

INTERIM REPORT
16 September - 7 October 2026

9 October 2026

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 25 October early parliamentary elections take place against the backdrop of a prolonged political crisis and deepening polarization across Serbian society, which has increasingly affected the functioning of public institutions. The student-led protests that followed the November 2024 collapse of a railway station canopy in Novi Sad, which killed 16 people, evolved into a political movement and has emerged as a major challenger in these elections. On 27 September, Aleksandar Vučić resigned as president to lead the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) list.
- The electoral legal framework underwent several significant amendments in 2025 and 2026, some of which addressed prior ODIHR recommendations in whole or in part. While some ODIHR EOM interlocutors welcomed the changes, several raised concerns about the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the consultation process, the adoption of some amendments close to the elections, and their implementation in good faith. Several previous ODIHR recommendations, including priority ones, remain unaddressed, notably concerning voter intimidation and pressure, sanctions and oversight for campaign or finance violations, certain aspects of the misuse of state resources, the independence and effective oversight of the media regulator, the safety of journalists and restrictions on voting rights.
- The elections are administered by a three-tier structure headed by the Republic Electoral Commission (REC). The REC has so far met all legal deadlines for election preparations, and its sessions are streamed online and open to media and observers. While the REC expressed confidence in its capacity to administer the elections, some ODIHR EOM interlocutors at the national and local level raised concerns about the impartiality and political neutrality of the election administration and alleged deficiencies in the integrity of out-of-country and mobile voting. Although the May 2026 provisions introducing mandatory training and certification of election officials enter into force only in 2027, the REC has trained some 1,500 trainers to deliver training for polling board members and is conducting voter information and education activities through broadcast and online channels.
- The right to vote is granted to adult citizens, except those fully deprived of legal capacity or suffrage rights by a court decision. Voter registration is passive, with some 6.5 million voters included in the Unified Voter Register (UVR). Despite efforts with the stated aim of enhancing the transparency of the voter register, numerous electoral stakeholders raised concerns about the accuracy of the UVR, including unusually high numbers of voters registered in certain municipalities and at particular addresses. The authorities have not publicly explained these reported discrepancies or indicated whether they are being examined. The newly established multi-stakeholder Voter Registration Audit Commission has commenced its audit of the UVR, with the first report due by 28 October; several of its members reported not receiving access to relevant data until mid-August and then only partially, enabling limited cross-checking of voter registration records.
- All voters have the right to stand for parliament, although individual independent candidates are not permitted. Candidate lists must submit at least 10,000 supporting signatures, reduced to 5,000 for national minority lists. Following the May 2026 amendments, voters may support more than

one candidate list and contestants may rectify deficiencies identified in their nomination documents. All 19 lists that submitted nominations to the REC were registered, including half under the criteria applicable to national minority lists; one list subsequently withdrew. All registered lists met the requirement that at least 40 per cent of candidates be of the less represented gender; however, only one has a woman at the top of the list.

- The official campaign commenced with the call of elections on 9 September, although unofficial campaigning started earlier. A number of contestants and CSOs raised concerns about what they perceive as the misuse of administrative resources, including the late-August decision to disburse almost EUR 1 billion in one-off payments to adult citizens, as well as significant disparities in campaign resources that disproportionately advantage the ruling party. To date, the campaign is generally low-key, but highly polarized, with door-to-door and street-stand campaigning, and a few well-attended events. Lists' representatives reported multiple examples of intimidation of their activists. Tensions during street campaigning, with isolated instances of violence, have been noted in some locations.
- Campaigning on social networks is largely unregulated, although recently adopted rules on separating public officials' social network accounts for official and campaign purposes, and new regulations on third-party campaigning also apply online. No institution is designated to oversee the online campaign overall. Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about disinformation and manipulative online content, spread and amplified in particular by mainstream outlets and public officials, while no inter-agency mechanism is in place for the elections to publicly co-ordinate responses to online disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference. Reports of alleged spyware used against members of the opposition and activists have heightened concerns about the respect for digital rights, including the integrity of personal data.
- Campaigns are financed from public and private sources. The 2026 amendments introduced for the first time a EUR 6 million campaign expenditure ceiling, regulated third-party campaigning, and linked additional public funding for electoral lists to women's representation addressing a number of previous ODIHR recommendations. The Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC) oversees contestants' campaign finances and monitors the use of public resources during campaigns. The APC has deployed monitors, published weekly statistics, and issued campaign finance guidelines for political entities and third parties. While many ODIHR EOM interlocutors welcomed the amendments, they considered their practical implementation so far to be limited and noted that the APC had yet to initiate timely enforcement measures during the campaign. Contestants must submit preliminary campaign finance reports five days before election day, which cover the campaign up to seven days before the vote.
- The polarized media environment remains constrained by a limited advertising market and dependence on public funding, which many ODIHR EOM interlocutors considered to expose media outlets to political and economic influence. Most national and regional broadcasters are perceived as favouring the government and the ruling party. Journalist associations reported attacks, intimidation, smear campaigns, obstruction of reporting as well as criminal cases and civil lawsuits against journalists. During the campaign, broadcasters must provide non-discriminatory election coverage. The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) resolved a prolonged leadership deadlock on 22 September and as of 10 September monitors 11 television services using its 2023 monitoring sample; a proposal to expand the sample, including to *Informer TV*, failed following a tied vote in the REM Council.
- The REC adjudicates complaints against the decisions, actions and omissions of the election administration in public sessions, and its decisions have so far been published in a timely manner.

As of 7 October, the REC considered 21 complaints, 2 of which were upheld, while on appeal the Administrative Court upheld all 10 REC decisions on their merits. The May 2026 amendments introduced expedited deadlines for the Constitutional Court to adjudicate electoral disputes. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about the independence of the judiciary. The APC adjudicates complaints concerning misuse of administrative resources and public office and campaign finance violations, and may also act *ex officio*. While certain types of its decisions are published, the APC considers cases in closed sessions and does not maintain a public register of complaints; to date, it has issued warnings to 17 public officials.

- The law provides for citizen and international observation. Several citizen observer organizations are conducting long-term observation and intend to deploy election day observers. Some ODIHR EOM CSO interlocutors described an increasingly hostile and intimidating environment for civil society, which they considered to discourage civic engagement and create challenges for an independent election observation. Citizen observer organizations also reported public pressure and physical and verbal attacks, and raised concerns about the safety of their observers.

II. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the authorities, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 16 September.¹ The ODIHR EOM, headed by Eoghan Murphy consists of a 14-member core team based in Belgrade and 30 long-term observers deployed on 25 September across Serbia. Mission members are drawn from 25 OSCE participating States and 50 per cent of mission members are women. ODIHR has requested participating States to second 300 short-term observers to observe election-day proceedings.²

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 25 October early parliamentary elections take place against the backdrop of a prolonged political crisis, decreasing trust in state institutions, and deepening polarization across Serbian society.³ Meaningful political dialogue and cross-party co-operation remain limited, while the polarized environment has increasingly affected the functioning of public institutions.

The outgoing government, elected in 2023, was led by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), which has governed in coalition with the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) since 2012. Changes in parliamentary coalitions since the last elections resulted in the 10 lists elected in 2023 splintering into 18 parliamentary groups.⁴ Women make up 37.6 per cent of the outgoing parliament, a slight increase from 2022 (36.4 per cent). Nine out of 31 ministers are women.

Following the collapse of a newly renovated canopy at Novi Sad railway station in November 2024, that resulted in 16 deaths and prompted student-led protests and university blockades, a significant student-led political movement emerged. In January 2025, controversies concerning acts of violence against the protesters led to the resignation of Prime Minister Miloš Vučević.⁵ The student movement's initial demands for state accountability and rule of law evolved from May 2025 into a call for early elections, with their stated intention to register as a contestant.⁶

¹ See previous ODIHR [election observation reports](#) on Serbia.

² The ODIHR EOM is not observing the National Minority Councils' elections which will take place on 8 November.

³ Including the forthcoming elections, six out of the last eight parliamentary elections have been held early.

⁴ The composition of the outgoing parliament is available [here](#).

⁵ [In his statement from 28 January 2025](#), the Prime Minister cited attacks on students in Novi Sad as the reason for his resignation.

⁶ The student movement has since its inception called for greater financial transparency in government contracts.

Following a proposal of the government, on 9 September, President Aleksandar Vučić dissolved the National Assembly (Parliament) and called early parliamentary elections for 25 October.⁷ The President's call for elections was preceded by months of public statements indicating their likelihood.⁸ The President attributed the need for early elections to political turbulence which requires a decision from citizens on Serbia's future path.⁹ As per his previously stated intention, on 27 September, 19 days into the campaign, Aleksandar Vučić resigned as president, to lead the "Aleksandar Vučić – United Serbia" list for the parliament.¹⁰ Ana Brnabić, the Speaker of the Parliament, is currently the acting president.

Concerns about the observance of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of peaceful assembly have been increasingly voiced by domestic and international actors.¹¹ Serbia has been an EU candidate country since 2012; however, in July 2026, eight EU member states opposed the opening of Cluster 3 of accession negotiations, preventing the required unanimity to be reached, citing concerns related to the rule-of-law and Serbia's alignment with the EU's foreign and security policy.¹²

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 2006 Constitution and the 2022 Law on Election of Members of Parliament (LEMP), supplemented by Republic Electoral Commission (REC) decisions and instructions. The electoral legal framework has undergone four rounds of significant amendments since last parliamentary elections, including amendments to the Law on the Unified Voter Register (LUVR) in 2025, the LEMP and other election-related legislation in May 2026, the Law on Financing Political Activities (LFPA) in July, and the latest changes to the Law on Prevention of Corruption (LPC) introduced on 31 August 2026.¹³ The LUVR, LFPA and LPC were adopted under urgent procedure.¹⁴

Some amendments addressed previous ODIHR recommendations in whole or in part, including measures aimed at enhancing the transparency and integrity of the voter register and the professional capacity of the election administration, candidate registration, political and campaign finance, electoral dispute resolution and introducing additional safeguards separating public office and party

⁷ On 7 September, the same day that the government proposed calling elections, the funeral of Ratko Mladić, who was convicted of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, was held in Belgrade with military honours and attended by high public officials, sparking strong criticism from some of the opposition and international community.

⁸ On 30 May 2025, the President [linked](#) the timing of elections to preparations for Expo 2027 in Belgrade.

⁹ A [summary](#) of the government's proposal was published on 7 September. President Vučić's declaration was [reported](#) by the media.

¹⁰ The then President's second mandate was due to expire on 31 May 2027. The Constitution permits only two five-year terms. No date has been confirmed for the early presidential election.

¹¹ During a 15 March 2025 demonstration, a sudden collective panic resulted in injuries and raised allegations of the use of a sonic weapon, which the [government denies](#). The demonstration, described as Serbia's largest-ever, was measured by the government at 107,000 and by the independent Public Assembly Archive at between 275,000 to 325,000. In April 2025, the UN's Special Rapporteurs [raised concerns](#) that an acoustic weapon may have been used, listed other "serious concerns at what appears to be an increasing restriction on the right to peaceful assembly".

¹² See the [EU Council Working Party](#) on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU documents of 6 and 7 July 2026 concerning Serbia and Cluster 3. See also [media reports](#).

¹³ Other changes to the electoral legal framework include the 2023 and 2025 amendments to media legislation.

¹⁴ At the request of the Serbian authorities, ODIHR provided [legal opinions](#) on several proposed amendments, assessing the extent to which the submitted drafts addressed previous recommendations and identifying areas requiring further revision. While many recommendations in the ODIHR Opinions were addressed, others remain outstanding.

activities.¹⁵ However, several previous ODIHR recommendations, including priority ones, remain unaddressed; those relate mainly to preventing voter intimidation and pressure, dissuasive sanctions and oversight for campaign or campaign finance violations, certain aspects of prevention of the misuse of state resources, the independence and effective oversight of the media regulator, safety of journalists, and the remaining restrictions on voting rights.

While the authorities informed the ODIHR EOM about the public consultations held during the legal reform process, several ODIHR EOM interlocutors highlighted the lack of meaningful discussions and insufficient opportunities to participate effectively.¹⁶ While some ODIHR EOM interlocutors welcomed the legislative changes, several raised concerns about certain amendments in terms of their actual impact on the election process, the capacity of their good faith implementation by the respective authorities, as well as limited awareness of the new provisions among relevant stakeholders, especially due to their adoption close to the election date.

The 250 members of National Assembly (*Narodna Skupština*) are elected for four-year terms through a proportional representation system with closed candidate lists in a single nationwide constituency. Mandates are distributed among candidate lists that receive at least three per cent of the votes cast, while lists representing national minorities are exempt from the threshold.¹⁷

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections are administered by a three-tier structure comprising the REC, 166 local electoral commissions (LECs) and some 8,323 polling boards (PBs).¹⁸ All election management bodies operate in permanent and extended compositions.¹⁹ Permanent members of the election commissions are nominated by political parties, whereas members of the extended composition are nominated by registered contestants. All members have substitutes (deputy members).

The permanent REC composition comprises a chairperson and 16 members, of whom 8 are women, appointed proportionally to political parties' representation in parliament.²⁰ For these elections, electoral contestants have nominated an additional 16 members (including four women) and their substitutes, forming the extended composition of the REC. The REC is supported by the General

¹⁵ The amendments, *inter alia*, introduced mechanisms for independent audit and transparency of the voter register, mandatory training for lower-level election commissions, allowed voters to sign in support of more than one electoral list and contestants to rectify deficiencies in nomination documents, revised the criteria for determining national minority list status, removed deposit requirements for political parties and groups not represented in the previous parliament, introduced expenditures limits, regulated third-party campaigning, introduced deadlines for the Constitutional Court to adjudicate election-related constitutional complaints, broadened the definition of public officials, and increased the APC's monitoring responsibilities.

¹⁶ Public hearings preceded the adoption of amendments to each of the LEMP, LFPA and LPC, and were held in Kragujevac, Niš, Novi Sad and Belgrade in May, June and August 2026, respectively. The few opposition MPs who participated in voting on the amendments, voted against or abstained. In its legal [opinions](#) on the recent electoral reforms, ODIHR repeatedly underlined the importance of inclusive, transparent and meaningful consultations with relevant stakeholders, with sufficient time for their effective participation and consideration of their views, and of adopting electoral reforms well in advance of elections.

¹⁷ Moreover, alongside the exemption from the threshold, the quotient for national minority lists that receive less than 3 per cent of the votes cast is increased by 35 per cent during the seat allocation process.

¹⁸ Including 8,210 polling stations inside the country. Special polling stations (PSs) have been established in 29 penitentiary institutions and 93 in Serbia's diplomatic representations across 37 countries to facilitate out-of-country voting. On 5 October, the REC decided that voters residing in Kosovo* will vote at the polling stations of the neighbouring municipalities, Vranje, Kuršumlija, Raška and Tutin. All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, should be understood in line with the [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99](#).

¹⁹ PBs are constituted only for the election period.

²⁰ The REC Secretary and a representative of the Statistical Office participate in REC sessions without voting rights.

Secretariat of the Parliament. In December 2024, the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification within National Assembly Service was amended to establish a new unit dedicated exclusively to supporting the REC, in line with previous ODIHR recommendations.²¹

The REC has so far met all legal deadlines for election preparations. Since the elections were called, the REC has held 23 sessions and adopted decisions that were promptly published.²² The REC established additional working groups on financial matters related to election administration, voting abroad, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and statistical data management. REC sessions were streamed online and along with working group meetings were open to the media and observers. Materials were provided to REC members and accredited observers in advance.

The REC expressed confidence in its capacity to administer the elections. However, ODIHR observers, both at national and local level, were informed about concerns regarding the impartiality and political neutrality of the election administration. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors alleged deficiencies in the integrity of out-of-country and mobile voting.²³

Permanent membership of the LECs proportionally reflects representation of political parties in local councils. LECs are composed of 7 to 13 members, depending on the number of voters in their respective administrative unit.²⁴ LECs manage election preparations at the local level, including allocation of polling stations and training of PB members.²⁵ In line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, the REC collected gender disaggregated data on LEC composition according to which some 46 per cent of LEC permanent membership and their substitutes are women.²⁶

The May 2026 amendments introduced a mandatory training and certification system for election officials to be organized by the REC. In accordance with the law, the provisions enter into force only from 2027; however, the REC informed the ODIHR EOM that for these elections it had trained some 1,500 trainers to conduct training of PB members. Since 1 October, the REC has been conducting webinars with 22 sessions covering 11 topics for LEC members, observers and other stakeholders, complemented by e-learning courses and training material for election officials on its website. The REC produced four voter information videos, which it distributed to national, regional and local broadcasters and begun disseminating voter information and education materials via its social media channels.

By 19 September, LECs had determined the locations of polling stations, and on 7 September the REC requested local authorities to report on their accessibility.²⁷ Some voter education and training materials on the REC website include accessibility features for persons with visual and hearing impairments.

²¹ Between February and September 2026, 19 staff were recruited or reassigned to the unit from other positions in the Secretariat of the Parliament.

²² REC decisions are published online and included, among others, decisions on the allocation of funds, electoral documentation and materials, contestant registration and replacement of LEC members.

²³ To date, the REC has not adopted the draft Instruction on the rules for mobile voting.

²⁴ Since the call of the elections, some 4.5 per cent of the LEC members and deputies were replaced.

²⁵ On 29 September, the REC adopted a decision on mandatory allocation of parliamentary parties' quotas in membership of each of the in-country PBs. The allocation was prepared by the Statistical Office using mathematical and sociological methods, which, according to the REC, included the use of artificial intelligence for the first time.

²⁶ The REC published data on gender representation of LEC members on its [website](#).

²⁷ The REC requested local authorities to provide detailed information on polling station accessibility, including the availability of ramps, elevators and lifting platforms, designated parking, audio-tools, and appropriate signage. Mobile voting may be requested due to serious illness, age or disability.

VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

The right to vote is granted to citizens who reach 18 years of age, except those fully deprived of legal capacity or suffrage rights by a court decision.²⁸ Voter registration is passive, with eligible voters automatically included in the electronic Unified Voter Register (UVR) based on their permanent residence. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) maintains and updates the UVR based on data provided by the Ministry of Interior and local administrations, as well as voter requests.²⁹

The MPALSG and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) have provided voter information on registration and procedures for updating voter records, including for voters temporarily residing elsewhere in Serbia or abroad. In line with the LUVR, the Ministry has been publishing weekly online updates on the number of voters by municipality and household, as well as changes to the UVR.³⁰ Voters may verify their records and request corrections online or through local administrations.

In recent weeks, numerous ODIHR EOM interlocutors and other electoral stakeholders, as well as media reports, have pointed to unusually high numbers of voters registered in certain municipalities and at particular addresses.³¹ To date, the MPALSG has not publicly provided an explanation for these reported discrepancies or announced whether they are being examined, and informed the ODIHR EOM those were politically biased allegations.

The 2024 and 2025 legal amendments aim to enhance voter registration transparency and public confidence in the integrity of the UVR.³² Accordingly, the Voter Registration Audit Commission (VRAC) was established on 28 January to conduct periodic UVR audits.³³ By law, it must issue its first report, including recommendations to improve the UVR's maintenance and accuracy, by 28 October. By 9 July, the VRAC had held seven sessions, adopting its rules of procedure and work plans and addressing organizational matters. Thereafter, and through 6 October, its work continued in working groups whose meetings were not open to the public, with no public updates on interim findings or results. According to the authorities, the Commission was granted phased access to the relevant databases starting from March 2026.³⁴ While acknowledging some access was granted,

²⁸ The disenfranchisement of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities on this basis remains contrary to international standards. See Articles 12 and 29 of the CRPD. Paragraph 9.4 of the 2013 CRPD Committee's Communication No. 4/2011 states that "an exclusion of the right to vote on the basis of a perceived or actual psychosocial or intellectual disability, including a restriction pursuant to an individualized assessment, constitutes discrimination on the basis of disability, within the meaning of article 2 of the Convention".

²⁹ Voters could request corrections to their records from local administrations up to 9 October and from the MPALSG between 10 and 21 October. By 10 October, the MPALSG is required to determine the total number of voters for each municipality and polling station and provide the relevant UVR extracts to the respective LECs. Decisions on individual changes to the UVR made after 10 October shall be submitted to the REC by 22 October.

³⁰ As of 5 October, the MPALSG website recorded 6,450,053 voters included in the UVR. This figure does not include voters registered in Glogovac, Đakovica, Dečani, Kačanik, Štimlje, Suva Reka in Kosovo*, which does not preclude their right to vote.

³¹ Some electoral stakeholders, including ODIHR EOM interlocutors from Apatin, Bujanovac, Mali Zvornik, Sjenica, Uzice and Zaječar, and [media](#) raised concerns about [deficiencies](#) or unusually high voter numbers at certain addresses or in settlements, as well as in some municipalities, compared with 2022 census data.

³² Since 2024, the LUVR has amongst other changes required that a citizen have at least six months of permanent residence before election day to register to vote at a new permanent address. This safeguard against past practices of mobilizing voters to vote from another municipality does not apply to voters who recently acquired citizenship and are now to be enrolled on the UVR for the first time.

³³ The VRAC is a multi-stakeholder collegial body comprising five members nominated by parliamentary majority parties, three by the parliamentary opposition, and two by civil society. Each member has a deputy. Only 3 of the 20 VRAC members and deputies are women.

³⁴ To the voter register's transactional database on 10 March, the electronic data exchange system on 5 May, and the functionality to retrieve underlying records on 3 July 2026. They further stated that additional requests from Commission members required time for technical implementation and ensuring secure access.

several VRAC representatives informed the ODIHR EOM that although they got partial access in mid-August they continue to face limitations in cross-checking the data against residency and citizenship databases.

Voters, including those temporarily residing abroad, may request to vote at their place of temporary residence no later than 3 October. Upon voters' requests to vote at a particular diplomatic or consular representation and upon proposal of the MFA, the REC establishes a polling station abroad, by 4 October. The MFA submitted its proposal on allocation of polling stations only hours before the deadline, which limited the time available to consider the amendments. Opposition representatives raised concerns that the proposed allocation of polling stations for out-of-country voting was insufficient.³⁵

VII. PARTY AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

All eligible voters have the right to stand for parliament. Candidate lists may be nominated by registered political parties, coalitions of parties or groups of at least 10 voters, but individual independent candidates are not allowed.³⁶ The nomination period began when the elections were called and ended on 4 October. Each nominating entity must submit at least 10,000 supporting signatures from eligible voters, individually certified by an authorized entity.³⁷ Following the May 2026 amendments, voters may support more than one candidate list. National minority lists require 5,000 support signatures.³⁸ The amended legal provisions further specified the criteria for determining national minority list status and extended the possibility to nominate such lists to groups of citizens.³⁹ A number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concern, that despite recent amendments, registration requirements for national minority lists remain prone to misuse. Candidate lists must include at least 40 per cent of the less represented gender, with at least two of every five consecutive candidates belonging to that gender.

The REC verifies the submitted registration documents and decides on the registration of a nomination within 48 hours following submission. Support signatures are verified against the UVR. The verification process identified cases of an insufficient number of support signatures, multiple signatures by the same voter in support of the same list, candidates not registered in the UVR, and missing required consent forms.⁴⁰ Under the May 2026 amendments, if the REC identifies omissions or irregularities during verification, the nominating entity is granted 48 hours to correct the submitted documents.⁴¹ The amendments also require the REC, where there are "reasonable grounds" to suspect

³⁵ In response to the public statements by the opposition, including student movement, about the alleged suppression of voting abroad, on 1 October, the MFA [replied](#) that "[t]he so-called "student instructions" circulated on social media constitute a malicious attempt to exert day-to-day political pressure during the election campaign" and provided clarification on the application procedure for out-of-country voting.

³⁶ Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits participating States to "respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination".

³⁷ The signatures can be certified at municipalities, courts, and public and private notaries. "Student List" claimed that municipal authorities were not even-handed in the certification process.

³⁸ National minority lists may be nominated by parties or coalitions composed exclusively of political parties registered in the Register of Political Parties as representing national minorities.

³⁹ The amendments also restored the possibility to consult the relevant National Minority Council when determining whether a list qualifies for national minority status.

⁴⁰ Following complaints from REC members and voters, the registration documentation of the list "Dad, this is for you – Petar Đurić" was subject to additional scrutiny. On 30 September, its registration was annulled after an additional 125 signatures were invalidated, leaving the list with an insufficient number of valid signatures. The list was granted 48 hours to submit the missing signatures; on 2 October, the list was registered.

⁴¹ In addition to the list "Dad, this is for you – Petar Đurić", two other lists were given an opportunity to correct their documentation: the "People's Choice" and the "Bogoljub Karić – Movement Power of Serbia – BK". Both were registered after submitting the corrected documentation.

misuse of voters' personal data in the collection of support signatures, to file a criminal complaint with the prosecutor's office.⁴² The order of parliamentary candidate lists on the ballot is determined by the chronological order of their registration.⁴³

All 19 lists that submitted their nominations to the REC were registered; one list subsequently withdrew.⁴⁴ Of these, nine were nominated by political parties, seven by coalitions and two by groups of voters. Half of the lists were registered under the criteria applicable to national minority lists. While all registered lists met the gender representation requirements, only one has a woman at the top of the list.

VIII. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The official campaign commenced with the call of elections on 9 September and ends 48 hours before election day.⁴⁵ While there are 18 candidate lists running, the campaign discourse to date has mainly been dominated by two contestants: the SNS-led list, "Aleksandar Vučić – United Serbia" ("United Serbia"), headed by the outgoing President, and the "Student List – Students are Winning" ("Student List"), put forward by the decentralized student movement, in which Dr. Ilija Srdanović is placed first on the list.⁴⁶ Some outgoing parliamentary parties are also contesting the elections.⁴⁷

Unofficial campaigning began before the calling of the elections. Several of the lists used the collection of signatures as an opportunity to mobilize supporters and test their campaign operations. "United Serbia" list reported collecting over 200,000 signatures in a matter of hours, relying on the SNS political structures. "Student List" collected over 84,600 signatures in a more organic manner. The "Student List" started their campaign with a cycling tour of the country presenting themselves as "Guardians of the Constitution" and meeting local communities. Aleksandar Vučić's resignation as president marked an increase in the visibility of the "United Serbia" campaign, with the former president joining the campaign trail. Still, to date, the campaign is generally low-key with billboards, door-to-door and street-stand campaigning, along with call-centre activities and a few well-attended events.⁴⁸ All contestants note that the overall campaign environment is highly polarized. Lists' representatives report multiple examples of intimidation of their activists. Media and ODIHR Long-

⁴² On 23 September, while verifying the list of "Bogoljub Karić – Movement Power of Serbia – BK", the REC requested additional information from the authorities that had certified the support signatures. Following their response, the REC invalidated some 4.5 per cent of the signatures and identified indications of potential misuse. The list retained a sufficient number of valid signatures and was registered.

⁴³ The "People's Choice", registered on 18 September, withdrew from the race on 22 September. As the law does not regulate the effect of such withdrawals on the order of lists on the ballot, the case prompted discussion within the REC and among registered contestants placed lower on the ballot as to whether their ballot positions should change. Representatives of "European Serbia" list informed the ODIHR EOM that the uncertainty regarding the number on the ballot was negatively impacting their ability to campaign.

⁴⁴ See [the list of registered contestants](#) on the REC website.

⁴⁵ [Media](#) and [CSOs](#) noted earlier instances of political mobilization and campaigning, with President Vučić touring the country throughout August, including at a 29 August "United Serbia - Aleksandar Vučić" rally, which became the official slogan of the SNS campaign.

⁴⁶ "United Serbia's" list also includes candidates from five smaller parties, whereas "Student List" has drawn support from around 18 opposition political parties as well as a range of civil society associations and organizations. "Student List" deliberately did not include outgoing MPs on their list.

⁴⁷ Among others: Party of Freedom and Justice (SSP) and Center Party of Serbia (SRCE) in a coalition list "European Serbia"; the SPS-led list "Factor of Stability" includes the Greens of Serbia (ZS), Unique Serbia (JS), and Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS); and the "Authentic Right" list includes the New Democratic Party of Serbia (Novi DSS) and The Monarchists.

⁴⁸ To date, the biggest campaign rally, organized by the "United Serbia" in Belgrade on 3 October, gathered at least 25,000 supporters.

Term Observers noted tensions in street campaigning in some locations, with isolated instances of violence.⁴⁹

The “United Serbia” has centred its campaign around themes of stability, economic growth and foreign policy, whereas the “Student List” focuses mainly on anti-corruption, framing the elections as a referendum on the future direction of the country. The national minority parties focus predominantly on local issues of their respective communities.

The LPC prohibits the use of public resources for the promotion of political parties, electoral lists and candidates, including for the public presentation of parties or their electoral programmes during an election campaign. The Law on Electronic Media extends the prohibition to media outlets, which may not report on official openings of infrastructure and other facilities attended by officials who are candidates during the 30 days before voting.⁵⁰ A number of contestants and CSOs raised concerns about what they perceived as the extensive misuse of administrative resources, including decisions taken to revise the budget at the end of August resulting in one-off payments to adult citizens totalling almost EUR 1 billion, and pointed to the significantly disproportionate resource advantage enjoyed by the ruling party.⁵¹

The Internet is widely accessible and used across Serbia. Social network platforms have become a leading source of news. Instagram and Facebook are the most used platforms, with political actors also active on X and TikTok. Contestants have relied heavily on social networks for campaigning.⁵² Campaigning on social networks is largely unregulated, although recently adopted amendments to the LPC establish rules on separating public officials’ social network accounts for official and campaign purposes, and new regulations on third-party campaigning also apply online. The Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC) is mandated to monitor compliance with these regulations; however, no institution is designated to oversee the online campaign overall.

Thus far, narratives of the government’s achievements and patriotism have dominated the incumbent’s campaign discourse online, along with accusations against the student movement, while the “Student List” mostly focused on mobilization and presentation of its program. The tone of the

⁴⁹ On 25 September, the Ministry of Interior [reported](#) a case of an attack on SNS activists and vandalism of a “United Serbia” campaign stand in Kula. The Public Prosecutor is investigating reports of a violent encounter between “United Serbia” and “Student List” supporters including in [Novi Sad](#) on 29 September.

⁵⁰ The 31 August 2026 amendments to the LPC require the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC) to monitor public officials’ campaign-related activity and report weekly. Since 15 September, the APC has been monitoring the campaign activities of 93 public officials. The APC has deployed monitors throughout the country to specifically track the contestants’ campaign expenditure. Its weekly reports provide statistics on decisions concerning public officials but do not include information on its monitoring activities. On 30 September, one of them was violently attacked in Belgrade when on duty, [according to the media reports](#). The APC also issued special guidelines and instructions for political entities and third parties participating in the election campaign.

⁵¹ The [announcement](#) of budget amendments was made on 31 August, including automatic payments in September of between RSD 20,000 to RSD 35,000 to pensioners, RSD 25,000 per child receiving benefits, and up to RSD 25,000 to veterans. All adults not receiving these payments were eligible for a payment of RSD 6,000. In early September, President Vučić sent a letter to all pensioners which was argued could be a [breach of personal data](#) and constitute campaign material. After the elections were called, a housing subsidy scheme for rural areas [increased](#) maximum payments from RSD 1.5 million to RSD 2.5 million. On 26 September, the Minister for Energy announced [energy price reductions](#) to some pensioners throughout the winter.

⁵² On 23 September, the ODIHR EOM started qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the online campaign, with a selection of over 70 accounts of political parties or electoral lists, party leaders, state institutions, and key political actors, across *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *TikTok*, and *X*.

campaign, both offline and online, was often highly confrontational and divisive.⁵³ Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors have raised concerns regarding disinformation and manipulative content online, spread and amplified in particular by mainstream outlets and public officials.⁵⁴ Social network platforms are not legally obliged to address systemic risks related to elections, or to report on their activities related to preventing coordinated inauthentic operations.⁵⁵ There is no inter-agency mechanism in place for the elections to publicly co-ordinate responses to online disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference and no state institution is designated to handle communication with social network platforms.

Several domestic and international organizations have expressed concerns about the respect for digital rights, including the integrity of personal data.⁵⁶ Recent reports of alleged spyware used against members of the opposition, individuals in the student movement, and activists have heightened concerns among a number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors.⁵⁷ Over the past year, numerous cases of alleged threats and targeting of individual social network accounts have been documented, including against civil society organizations and media workers.⁵⁸ Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted a general widespread lack of trust in state institutions, compounded by limited responsiveness of relevant authorities to reported online cases.

IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is regulated by the LFPA, substantially amended on 9 July 2026, the LPC and the Criminal Code. The 2026 amendments introduced ceilings on campaign expenditure for the first time, regulated third-party campaigning, and linked additional public funding for electoral lists to women's representation. While the authorities addressed a substantial majority of prior ODIHR recommendations, several remain unaddressed, including pre-electoral reporting obligations for third parties, on-site inspection powers for the APC and the obligation for the Agency to identify violations

⁵³ For example, on 19 September, the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts posted a video on Instagram, which National Assembly Speaker Ana Brnabić condemned as containing “threats to arrest Vučić and allusions to sexual violence”. On 22 September, SNS candidate Saša Borojević described on Instagram members of the “Student List” as “those who hold sectarian views”, accompanied by an image of a devil. On 30 September, former President Vučić referred to the student movement as “those who wanted to bring our country down”.

⁵⁴ For example, on 16 and 17 September, several posts on X, [including](#) by Milenko Jovanov, leader of the SNS parliamentary group targeted Dr. Ilija Srdanović, the first candidate on the “Student List” with manipulated images linking him to Montenegrin nationalist groups. Local officials in Kraljevo and Vrnjačka Banja shared on Facebook [manipulated](#) video content about a “Student List” candidate’s sexual life. Over 30 women’s organizations and activists [condemned](#) spreading manipulative and misogynist content online.

⁵⁵ Although the Law on Personal Data Protection requires companies that process large amounts of personal data based outside Serbia to appoint a representative in Serbia if they offer services to people in Serbia, not all platforms have complied with this regulation. Meta, Google, and TikTok voluntarily publish periodic reports on some actions taken against coordinated influence operations. According to TikTok’s 2026 covert influence operations [reports](#), in January, it disrupted a network of 60 inauthentic accounts operating from Serbia across multiple platforms, with a total of 52,420 followers, while in May it disrupted a network of 322 inauthentic accounts with a total of 795,959 followers; both networks aimed to artificially amplify narratives favourable to SNS. Google [reported](#) that in May 2026, as part of its activities against coordinated influence operations in Serbia, it had terminated eight YouTube channels that had been sharing content critical of the United States government.

⁵⁶ See the [15 September press release by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#); the [June 2026 Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#); [SHARE Foundation Quarterly Report](#); and the [2026 Human Rights Watch Report](#).

⁵⁷ The SHARE Foundation [identified](#) at least 14 individuals who had been targeted by advanced spyware since the beginning of 2026, with forensic analysis of two cases corroborated by the [Citizen Lab](#) at the University of Toronto and Amnesty International’s Security Lab.

⁵⁸ The Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights’ [database](#) includes 95 incidents of social media attacks, 49 cases of electronic or social media defamation, and one case of a hacked social media account in 2026. SHARE Foundation’s [database](#) includes at least 53 incidents of threats and attacks on social networks in 2026.

proactively, financial disclosures in the final week of the campaign, limits on candidate's own funds and more dissuasive sanctions.⁵⁹

Campaigns are financed from public and private sources through a dedicated campaign account.⁶⁰ Public campaign funds are paid in two instalments: 40 per cent divided equally among lists that declared an intention to use them, and 60 per cent among lists that win seats and have filed the preliminary report. Private funding is limited to membership fees, donations, legacies and income from a party's own property.⁶¹ Third parties may use only their own funds and loans, and may not contribute to the entity they support.⁶²

Ceilings on campaign expenditure are set for the first time at EUR 6 million per electoral list (approx. RSD 702 million).⁶³ Third parties are subject to a separate ceiling of 10 average monthly salaries (AMS) per calendar year, RSD 1,088,400 (approx. EUR 9,300). The third-party expenditure does not count towards the costs incurred by the contestants.

The APC oversees contestants campaign finances and monitors the use of public resources during campaigns. No later than five days before elections, contestants must file preliminary campaign finance reports electronically with the APC covering the period from the calling of the elections to seven days before election day. Final reports, reflecting the financing of the entire campaign period, are due within 30 days of the publication of the final results. Third parties file a single report within 10 days after election day. All reports must be published by the APC.

While welcoming the amendments to the LFPA, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors considered that practical implementation has so far been limited, noting that the APC had yet to initiate timely enforcement measures during the campaign period. The LFPA requires contestants to publish on their respective websites if a donation exceeds one AMS within eight days. As of 7 October, the ODIHR EOM noted a few contesting lists had published such information. By law, the contestants are required to label the printed campaign material they distribute with the name of the printing house that had produced it. The EOM Long-Term Observers report inconsistencies in the compliance with the provision.⁶⁴

X. MEDIA

The polarized media environment remains constrained by a limited advertising market and dependence on public funding. Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors consider that such conditions

⁵⁹ The ODIHR opinions of [11 May](#) and [29 June](#) 2026 assessed successive drafts without covering the final text as adopted. See also the ODIHR final reports on the 2023 early parliamentary elections and the 2024 local elections.

⁶⁰ Foreign, anonymous, cash and intermediary contributions are prohibited, as are those from public institutions, state-owned enterprises, trade unions, associations, foundations, religious communities, and gambling and excise operators.

⁶¹ In an election year, contributions may not exceed 7.5 average monthly salaries (AMS) for natural persons and 15 AMS for legal persons; that is RSD 816,300 (approx. EUR 7,000) and RSD 1,632,600 (approx. EUR 13,950) respectively. EUR 1 = RSD 117. One AMS is approx. RSD 108,840 (approx. EUR 930).

⁶² As of 7 October, no third party was registered according to the APC website.

⁶³ The ceilings are fixed in euros and not indexed. In 2023 early parliamentary elections, the highest expenditure was reported by the list "*Aleksandar Vučić – Serbia Must Not Stop*", at RSD 866.8 million (approx. EUR 7.4 million), while the next highest was reported by the list "*Ivica Dačić – Prime Minister of Serbia*", at RSD 262.0 million (approx. EUR 2.2 million).

⁶⁴ In Belgrade, Novi Pazar, Vranje, Zaječar, Zrenjanin printed campaign material of various contestants did not display the required information. The APC informed the ODIHR EOM that on the basis of collected materials and APC monitors' reports, it will initiate appropriate proceedings against all political entities that fail to comply with this legal obligation.

expose outlets to political and economic influence.⁶⁵ National television remains the most frequently used source of information.⁶⁶ Public Radio-Television of Serbia (RTS) and the four national private broadcasters, B92, Happy, *Pink*, and *Prva*, as well as the majority of regional broadcasters, are perceived as pro-government and pro-SNS.⁶⁷ The major cable broadcasters, *N1* and *Nova S*, are part of the Luxembourg-based United Media, and are primarily available through cable networks and online platforms. They report obstacles with their distribution through providers owned by the state-controlled *Telekom Srbija*.⁶⁸ Ongoing changes in the management of United Media and its broadcasting channels and web portals, as well as the subsequent dismissals of senior editors and the cancellation of a prominent satirical program prompted interlocutors' concerns about editorial independence. Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors also questioned the expansion of the pro-SNS *Informer TV* and *Kurir TV* through regional broadcasting and nationwide terrestrial distribution over *Telekom Srbija*'s infrastructure, without national terrestrial licenses.⁶⁹

Journalists' associations have repeatedly drawn attention to attacks, intimidation, smear campaigns against journalists, and obstruction of reporting, including exclusion from SNS campaign rallies.⁷⁰ At the September meeting of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, which comprises the Ministry of Interior, prosecutors and journalist associations, the General Prosecutor's Office reported that 99 cases concerning journalists' and media workers' safety had been opened in the first eight months of 2026, with only one resulting in a final conviction.⁷¹

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and prohibits censorship. Defamation was decriminalized in 2012, but insult remains a criminal offence. Reported penalties include fines of up to RSD 450,000 (EUR 3,850) and up to a one-year editorial-work ban.⁷² Civil defamation suits and strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), including proceedings initiated by senior public officials and businesses aligned with the government, place legal and financial pressure on investigative journalists.⁷³

During the campaign, broadcasters must provide non-discriminatory election coverage, identify political advertising, and apply equal advertising conditions. Public broadcasters are obliged to provide equal and balanced presentation of electoral lists. So far, they have broadcast solely the

⁶⁵ The European Commission's [2026 Rule of Law Report](#) states that "political and economic influence on the media, including on editorial policy, is a cause of serious concern". It also notes media dependence on public funding in a limited advertising market.

⁶⁶ The [2026 Council of Europe/Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media \(REM\) survey](#) found that national television was respondents' most frequently used medium (35 per cent).

⁶⁷ The European Commission's [2026 Rule of Law Report](#) noted that for public media "concerns over limited pluralism and biased reporting in favour of the government persisted". The [Council of Europe Platform Alert 156/2026](#) noted "Systemic Threats to the Independence and Public Service Mandate" of public media, pointing to "pronounced bias in favour of the ruling party, including limited representation of opposition voices and extensive, largely uncritical coverage of government events and official statements. The ODIHR EOM noted that, between 28 September and 4 October, up to 36 broadcasters, primarily regional outlets, broadcast daily in their prime-times full 30-minute speeches delivered by Aleksandar Vučić at SNS rallies.

⁶⁸ N1 and Nova S were [removed](#) from Total TV and Net TV Plus after Telekom Srbija acquired the platforms in 2025.

⁶⁹ On 24 September 2026, 16 journalist, media and civil-society organizations alleged unauthorized terrestrial transmission of *Informer TV* and *Kurir TV* and [called](#) for action from REM and Telekom Srbija.

⁷⁰ In August 2026 the Independent Union of Journalists (NUNS) [recorded](#) 29 incidents, including four physical attacks on journalists and 16 cases of death threats and threats to physical safety. Between 18 and 23 September 2026, journalist associations reported six cases of obstruction or intimidation of local journalists by SNS supporters and officials at campaign events.

⁷¹ In February 2025, five out of six journalists' associations suspended their participation in the Working Group, citing institutional inaction.

⁷² In December 2025, editor-in-chief of "*Novosti*" portal Andrijana Nešić [received](#) a first-instance RSD 450,000 fine and a one-year editorial-work ban.

⁷³ The 2025 report of the Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE) [recorded](#) 13 SLAPPs filed in Serbia in 2024 and reported Serbia had not initiated an anti-SLAPP legislative process.

campaign material supplied by contestants, airing it free of charge in the main daily newscasts. While there are no legal requirements to organize debates, several broadcasters, including RTS organized eight debates during the reporting period.⁷⁴

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) supervises broadcasters and adjudicates complaints. Its council has nine seats, eight of which are filled. On 22 September, it elected a president, ending a longstanding leadership deadlock, which had created a substantial backlog of unresolved cases. On 9 September, REM began monitoring 11 television programme services, using the monitoring sample from 2023.⁷⁵ On 28 September, a proposal to expand the media monitoring sample, to include *inter alia* *Informer* TV failed after a four-to-four vote.⁷⁶ On 27 September the ODIHR EOM began quantitative and qualitative monitoring of eight television channels.⁷⁷

XI. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The REC adjudicates complaints against the decisions, actions and omissions of the election administration, with deadlines for filing and adjudicating complaints ranging from 48 to 72 hours.⁷⁸ Legal standing varies depending on the subject matter, with electoral list submitters and candidates generally enjoying broad standing, while voters may challenge decisions only in cases specified by law. REC decisions are subject to judicial review by the Administrative Court. The Constitutional Court has jurisdiction to decide electoral disputes for which jurisdiction of another court is not provided by the law and may annul the elections in whole or in part if irregularities influence the results significantly.⁷⁹ The May 2026 amendments to the Law on the Constitutional Court introduced a 20-day deadline for deciding electoral disputes, shortened from eight to three days the deadline for the competent election administration body to submit its response and relevant documentation to the Court.⁸⁰ Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns over the independence of the judiciary.⁸¹

The REC deliberates on complaints in public sessions and so far has published decisions in a timely manner on the REC online register, alongside decisions of the Administrative Court where applicable. As of 7 October, the REC considered 21 complaints, two of which were upheld on appeal, with five

⁷⁴ The RTS has also invited Ilija Srdanović (“Student List”), Aleksandar Vučić (“United Serbia”), and the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), to a joint debate. CRTA declined, emphasising its role as an election observer rather than a contestant. Mr. Srdanović [declined](#) the invitation, asking instead for a thematic debate between the lists’ expert candidates.

⁷⁵ The ODIHR EOM was informed that the REM Council initiated 11 proceedings based on submissions filed by individuals and legal entities. The authorities also noted that certain media service providers operating in Serbia are registered abroad and thus fall outside REM’s jurisdiction.

⁷⁶ Four REM members subsequently [alleged](#) that colleagues had reversed their own earlier written support for expansion, which they attribute to direct political influence. The REM Chairperson [defended](#) the decision, citing the lack of in-house capacities to expand the monitoring sample.

⁷⁷ The ODIHR EOM’s media monitoring sample includes prime-time coverage (18:00-24:00) of five television channels with national terrestrial coverage (*RTSI*, *TV Pink*, *TV Happy*, *TV Prva*, *TV B92*), and three cable televisions (*Informer*, *NI*, and *Nova S*).

⁷⁸ Requests for the annulments of the polling station results may be filed with the corresponding LECs.

⁷⁹ It is the Constitutional Court’s position that it does not act as a third-instance court in electoral dispute resolution and that, where effective judicial protection of electoral rights is otherwise ensured, it does not adjudicate. The Court therefore considers its competence to be “residual” rather than subsidiary, although the practical scope of such residual jurisdiction remains undefined.

⁸⁰ Amendments also extended from 10 to 30 days the maximum period for holding repeat elections following the annulment of election results by the Constitutional Court.

⁸¹ In its [2026 Rule of Law Report](#), the European Commission noted the low level of perceived judicial independence among the general public.

denied admissibility due to various technical grounds.⁸² Most cases concerned the registration of candidate lists and appointments of LEC members in their extended composition.⁸³ The Administrative Court received ten appeals and upheld nine REC decisions, rejecting one as untimely.⁸⁴

The APC adjudicates complaints concerning misuse of administrative resources and office by public officials and campaign finance violations, and may also act *ex officio*. During election campaigns, complaints concerning alleged violations by public officials under the LPC are decided within five days, while complaints related to campaign finance violations under the LFPA are decided within three days.⁸⁵ Following the July 2026 amendments, decisions under the LFPA are subject to expedited judicial review, with the Administrative Court deciding within 72 hours, while no such deadline applies for the review of decisions under the LPC. The agency reviews cases in closed sessions and does not maintain a public register of complaints. Decisions on proceedings initiated upon complaints and decisions on imposing measures are available on its website. To date, the APC issued warnings to 17 officials, including five upon complaints.⁸⁶ Three complaints were rejected as ungrounded.⁸⁷ According to the information provided to the ODIHR EOM, several complaints remain pending.

XII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The law provides for citizen and international election observation.⁸⁸ Citizen observers shall be granted unhindered access to the entire electoral process, including, in line with the recent legal amendments, access to the voter registration data and the right to attend sessions of the VRAC.

As of 7 October, the REC had accredited three citizen observer groups and two international and foreign organizations.⁸⁹ Some civic organizations, including the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) started

⁸² The REC rejected two complaints for lack of legal standing, finding that voters may challenge REC decisions only in cases expressly provided by law and that this did not extend to decisions determining the national minority status of an electoral list. In one case, the REC noted that the voter did not have legal standing to challenge the LEC decision on the determination of polling stations. In the two complaints upheld, the REC annulled its decision proclaiming the candidate list “Dad, this is for you – Petar Đurić” due to an insufficient number of valid supporting signatures.

⁸³ Seven complaints challenged the registration of the “Aleksandar Vučić - United Serbia” electoral list, contesting the use of the President’s name in the list title and alleging that his association with the electoral list was incompatible with his presidential office. Four complaints concerned national minority electoral lists, including challenges to the national minority status of the “Rasim Ljajić- Ldjuski (SDP-CDP)” list on the grounds that its leader and certain candidates had previously been affiliated with a political party that does not represent a national minority, and were allegedly still active members of that party; a criterion which, under the amended legislation, may preclude the granting of national minority status to an electoral list.

⁸⁴ In a case concerning the national minority status of the “Rasim Ljajić - Ldjuski (SDP-CDP)” list, the Administrative Court ruled that active membership in a non-minority party should be assessed based on overall and continuous public political activity in support of that party, such as participation in its election campaigns, distribution of promotional materials and communication with voters.

⁸⁵ The deadline on deciding on complaints is counted from the moment the involved parties are notified of the proceedings against them.

⁸⁶ Those included cases concerning participation in political party campaign activities during working hours and the publication of “United Serbia” campaign materials on social media accounts used in an official capacity.

⁸⁷ The complaint alleged that a candidate of the “Student List – Students Win” used her official university email account during the campaign to co-ordinate financial assistance for faculty employees through “Solidarity Network”. The APC found that the activity was undertaken individually, was neither organized nor financed by the Citizens’ Group, and did not promote the electoral list or solicit electoral support. Regarding a complaint alleging that SNS used a public enterprise (“Indija put”) vehicle to transport campaign materials, the APC noted insufficient evidence to establish a violation, based on the statements provided by the parties concerned.

⁸⁸ Civil society organizations registered for election-related statutory purposes may nominate observers until seven days before the elections. International observers must be nominated at least 10 days before the elections.

⁸⁹ In total, REC accredited 205 citizen observers and 47 international ones.

nationwide long-term observation and intend to deploy election day observers. The Bureau for Social Research (BIRODI) and Transparency Serbia informed the ODIHR EOM that they would focus on media and campaign finance, respectively.

Some CSOs representatives informed the ODIHR EOM about an increasingly hostile and intimidating environment for civil society that discourages citizen engagement and creates challenges for an independent election observation. Due to cases of violence they experienced during recent local elections, the CSOs voice concerns regarding safety of their observers.⁹⁰ The citizen observer organizations also reported being exposed to public pressure and physical and verbal attacks by representatives of the incumbent parties.⁹¹

XIII. ODIHR EOM ACTIVITIES

The ODIHR EOM opened in Belgrade on 16 September. The ODIHR EOM established regular contacts with the REC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other high-level state officials, candidates and other representatives of political parties, movements, media, civil society, and the international community.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), announced their intention to deploy an observer delegation for election-day observation. Gilles Baum (Luxembourg) has been nominated to serve as Special Co-ordinator, and Federica Onori (Italy) has been appointed as Head of the OSCE PA delegation.

*The English version of this report is the only official document.
An unofficial translation is available in Serbian.*

⁹⁰ For example, citizen observers were physically attacked in [Mionica in November 2025](#) and [in Bor in March 2026](#). During the 2026 local elections, [citizen](#) and [international](#) observers also noted large presence of politically biased or ingenuine observers with no-track record or methodology, that were influencing the process.

⁹¹ On 29 September, Aleksandar Vučić criticized one of the domestic observers CSOs [positing in TV Informer](#) that it represented “Western services” and alleged their active participation in a “colour revolution”.