenia, including powers to request information, issue corrective orders, and impose fines.

In contrast, no national legislation is yet in place to implement the EU Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising (2024/900) (TTPA), in force across the EU since October 2024.<sup>53</sup> In its absence, oversight and enforcement mechanisms remain not fully defined. AKOS and the Inspectorate for Culture and Media received related complaints but were unable to act or refer them to other bodies. In practice, based on the ODIHR EAM's limited review of paid ads in online news portals, only a limited number of them included the required transparency information on their paid nature and the ordering and paying entity. The ODIHR EAM also identified examples of paid campaign-related content on Meta and Google presented in ways not readily identifiable as political advertising, raising concerns about possible circumvention of prohibitions on these platforms.<sup>54</sup>

*National measures to support effective implementation of the EU Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising should be adopted in a timely manner, including designation of competent authorities and establishment of procedures for oversight and complaints handling.*

In the period leading up to the elections, concerns increased about potential digital threats, including cyberattacks, disinformation and manipulative online practices. In response, several measures were put in place. A co-ordination mechanism involving several state bodies focused on detecting and countering disinformation operated under the co-ordination of the Government Communication Office (UKOM). UKOM, in co-operation with the Ministry for Digital Transformation, also implemented an awareness-raising campaign on identifying misleading and manipulative information. In addition, guidelines on cyber and information security were developed for election contestants.<sup>55</sup>

Engagement mechanisms with social media platforms were also activated.<sup>56</sup> Building on the DSA framework, AKOS convened a roundtable with key platforms and national stakeholders to discuss risk mitigation strategies and establish points of contact.<sup>57</sup> The EU Rapid Response Mechanism under the Code of Practice on Disinformation was also activated. CSOs maintained contacts with platforms, including through trusted flagging and fact-checking activities.<sup>58</sup> However, no information on the scope or effectiveness of these efforts, including on flagged or moderated content, was publicly available or shared with the ODIHR EAM.

The digital resilience framework was tested during the campaign by several developments, seen by many ODIHR EAM interlocutors as unprecedented in scale and complexity. Early in the campaign, the Instagram profiles of GS and Prime Minister Golob were reportedly compromised and

<sup>53</sup> The ODIHR EAM was informed that the implementing legislation was in the early drafting stages by the MPA.

<sup>54</sup> According to Meta and Google ad transparency data, between 19 February and 20 March 2026, GS purchased approximately 200 campaign ads on Meta, with estimated spending of EUR 12,000 and reach of some 9 million views, and around 800 ads on Google. The Facebook profile *Slovenija Naprej*, used for ad purchases, was listed as a news and media website and linked to a [website](#) identifying GS as the sponsor. As of 16 March, 99 such ads remained active; by 20 March most had been removed by Meta for non-compliance with advertising standards. On Google, campaign ads (all accessible as of 20 March) were categorized under non-political topics, including apparel, health, travel and tourism, and financial, business and industrial services. While similar practices by other actors cannot be excluded, the ODIHR EAM did not identify comparable paid ads linked to official profiles of other contestants.

<sup>55</sup> See February 2026 [recommendations](#) by the Information Security Office.

<sup>56</sup> According to January 2025 [data](#), YouTube had approximately 1.58 million users, Facebook 1.01 million users, followed by Instagram with 683,000 users, and TikTok with some 500,000 users.

<sup>57</sup> TikTok deployed election-related prompts directing users engaging with political content to basic factual information on the electoral process and official government sources.

<sup>58</sup> Two organizations have been granted trusted flagger status by AKOS, while no out-of-court dispute settlement body under the DSA has been certified in Slovenia.

investigated as a possible cyberattack with a foreign element. Throughout the campaign, national digital environment experts observed a high volume of misleading content and inauthentic online activity that was difficult for users to identify as deceptive.<sup>59</sup> Two weeks before election day, the alleged illicitly recorded audio and video materials on an anonymously run Facebook profile and website were released, depicting high-ranking officials and other public figures as being implicated in corrupt practices. This triggered a significant public reaction and prompted investigations by data protection, anti-corruption, law enforcement, national security, and intelligence authorities, including in relation to possible interference.<sup>60</sup> The entities behind these materials remained unclear until after the elections.

Overall, while awareness of digital risks is increasing, the regulatory and oversight framework for the digital domain remains fragmented. The ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that investments in preparedness, co-ordination and public awareness were introduced relatively late and, with the DSA framework still new and not fully tested, institutions and the public appeared to be insufficiently prepared for crisis scenarios and showed limited familiarity with possible response mechanisms.

*To strengthen response to digital and online threats and safeguard electoral integrity, authorities should consider developing a coherent regulatory and operational framework with clear institutional mandates, co-ordination arrangements, and transparency safeguards. Pre-electoral tabletop exercises and stress tests could be conducted to ensure effective functioning of incident protocols and escalation channels.*

*Agency for Communication Networks and Services and other relevant bodies could enhance public awareness efforts to inform users of their rights and available mechanisms of engagement with online platforms, including for content flagging, complaint procedures, and remedies.*

Social media played a significant role in the contestants' campaign outreach. Among the accounts monitored by the ODIHR EAM, the largest volume of content was shared on *Facebook*, followed by *Instagram* and *TikTok*.<sup>61</sup> Among political parties, aggregated cross-platform engagement was the highest with the content of GS and SDS, while among individual politicians, Robert Golob led with the highest aggregated engagements, followed by Janez Janša, who had by far the highest number of followers of all monitored profiles. At the same time, the CSO 8 March Institute outperformed all political and institutional actors, both in posting frequency and overall engagement. Content focused predominantly on voter mobilization, with policy issues less prominent. While most posts were neutral, notable differences emerged: actors broadly identified as right-leaning more frequently used adversarial framing, whereas those more left-leaning emphasized mobilization and value-based messaging.

The ODIHR EAM interlocutors widely noted that social media increasingly serves as a conduit for polarizing and aggressive rhetoric. Stakeholders across the political spectrum reported growing volumes of such engagement, seen to undermine policy debate and requiring additional resources to manage abusive comments. Based on the assessment of women's organizations, this discourse appears to disproportionately affect women in public roles through sexist and misogynistic comments,

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<sup>59</sup> See related media [analysis](#). According to the 2025 Ministry of Culture [analysis](#), 31 per cent of the population report being exposed to inaccurate information at least once a day.

<sup>60</sup> On 16 March, CSOs held a press conference presenting information about a possible connection of a private Israeli intelligence company to the leaked recordings. On 19 March, Prime Minister Golob appealed for EU support through the European Democracy Shield framework. In the days after the elections, national security and intelligence authorities confirmed investigations into suspected electoral interference with foreign involvement.

<sup>61</sup> Between 7 and 22 March, the ODIHR EAM monitored 30 accounts of parties, candidates, public figures, and civic initiatives on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *TikTok*. Accounts of parliamentary parties were monitored across three platforms. For other actors, their most actively used platforms were followed. In total, 1,724 posts were analyzed through qualitative methods.

discouraging public engagement.<sup>62</sup> The ODIHR EAM was further informed that allegations of hate speech, particularly online, are reported to the police and equality bodies, but only a limited number of cases are referred for investigation and prosecuted.<sup>63</sup>

## **X. CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

The legal framework for political party and campaign financing is set out in the ERCA and PPA. The 2023 amendments to the PPA adjusted the allocation of public funding to qualifying political parties, introduced additional public funding for youth wings, and reduced the fines for irregularities.<sup>64</sup> Applicable from 2024, these changes increased the overall level of public funding available to eligible parties.<sup>65</sup> Campaign finance rules have not been subject to legislative review since the last elections. Several previously identified gaps and ODIHR recommendations on transparency and oversight of campaign finance regulation, therefore, remained unaddressed, which some ODIHR EAM interlocutors attributed to limited policy prioritization.<sup>66</sup>

### **A. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

Under the PPA, apart from public funding, which constitutes a significant portion of eligible parties' budgets, parties can be financed from donations from natural persons, membership fees, loans, and income from property. While contributions from legal entities and foreign sources are prohibited, parties can own companies, which may conduct business, including with entities abroad, thus creating a potential channel for indirect inflow of foreign funds.

Election campaigns may be financed from parties' public funds, loans, and donations from private persons. Individual contributions may not exceed 10 times the average gross monthly salary (EUR 25,360), and cash donations are permitted up to EUR 50. In-kind contributions are permitted, subject to market price valuation and reporting as part of campaign spending. Parties may also allocate funds for the campaign from their regular accounts up to the expenditure ceiling. Certain contestants are entitled to partial reimbursement of their campaign expenses.<sup>67</sup>

The spending limit is set at EUR 0.40 per voter in each constituency contested (EUR 679,340 for parties running in all constituencies). All campaign transactions must be made through a dedicated

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<sup>62</sup> A [study](#) of political discourse on X during the 2022 parliamentary elections corroborated this pattern, revealing that women in political roles were disproportionately targeted by sexist and misogynistic commentary and that such discourse did have an impact on women's preparedness to remain actively engaged in public roles.

<sup>63</sup> The Criminal Code prohibits public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance based on personal characteristics, where such conduct may disturb public order or involves threats or insults. Media and anti-discrimination laws further prohibit harmful or discriminatory content, including online.

<sup>64</sup> Political parties that obtained at least one per cent of the valid votes in the last parliamentary elections are eligible for annual state funding. Of the total annual subsidy, 10 per cent is distributed equally among eligible parties, while the remaining 90 per cent is allocated proportionally to the number of votes each party received. Youth wings are supported through additional allocations linked to these entitlements. Parties may also use up to 70 per cent of funds allocated for parliamentary work for general party activities.

<sup>65</sup> According to the Ministry of Finance, in 2025, 18 parties received state funding in aggregate amount of EUR 5.6 million. In addition, parliamentary parties received EUR 716,845 for their parliamentary work.

<sup>66</sup> The Court of Audit (CoA) has in the past proposed changes to regulations with a view to increasing transparency and control over campaign finance.

<sup>67</sup> Contestants that won mandates receive reimbursement of EUR 0.33 per vote, not exceeding total expenditures. Nominating parties or groups that received 2 per cent of votes countrywide or 6 per cent in a constituency receive EUR 0.17 per vote. Qualifying national minority candidates are also entitled to EUR 0.33 reimbursement per vote.

bank account that contestants must open at least 45 days before election day and close within 4 months after the elections.<sup>68</sup> Any loans must be repaid 30 days before campaign account closure.

## B. DISCLOSURE AND OVERSIGHT

By law, all political parties are required to submit annual reports by 31 March of the next year to the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES) through a dedicated electronic portal. Campaign finance reports from election campaign organizers are due for submission to AJPES within 15 days of the closing of campaign accounts, with both annual and campaign reports published on its website. There is no requirement for interim campaign reporting, reducing transparency of income and expenditure and limiting public access to timely information, contrary to international standards, good practice, and past recommendations.<sup>69</sup>

Campaign reports cover income and expenditure for the 30-day campaign period.<sup>70</sup> Contrary to past recommendations, the law is silent on campaign-related spending outside this period.<sup>71</sup> As campaign-like activities were reported to have started several months before the official campaign period, many ODIHR EAM interlocutors considered this a significant gap that may undermine equality of campaign conditions, transparency, and accountability, and hinder effective oversight. According to the CoA, such expenses may be captured in parties' annual reporting but are not purposefully cross-checked.

Despite past recommendations, campaign-related activities and spending by third parties remain unregulated, leaving space for covert influence and evasion of existing disclosure and oversight mechanisms. Some practices by non-contestants during these elections raised questions among the stakeholders as seemingly campaign-related, yet outside any regulatory scope.<sup>72</sup> Most ODIHR EAM interlocutors concurred that, while third-party activity should be protected as a form of political participation and expression, transparency and disclosure rules are needed to subject such actors to a framework similar to that for contestants.<sup>73</sup>

*To enhance transparency, integrity, and accountability of campaign finance, consideration should be given to regulating third-party campaigning and spending, defining disclosure rules for pre-campaign expenditures, and introducing interim campaign reporting before election day.*

<sup>68</sup> Funds remaining on parties' campaign accounts are transferred back to their regular accounts, while contestants other than parties must transfer such funds to a humanitarian organization. Prohibited donations and those exceeding legal limits, as per CoA findings, must also be transferred to a humanitarian organization.

<sup>69</sup> Article 7.3 of the [UNCAC](#) provides that states should take measures "to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office". Paragraph 261 of the [2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that "it is good practice to require the following reports: [...] reports providing oversight bodies and the public with preliminary information on campaign incomes and expenses of parties and candidates several days before election day".

<sup>70</sup> Based on ERCA and supplementary MoI [rules](#), campaign reports must provide detailed information on funds raised, including donations, transfers from campaign organizers' own accounts, loans, and in-kind contributions, identity of large donors, contributions received in contravention of the law and transfers for humanitarian purposes, as well as a detailed account of expenditures.

<sup>71</sup> Paragraph 206 of the [2020 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that "if relevant legislation distinguishes between party support and campaign financing, it should include clear and precise rules and guidelines for the appropriate use and allocation of funds for these different purposes" and that "the definition of what constitutes a 'campaign purpose' and any related restrictions must be laid out clearly."

<sup>72</sup> In the months leading to and during the campaign, a large-scale billboard campaign, reportedly associated with a businessman, appeared to promote positions aligned with the political right and critical of the government. Several reports were made about religious leaders providing advice to voters, seen by some as politically suggestive. Messaging by some CSOs as part of voter mobilization was at times seen as favouring a particular political choice.

<sup>73</sup> Paragraph 256 of the [ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that "Third parties should be subjected to similar rules on donations and spending as political parties to avoid situations where third parties can be used to circumvent campaign finance regulations".

Within six months after the closure of campaign accounts, the CoA, as the authority overseeing both political party and campaign finances, conducts audits of campaign accounts of contestants entitled to partial reimbursement of campaign expenses and publishes findings on its website. As part of audits, the CoA has the authority to request additional information and clarifications, and order corrections and resubmission of campaign reports.

The oversight work by the CoA was widely regarded positively, with ODIHR EAM interlocutors noting its professionalism and thoroughness. In support of post-election audits and as part of a proactive approach, the CoA designated a number of auditors to follow campaign activities and events, to enable more informed auditing and cross-checking of reports against campaign practice. At the same time, the CoA noted that it continues to perform its duties with limited dedicated resources, which, given comparatively short timeframes and the legally required scope of audits, remains a challenge.

*To support effective campaign finance oversight, including in areas recommended for further regulation, consideration could be given to strengthening the capacity of the Court of Audit through increased staffing and resources.*

The law provides for a range of graduated sanctions for campaign finance irregularities. Non-submission or deliberate misreporting, failure to use a dedicated account, and unlawful financing entail tiered penalties for campaign organizers, their responsible persons, legal entities, and individuals, ranging between EUR 400 and EUR 20,000. Exceeding the expenditure ceiling may lead to a reduction or loss of entitlement to campaign reimbursement or, temporarily, to public funding, depending on the extent of overspending.

## **XI. MEDIA**

### **A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT**

Slovenia has a diverse media landscape with a large number of registered outlets.<sup>74</sup> While television (TV) remains a primary source of political information, the media ecosystem is increasingly shifting towards online news platforms at the expense of print media, reflecting a global trend. Public *RTV Slovenia* remains a key media actor given its nationwide reach and role as the main provider of public service television, radio, and online news.<sup>75</sup> Together with commercial networks *Pop TV*, *Planet TV*, *Nova24TV*, and *Kanal A*, these constitute the core of the broadcasting sector. The state-owned Slovenian Press Agency serves as a key information source for many small media.

Media market is highly concentrated, with a few companies controlling multiple outlets. The most influential private clusters include *Pro Plus*, owned by a Czechia-based investment group, the *Nova24TV* conglomerate, and *United Media* and *Media 24*, associated with a Slovenian business person. Some of these conglomerates are perceived as linked to specific political actors. Despite recently introduced media ownership transparency measures, media experts note continued challenges in tracing ultimate beneficiaries, complicated by complex ownership chains involving multiple corporate layers and jurisdictions.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> The Ministry of Culture's [media registry](#) currently lists 2,652 registered media outlets.

<sup>75</sup> The public broadcaster operates three TV and six radio channels, including regional studios in Koper and Maribor, as well as dedicated programming for the Hungarian and Italian national communities.

<sup>76</sup> Slovenia was among the six EU countries classified as high risk in the European Commission's [2025 Media Pluralism Report](#) indicator on transparency of media ownership.

A limited advertising market, combined with the shift towards the online domain, contributes to increased dependence of media outlets on state advertising as an income source. Although the new Mass Media Act introduced transparency and non-discrimination requirements for the allocation of state advertising, ODIHR EAM interlocutors noted that clearer rules on allocation are still needed, particularly on allocation criteria, disclosure of beneficiary outlets and amounts, and justification of decisions. The allocation of state advertising remains subject to regular political scrutiny. During the election campaign, a parliamentary inquiry report alleging the channeling of public and private funds into party-aligned media in connection with the 2022 elections was published and pointed to indications of close links between certain media and political actors and described financing arrangements involving advertising and intermediaries that may have operated outside formal frameworks.<sup>77</sup>

Journalists report that they adhere to the Journalists' Code of Ethics, which promotes professional standards in reporting. However, time constraints, understaffed newsrooms, and pressure to produce content limit thorough verification. While larger newsrooms had dedicated verification capacities and one civil society organization engaged in fact-checking activities, these efforts did not always enable timely assessment of potential false or misleading content and its communication to the public.

Alongside these efforts, some ODIHR EAM interlocutors pointed to the importance of strengthening media literacy as a complementary approach to enhancing citizens' critical engagement with information.<sup>78</sup> While a number of initiatives have been undertaken, often led by CSOs and implemented through project-based funding, these were described as fragmented and not fully underpinned by broader, state-led policies, with limited integration into the education system. Interlocutors noted that a more co-ordinated and sustained policy framework could further support citizens' ability to critically assess information.

*Consideration could be given to further developing a national media literacy framework, with strengthened state-level co-ordination and policy direction, and closer collaboration with CSOs, fact-checkers, and media actors.*

Media representatives and associations, including the Slovenian Journalists' Association and the Association of Journalists and Publicists, reported that media professionals were often subjected to personal attacks, insults, and discrediting during the election campaign. The ODIHR EAM interlocutors also noted that harassment is often not reported, particularly by women journalists, who are disproportionately affected by such conduct. Since its launch in 2020, a reporting platform established by the former journalists' association has recorded 101 cases.<sup>79</sup> However, concerns were raised about its effectiveness as it is not linked to formal follow-up or protection mechanisms, which, together with insufficient awareness within media organizations, may contribute to journalists' reluctance to report.<sup>80</sup> Recurring practices by political actors to restrict access or provide inadequate working conditions for some media were also reported.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The [report](#) examined alleged irregularities in the financing of political parties and related media activity around the 2022 elections, including the possible use of public funds, state-owned companies and foreign-linked entities.

<sup>78</sup> See [analysis](#) related to education and skills policies relevant to media literacy initiatives. The [EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), Article 33, provides that "Member States shall promote and take measures for the development of media literacy skills".

<sup>79</sup> The [platform](#) serves primarily monitoring and awareness-raising purposes and does not automatically trigger action by public authorities.

<sup>80</sup> The Journalists' Association of Slovenia [Women in the Media](#) report indicated that 42 per cent of women journalists experienced verbal or physical sexual workplace harassment, and more than two-thirds did not report incidents.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, the 23 March 2026 [press release](#) by the Slovenian Journalists' Association regarding the denied access of *Planet TV* journalists to GS' election headquarters on election day.

*Public institutions, in co-operation with journalist associations, could review existing mechanisms for addressing harassment and protecting journalists, especially women journalists, to ensure that they are effective, trusted, and provide clear procedures for follow-up and accountability. Particular attention could be given to strengthening awareness within media organizations and encouraging reporting.*

## **B. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

Freedom of expression and access to public information are constitutionally guaranteed. However, contrary to international standards and despite past recommendations, defamation, slander, and insult remain criminal offences.<sup>82</sup> Disaggregated data on cases of defamation, slander, and insult are not publicly available.

*Criminal provisions for defamation, slander, and insult should be repealed in favour of proportionate civil remedies.*

The legislation provides a generally sound framework for media operations, including during electoral periods.<sup>83</sup> The new Mass Media Act, adopted in September 2025, aligned national legislation with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and the DSA, and constituted the first comprehensive reform of the sector in over two decades, replacing the previous Mass Media Act. It strengthened media ownership transparency, notably through the introduction of a media registry, and enhanced the right of reply. This reform marked a substantial step in improving transparency and accountability in the media environment, in line with previous ODIHR recommendations.

An important reform of the *RTV Slovenia* Act introduced a more pluralistic governance model for the public broadcaster. It replaced a system in which board members were largely appointed by the National Assembly with appointments by a range of institutions, including CSOs, universities, cultural bodies, and *RTV Slovenia* employees. The ODIHR EAM interlocutors welcomed the change as strengthening institutional independence and reducing the potential for political influence, in line with past ODIHR recommendation.

In another positive development, the EU Directive on protecting persons who engage in public participation from abusive court proceedings (“anti-SLAPP Directive”) was transposed into national legislation through a dedicated act, in force since February 2026.<sup>84</sup> However, its effectiveness in deterring abusive litigation, a concern raised in past reports, remains to be assessed in practice.<sup>85</sup>

Media oversight during elections is shared between AKOS, the national regulatory authority for electronic media, and the Inspectorate for Culture and Media, which is mandated to monitor media conduct during election campaigns, including campaign advertising, and to handle complaints. In practice, complaints were submitted to both institutions, indicating some ambiguity in the division of responsibilities. The Inspectorate noted that more effective co-ordination with AKOS would be beneficial and noted the need for additional staffing to enhance its media monitoring capacity.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> According to paragraph 47 of the [General Comment No. 34](#) to the ICCPR, “states parties should consider the decriminalization of defamation and, in any case, the application of the criminal law should only be countenanced in the most serious of cases and imprisonment is never an appropriate penalty”.

<sup>83</sup> This includes: ERCA, the 2025 Mass Media Act, the 2003 Public Information Access Act (amended in 2023), the 2011 Audiovisual Media Services Act (amended in 2022), and the 2005 *RTV Slovenia* Act (amended in 2025).

<sup>84</sup> See [Ius-Info](#) regarding the Act on Protective Measures against Strategic Actions to Prevent Public Participation.

<sup>85</sup> The [2025 European Commission Rule of Law Report for Slovenia](#) noted persisting concerns about SLAPP suits and other forms of pressure against journalists, while acknowledging improvements in overall media freedom.

<sup>86</sup> The Inspectorate allocated three inspectors to monitor media and handle complaints during the electoral period.

While it received a limited number of complaints, primarily concerning transparency of political content and its financing, no violations of applicable legislation were identified.<sup>87</sup>

### C. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Public service broadcaster *RTV Slovenia* is legally required to ensure balanced and impartial coverage during electoral periods, including equal presentation conditions and structured allocation of airtime to political contestants, while private media are guided by editorial choices in their election coverage.

In practice, the media provided contestants with broad opportunities to present their platforms. Representatives of political parties met by the ODIHR EAM indicated that they had access to media throughout the campaign. Media outlets invited contestants from across the political spectrum to participate in discussions and televised debates, allowing them to present their positions. Televised debates, particularly those organized by *RTV Slovenia*, served as a key platform for visibility and presentation of policy positions, with short video excerpts often disseminated by parties and candidates additionally on social media. In some cases, debates were complemented by post-broadcast fact-checking, contributing to viewers' ability to assess the accuracy of statements. While media coverage addressed a range of issues during most of the campaign, in its final weeks it was largely dominated by the release of allegedly illicit recordings and related public and political reactions.

As in previous elections, disputes over participation in public TV debates by non-parliamentary parties re-emerged. Two parties filed lawsuits challenging their exclusion from *RTV Slovenia* debates, arguing that registration deadlines had been set prior to the official start of the campaign. An administrative court ordered the inclusion of one party, while proceedings in the other case were not concluded by the end of the campaign. According to *RTV Slovenia*, this was the first final ruling of its kind and raised concerns that the decision created unequal treatment vis-à-vis other non-parliamentary parties, which, under existing regulations, participate in separate debates.<sup>88</sup>

The *RTV Slovenia* Act requires the public broadcaster to “implement programming content intended for the blind and visually impaired, as well as for the deaf, using adapted techniques”. The Audiovisual Media Services Act provides that broadcasters should “gradually and continuously improve the accessibility of their services for persons with disabilities through proportionate measures, such as sign language interpretation, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, spoken subtitles and audio description”. However, neither law establishes clear or measurable requirements regarding the proportion of programmes that must be accessible, which limits the effectiveness of existing legal provisions in ensuring equal access to information.<sup>89</sup> OPD representatives emphasized that people with hearing impairments cannot fully follow or stay informed about the campaign, as only a very limited amount of news is broadcast in sign language. They also noted that subtitles are often delayed and not accessible or usable for all viewers.

*Consideration could be given to introducing clear and measurable requirements for ensuring the accessibility of information provided by the media, including during election campaigns.*

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<sup>87</sup> The Inspectorate informed the ODIHR EAM of six complaints that were filed with it.

<sup>88</sup> See [Act on Radio and Television Slovenia](#), Article 12 (3).

<sup>89</sup> Article 9 of CRPD requires States to ensure that information and communications intended for the public are accessible to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

## XII. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The election dispute resolution framework provides limited grounds for lodging complaints and appeals, namely voter and candidate registration and voting irregularities. Complaints not explicitly prescribed in the election legislation may be filed under the Act on Administrative Disputes. Courts review the legality of individual acts and actions by public authorities that interfere with human rights and fundamental freedoms where no other judicial remedy is available. This remedy is available only to affected individuals, not to legal entities. Also, no expedited deadlines are prescribed for such proceedings, raising questions about their effectiveness in providing timely redress in line with international standards.<sup>90</sup>

*The electoral dispute resolution framework should be reviewed to broaden legal standing to ensure that citizens whose electoral rights are violated are entitled to lodge a complaint to seek legal remedy within expedited deadlines.*

Complaints related to candidate nomination and registration may be submitted to the ConECs by candidates or representatives of candidate lists before the nomination deadline. Decisions of ConECs on the rejection of candidate lists 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 a ConEC decision on candidate registration if it finds that the decision was unlawful; such action must be taken no later than the day of the publication of candidate lists. These decisions may also be appealed to the Supreme Court within the same deadlines.

During the election period, a total of 15 complaints were submitted by three political parties and coalitions concerning candidate registration, early voting, and alleged election day irregularities. None of the complaints were upheld. Decisions were published either online or at ConECs' premises and were generally well-reasoned.

Candidate lists of one coalition were rejected in three constituencies due to non-compliance with the Election Act, but accepted in five others, indicating inconsistent ConEC practice.<sup>91</sup> After the Supreme Court upheld the initial rejections, the SEC annulled the list's registration in the remaining constituencies, a decision later confirmed by the Supreme Court upon further appeal.

Complaints concerning irregularities in the work of PSs and DECAs during elections may be submitted to the relevant ConEC only within three days after voting and must be decided within 48 hours. The ConEC may annul results at the polling station or district level if irregularities that could affect the outcome are established. The SEC may also annul results at the constituency level if it identifies irregularities in the work of a ConEC. Despite a previous ODIHR recommendation, the law does not clearly define who, if anyone, may appeal ConEC decisions on election results to the SEC, nor does it set clear grounds for invalidation of results. In addition, recount procedures are not foreseen in the legislation, while they could serve as an intermediate step for addressing correctable counting errors, procedural mistakes, or inconsistencies, and to enable better assessments of whether irregularities affected the results, thus providing a stronger basis for possible annulments.

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<sup>90</sup> Paragraph 5.10 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) commits participating States to ensure that “everyone have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”. Section II.3.3.g. of the 2002 Venice Commission’s [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) recommends that “[t]ime-limits for lodging and deciding appeals must be short (three to five days for each at first instance)”.

<sup>91</sup> The grounds for non-registration were that candidates had not been selected by secret ballot, as required by law, and that the candidate list had not demonstrated that it was nominated by party members in accordance with the legal requirements for the reduced signature threshold. As a result, the list was found to have an insufficient number of supporting voter signatures.

*The law should clearly define whether the State Election Commission can assess the legality of decisions of Constituency Election Commissions on election results on the basis of complaints and/or ex officio, and who may file such complaints. Consideration could be given to providing for a recount procedure, including applicable criteria.*

On 25 February 2026, and in an addendum of 9 March, SDS filed a complaint with the SEC challenging the establishment of joint early voting polling stations in seven out of eight constituencies, arguing that this violated the law, created risks to the secrecy of the vote, transparency, and equal access. The SEC dismissed the complaint for lack of jurisdiction, as the law prescribes that complaints against irregularities should be submitted within three days after voting. The complaint was resubmitted after early voting to the SEC, which referred it to the affected ConECs. On 22 March, the ConECs rejected the complaints.<sup>92</sup>

After election day, SDS filed further complaints requesting the annulment of results from 24 early voting polling stations, while the Democrats. of Anže Logar (*Demokrati. Anžeta Logarja*) party filed complaints concerning two constituencies.<sup>93</sup> All were rejected, with no grounds found for annulment or repeat elections. ConECs' decisions indicated a possibility of a complaint to the National Assembly within the mandate confirmation procedure as a further legal remedy available. After the counting of ballots from abroad, on 1 April, SDS filed an additional complaint regarding early voting and late ballot delivery in Argentina. Although it had to be decided within 48 hours, it was only considered on 7 April, together with the final results, and was rejected as unfounded.

Despite previous ODIHR recommendations, the National Assembly is still mandated by the Constitution to confirm the election of MPs through its Commission for Public Office and Elections, established at the first session of the newly elected convocation and dissolved after mandates are confirmed. Candidates or their representatives have the right to challenge decisions of ConECs that may affect the allocation of mandates before the first session of the Commission.<sup>94</sup>

### **XIII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION**

Legislation provides for the observation of all the stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers, with organizations required to apply for accreditation to the SEC no later than ten days before election day. The law also guarantees the presence of representatives of candidate lists at the SEC, ConECs, and DEC, and each list may appoint one proxy per polling station, who may be present throughout voting upon presenting a certificate from the respective DEC.

No nationwide citizen election observation was conducted, as interlocutors indicated a general trust in the voting process. However, some noted a need to monitor campaign conduct in the media and ensure transparency, while CSOs primarily lacked the financial resources to do so. Most activities focused on voter mobilization and enabling informed choice. In addition to ODIHR, one other

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<sup>92</sup> The grounds for rejections included that the organization of early voting complied with existing instructions, with polling locations justified by practical considerations (accessibility, logistics, resources, and security), and that no irregularities affecting the election results were identified. It was further noted that early voting is an optional voting modality, that organizational differences do not in themselves constitute a violation of rights, and that the allegations were general and insufficiently substantiated.

<sup>93</sup> Apart from early voting-related concerns, parties alleged other violations, including early ballot counting, lack of ID checks, improper sealing of ballot boxes, instances of voters being denied the right to vote, ballot shortages causing interruptions, temporary polling station closures, poor organization, and inaccuracies in voter registers.

<sup>94</sup> The newly elected parliament adjudicates these complaints and confirms MPs' mandates, completing the process within 20 days after election day. Decisions of the National Assembly may be appealed by affected candidates or their representatives to the Constitutional Court within eight days.

international observer group, European Exchange, and one national organization, Peace Institute, were accredited, deploying a limited number of observers for election day observation. Two other observer groups, one national and one international, applied for accreditation but were rejected.<sup>95</sup> Related decisions were not published, and the reasons for rejection remain unknown to the public.

#### XIV. ELECTION DAY

In line with ODIHR methodology, the EAM did not observe election day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner. However, EAM members visited a limited number of polling stations in Ljubljana, as well as in Domžale, Grosuplje, Litija, and Škofja Loka. The voting process was assessed as transparent and well-organized, and the secrecy of the vote was largely respected. In some polling stations, the placement of voting booths did not fully ensure secrecy of the vote.

All polling stations visited were accessible to voters with mobility-related disabilities; however, accessibility measures focused predominantly on physical access, with limited attention to other aspects of universal design. At each polling station, a poster outlining the voting steps in a simplified format was displayed. A tactile ballot template was available as an assistive tool for blind and visually impaired voters. However, its design did not allow for fully independent voting and could compromise the secrecy of the vote.<sup>96</sup> To enhance access to information for these voters, a sheet with a QR code linking to audio files with candidate lists and voting procedures was prepared by the election administration to be available at each polling station. However, its use was not systematic, and voters often required assistance from polling staff to locate and use it.

*In consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, further steps should be taken to ensure that voting facilities and materials are accessible, easy to understand, and easy to use for all voters.*

On the Saturday before election day, PB chairpersons and deputy chairpersons received brief instructions related to election day procedures, while all PB members received written SEC instructions some weeks before election day. The SEC also issued additional educational materials, but only one day before election day, which limited their usefulness. Even based on a limited number of polling stations observed, the ODIHR EAM members noted a lack of consistent and uniform application of procedures, including the protection of personal data in voter lists and the registration of assistants.<sup>97</sup> Some incomplete protocols were observed during the tabulation process. OPDs also stressed that training or written instructions for PB members on interacting with voters with psychosocial, intellectual, or cognitive disabilities, supporting them during voting, and preventing discrimination were lacking.

*The election administration should continue to improve the system of training for polling board members, enhancing its quality, to further facilitate consistent application of procedures, proper handling of sensitive data, accurate tabulation, and inclusive interaction with voters with disabilities.*

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<sup>95</sup> This included applications from the association We Are Connected (*Združenje PovezaniSmo*) and International CSO *Synergie Nouvelle pour une Afrique Solidaire* (SNAS).

<sup>96</sup> The template contained cut-outs corresponding to ballot positions, without Braille numbering, requiring voters to count positions. It also lacked tactile indicators to guide on how to insert the ballot into the template, not supporting independent use. The use of white paper templates may result in visible pen marks after use, potentially compromising the secrecy of the vote.

<sup>97</sup> Voters with disabilities or illiterate voters may be assisted by a person of their choice, and such assistance should be recorded in the polling station minutes. In several instances, the ODIHR EAM could not distinguish between assisted or family voting, with PB members neither intervening in possible cases of family voting nor ensuring that assisted voting was properly recorded.

Preliminary and final results were published in a timely and transparent manner on the SEC website, disaggregated by polling station, district, constituency, and nationwide. Preliminary results were updated as they were received, and interim turnout figures were announced at 11:00 and 16:00. Final turnout was 70.25 per cent.

## **XV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in Slovenia and to support efforts to bring them fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections to which they have committed. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with prior ODIHR recommendations, which remain to be addressed.<sup>98</sup> ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Slovenia to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

### **A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To ensure the equality of the vote, consideration should be given to introducing a requirement for periodic revision of district boundaries in a transparent process, which involves broad public consultations.
2. To strengthen legal certainty and public trust, the approach to determining the location of early voting polling stations should be clarified. This could involve a review of the law and related practice, with a view to reconciling legal requirements with operational considerations and, where appropriate, allowing for clearly regulated administrative flexibility.
3. To ensure a clear separation between campaigning and public functions, the legal framework should clearly define permissible activities by public officials during campaigns and be supported by practical guidance. Consideration could also be given to regulating the use of public resources and the timing of major income support measures and publicly funded initiatives during campaign periods.
4. To enhance transparency, integrity, and accountability of campaign finance, consideration should be given to regulating third-party campaigning and spending, defining disclosure rules for pre-campaign expenditures, and introducing interim campaign reporting before election day.
5. The election administration, political parties, and civil society should strengthen voter education efforts throughout the electoral cycle. In consultation with civil society organizations, the State Election Commission could develop and implement proactive, inclusive voter education campaigns, ensuring that information is accessible in multiple formats (including easy-to-read, sign language, and audio), widely disseminated beyond digital platforms, and

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<sup>98</sup> 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”. The follow-up of prior recommendations is assessed by the ODIHR EAM as follows: recommendation 4 from the [2017 presidential election](#), recommendations 9, 11, 17 from the [2018 parliamentary elections](#), and recommendation 9 from the [2022 parliamentary elections](#) are fully implemented. Recommendation 12 from the 2018 report and recommendation 1 from the 2022 report are mostly implemented. Recommendations 2 and 3 from the 2017 report, recommendation 1, 2, 5, 8, 14 from the 2018 report, and recommendations 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 from the 2022 report are partially implemented. See also the [ODIHR electoral recommendations database](#).

tailored to reach different groups of voters, including persons with disabilities, persons belonging to Roma communities, youth and first-time voters.

## **B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

6. To enhance transparency and safeguard trust, the State Election Commission should ensure the timely publication of session minutes, limit the use of correspondence sessions to exceptional circumstances and clearly regulate the grounds for their use, and establish clear rules for the publication of all its acts.

### **CANDIDATE REGISTRATION**

7. The impact of gender candidate list requirements should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that it effectively contributes to achieving parity in the representation of women, as aspired by international standards. Political parties should consider identifying and addressing barriers to women's participation, including by reviewing internal practices and conducting gender audits.

### **ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN**

8. National measures to support effective implementation of the EU Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising should be adopted in a timely manner, including designation of competent authorities and establishment of procedures for oversight and complaints handling.
9. To strengthen response to digital and online threats and safeguard electoral integrity, authorities should consider developing a coherent regulatory and operational framework with clear institutional mandates, co-ordination arrangements, and transparency safeguards. Pre-electoral tabletop exercises and stress tests could be conducted to ensure effective functioning of incident protocols and escalation channels.
10. Agency for Communication Networks and Services and other relevant bodies could enhance public awareness efforts to inform users of their rights and available mechanisms of engagement with online platforms, including for content flagging, complaint procedures, and remedies.

### **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

11. To support effective campaign finance oversight, including in areas recommended for further regulation, consideration could be given to strengthening the capacity of the Court of Audit through increased staffing and resources.

### **MEDIA**

12. Criminal provisions for defamation, slander, and insult should be repealed in favour of proportionate civil remedies.
13. Consideration could be given to further developing a national media literacy framework, with strengthened state-level co-ordination and policy direction, and closer collaboration with CSOs, fact-checkers, and media actors.

14. Public institutions, in co-operation with journalist associations, could review existing mechanisms for addressing harassment and protecting journalists, especially women journalists, to ensure that they are effective, trusted, and provide clear procedures for follow-up and accountability. Particular attention could be given to strengthening awareness within media organizations and encouraging reporting.
15. Consideration could be given to introducing clear and measurable requirements for ensuring the accessibility of information provided by the media, including during election campaigns.

#### **ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

16. The electoral dispute resolution framework should be reviewed to broaden legal standing to ensure that citizens whose electoral rights are violated are entitled to lodge a complaint to seek legal remedy within expedited deadlines.
17. The law should clearly define whether the State Election Commission can assess the legality of decisions of Constituency Election Commissions on election results on the basis of complaints and/or ex officio, and who may file such complaints. Consideration could be given to providing for a recount procedure, including applicable criteria.

#### **ELECTION DAY**

18. In consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, further steps should be taken to ensure that voting facilities and materials are accessible, easy to understand, and easy to use for all voters.
19. The election administration should continue to improve the system of training for polling board members, enhancing its quality, to further facilitate consistent application of procedures, proper handling of sensitive data, accurate tabulation, and inclusive interaction with voters with disabilities.

## ANNEX I: FINAL ELECTION RESULTS<sup>99</sup>

|                                      | Amount    | Percentage              |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Total number of registered voters    | 1,695,249 | 100                     |
| Total number of votes cast (turnout) | 1,190,932 | 70.25                   |
| Total number of invalid votes        | 11,050    | 0.93<br>(of votes cast) |

| Contestants                                                                                | Votes received | Percentage | Number of seats |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Freedom Movement                                                                           | 338,102        | 28.66      | 29              |
| Slovenian Democratic Party                                                                 | 328,923        | 27.88      | 28              |
| New Slovenia – Christian Democrats, Slovenian People's Party, FOCUS of Marko Lotrič        | 109,201        | 9.26       | 9               |
| Social Democrats                                                                           | 79,175         | 6.71       | 6               |
| Democrats. of Anže Logar                                                                   | 78,902         | 6.69       | 6               |
| The Left and the Spring                                                                    | 67,183         | 5.69       | 5               |
| Resni.ca Civic Movement                                                                    | 64,799         | 5.49       | 5               |
| Prerod – Party of Vladimir Prebilič                                                        | 35,976         | 3.05       | 0               |
| Pirate Party of Slovenia                                                                   | 27,811         | 2.36       | 0               |
| Slovenian National Party                                                                   | 26,375         | 2.24       | 0               |
| We, Socialists!                                                                            | 5,657          | 0.48       | 0               |
| Greens of Slovenia + Party of Generations                                                  | 5,277          | 0.45       | 0               |
| Coalition Alternative for Slovenia (Nothing of That Party and Party for a Healthy Society) | 4,785          | 0.41       | 0               |
| Voice of Pensioners of Pavel Rupar                                                         | 4,193          | 0.36       | 0               |
| Karl Erjavec – Trust Party                                                                 | 2,995          | 0.25       | 0               |
| Unity                                                                                      | 251            | 0.02       | 0               |
| Solution – Party of Pensioners of Velenje Slovenia                                         | 164            | 0.01       | 0               |

| Distribution of votes for the Hungarian national community MP seat: | Amount | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Total number of registered voters                                   | 5,384  | 100        |
| Total number of votes cast (turnout)                                | 3,332  | 61.89      |
| Total number of valid votes                                         | 3,224  | 96.76      |
| Total number of invalid votes                                       | 108    | 3.24       |

| Distribution of votes for the Italian national community MP seat: | Amount | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Total number of registered voters                                 | 2,856  | 100        |
| Total number of votes cast (turnout)                              | 1,975  | 69.15      |
| Total number of valid votes                                       | 1,935  | 97.97      |
| Total number of invalid votes                                     | 40     | 2.03       |

| Italian community candidates | Votes |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Felice Žiža                  | 802   |
| Alberto Scheriani            | 578   |
| Christian Poletti            | 347   |
| Stefano Destefano            | 208   |

| Hungarian community candidates | Votes |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Ferenc Horváth                 | 2,336 |
| Tomi Horvat                    | 888   |

<sup>99</sup> See SEC [information](#).

## ABOUT ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and began operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 150 staff.

ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programmes annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

ODIHR also assists participating States' in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights and fundamental freedoms** consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas, including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked people, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance and non-discrimination**, ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website ([www.osce.org/odihr](http://www.osce.org/odihr)).