



Statement by the delegation of
At the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working session 1: Democratic Institutions,
Including democracy
At the national, regional and
Local levels and democratic elections
Warsaw, September 10, 2018

Dear colleagues and respected guests, it is my great pleasure and honor to be a part of this very significant event.

As you are aware, the Presidential Elections in Georgia will be held this year, on October 28. Thus, the pre-election period has already started and the CEC implements number of activities in order to support conduct of credible and fair elections.

I would like to underline, that the CEC always works in line to take into the consideration recommendations issued by the OSCE/ODHIR election observation missions. In this regard, based on the last recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR and issues revealed during the previous elections, the CEC prepared legislative proposal and submitted to the parliament of Georgia. It aimed to clarify procedures in Election Code, eliminate various types of technical deficiencies and gaps to the legal norms, improve and specify existing procedures and regulations. It should be noted that most of the technical amendments were taken into account by the Parliament.

For example, eliminating the risks related to the photo-video shooting and processing the personal data and non-public information was identified as a challenging issue for the CEC.

Accordingly, in order to comply with the OSCE recommendation in this regard, the CEC proposed amendment to the Parliament of Georgia according to which, photo-video shooting or processing of the information or data which do not represent the public information, will be prohibited, except the cases when this kind of processing or shooting is envisaged by the election code.

Ensuring inclusive electoral environment is one of the main priorities of the Central Election Commission. The CEC annually approves its action plan, which envisages activities aiming at engaging different groups of voters in election processes as well as for the guarantying of inclusive election environment. The EA offers various services to them. For instance, along with the adapted official website for blind and visually impaired voters, the CEC ensures for

them a special tactile ballot guide and magnifying sheet at each election precinct, which supports their independent participation in elections.

In addition, for deaf voters the CEC provides its new service launched during the 2017 municipal elections which allows them to receive election related information through sign language using the skype video call at the CEC informational center. The CEC cooperates with other state agencies for increasing the number of adapted election precincts for the voters using wheelchair and as a result the number of adapted polling stations increases year by year.

In regard to the ethnic minority voters, the CEC provides information through different media means and election-related documentation is translated into ethnic minority languages, including the voters' list and ballot paper.

Let me draw your attention that Georgian citizens, residing in the occupied regions, are deprived of the right to participate in the elections organized by the EA Georgia. Meanwhile, Russia has illegally opened more than 30 polling stations in the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions for the 2018 Russian presidential elections. With such actions, Russia violates fundamental norms and principles of international law, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders and non-interference in internal affairs of another state.

At the end I would like to mention that the CEC Georgia highly appreciates OSCE/ODHIR's commitment to continue neutral observation of election processes in Georgia. We are looking forward to meeting with the mission team and we do count on their professional and impartial observation.

Thank you for attention.