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GENERAL GUIDE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared to provide you with general information about the election process in the Republic of Albania. It presents a brief description of some of the procedures to be followed by officials on election day, 29 June 1997. It also offers suggestions about the types of questions or points of examination you may wish to pursue in the course of your observation. It has been prepared for the US observer delegation organized by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). It is being offered only as a supplement to the guidance and training which you will be given by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR).

Please keep in mind that these parliamentary elections have been called as a result of political turmoil in the Republic of Albania. Given continued instability and the short campaign period, important elements of the campaign and election process are still undecided. This writing is based on amendments to the election law which took effect in May 1997. Some of the changes to the law result in inconsistencies within the text of the law. As of this writing important changes were still being made based on rulings of the Constitutional Court and other regulatory bodies. In addition, regulations concerning election procedures have yet to be issued by the CEC. The OSCE and IFES teams on site in Albania will appraise you of the latest developments and appreciate your patience and flexibility in this fluid electoral environment.

The presence of international observers in Albania serves several purposes:

- \* To provide openness and transparency for the public, candidates, and nominating entities;
- \* to raise public confidence in the process;
- \* to deter those who would engage in improper practices or fraudulent activities;
- \* to reduce opportunities for frivolous or misguided allegations of impropriety; and,
- \* to provide information which lawmakers, election officials, and activists can use to assess the process and plan for future improvements.

As an observer, your role is sensitive because Albanian citizens, officials, and participants in the election campaign look to your views as key to the evaluation of the freeness and fairness of the elections. In fact, the very presence of international observers can be interpreted as "legitimizing the process". Therefore, it is essential that your efforts be unbiased, thoughtful, and thorough to safeguard the constructive approach of the mission and to ensure that it is not compromised and to safeguard the constructive approach of the mission.

#### SCOPE OF OBSERVATION

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR)) has been invited by the Government of Albania and authorized by the OSCE Permanent Council to assist with election preparation and monitoring for elections to the People's Assembly slated for 29 June 1997. Based upon a request from the US Department of State and a memorandum of understanding with the OSCE-ODIHR, IFES has been asked to organize the American contingent of the OSCE delegation. You will be accredited as an OSCE observer by the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Albania.

The following conditions for effective election observation were established by the OSCE -ODIHR and communicated to Albanian authorities:

- \* To assess the number of observers necessary without negotiation with the host government;
- \* To receive accreditation through a simple and non-discriminatory procedure;
- \* To obtain information regarding the election process from election authorities at all levels;
- \* Meet with representatives of all parties and with randomly selected individuals;
- \* To obtain permission to travel in all regions of the country during the election campaign and election preparations and on election day;
- \* To have unimpeded access to polling sites and counting centers through the country;
- \* To have authority to issue public statements

The expectations of observers are listed in "General Standards of Conduct . . ." below.

As a member of the IFES organized, US observer contingent, you have been selected based on any number of the following criteria: background in election law and practice, international observer experience, regional knowledge, language skills, and neutrality toward the political outcome of the elections in Albania. In assuming your role as an observer, it is important to remember that elections do not begin and end with the conduct of the poll. To adequately evaluate the election, you should familiarize yourself with the political context in which elections are taking place, the legal framework underpinning the elections, and the attitude and confidence level of the electorate concerning the campaign and election process.

Toward this end, IFES has prepared this guide and supplementary briefing materials. Upon your arrival in Tirana, IFES will provide an orientation and up to the minute information on political and electoral developments. On 26 June, OSCE coordinators and trainers will conduct an in-depth briefing which will review codes of conduct, an assessment of the pre-election period based on long-term observation, an overview of the political and security situation prior to the election, an assessment of the media campaign, and review the election law and its practical implementation. Additional meetings may be set up in the localities on 28 June.

IFES is confident that you will approach this mission from a constructive perspective, upholding its mandate to support and strengthen the democratic election process worldwide. Starting from this point, you will need to:

- \* Identify circumstances, issues, or practices which may jeopardize or hinder the free and fair conduct of elections and to determine if irregularities appear to be the result of deliberate, pervasive, or part of an organized scheme
- \* Offer technically sound and attainable recommendations which can assist policy makers and election officials improve future campaigns and elections in Albania.

In the interests of tracking comparative electoral developments in established and transitional democracies, IFES would also request that you collect any election related documents including, but not limited to sample ballots, copies of CEC regulations and instructions, campaign posters and related materials, election related news clippings, copies of the official protocols of results and turn these over to IFES Training Coordinator Catherine Barnes. These materials will be logged into and made available to the international community through the IFES Election Resource Center.

#### GENERAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

As an observer, it is crucial that you adhere to a few general standards which will ensure that your sensitive role is not compromised and to maximize utility of the observer mission. Observers are expected to:

- \* Maintain absolute neutrality and impartiality throughout the observation mission;
- \* Participate in all briefings, training sessions, meetings, de-briefings scheduled by OSCE-ODIHR and IFES , to observe balloting and voting counting and aggregation on election day and complete election day checklists provided by OSCE-ODIHR, and provide a post-mission report to IFES;
- \* Carry on their person at all times the required accreditation issued by the Central Election Commission and provided by the OSCE and to provide this credential upon request;
- \* Never disrupt or interfere with the voting, counting, or any other phases of the election process;
- \* Ask questions and express concerns, but do not instruct, give orders,

or otherwise attempt to countermand decisions of election officials. Commentary should be addressed to the chairman of the election commission.

- \* Be vigilant and take detailed notes regarding positive aspects of the process as well as those describing questionable or irregular voting or counting practices. Include information as to the place and time and well as identifying witnesses, if circumstances warrant them. Your conclusions should be based on verifiable, factual evidence;
- \* Recognize that some mistakes may be made by election officials because of inexperience or unfamiliarity with the amended election law or with CEC regulations, rather than because of any deliberate intention to compromise the integrity of the process. Do not treat every mistake or variation in established practice as deliberate cheating;
- \* If serious problems are encountered at a particular polling site, you may choose to bring them to the attention of a superior election commissions, ie. The Zonal Election Commission. If communication mechanisms are available, you may also want to contact your delegation's headquarters for instructions or advice. Also consider returning to the polling site later in the day, if serious concerns about irregularities or potential fraud justify another look or increased observer presence.

#### GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA

In circumstances where elections are taking place in a politically unstable and tense environment and where international attention has been focused, considerable attention will be paid to observers by international and domestic media. While in Albania, journalists will certainly try to get your impressions of the election process before, during, and after polling.

During the campaign period and on election day, it would be advisable to refrain from contacts with the media. Under no circumstances are statements to be made on behalf of IFES. Inquiries regarding the preparation of the elections or the organization of the observation mission should be directed to the OSCE Tirana Spokesperson Mark Smith or to the OSCE Secretariat Spokesperson Melissa Fleming. In cases where interaction with a journalist is unavoidable, following these general guidelines can help safeguard against making any premature, inaccurate, or otherwise inappropriate remarks to the press:

- \* During the Pre-Election Period, do not be surprised by inquiries for your assessment of the election campaign and election preparations beginning upon the day of your arrival in country or at your deployment location. Keep in mind that the seemingly innocent question, "How is the election going?" requires a judgment on your part. Please refrain from judgments. Instead, describe your activities as an OSCE observer: Who you are, your professional and election background, where you are from, your mission as an OSCE observer, where you will be deployed.
- \* On Election Day, observers are strongly urged to refrain from individual comments during polling because even a carefully worded comment can be taken out of context and used to convey the wrong impression. Refrain from providing opinions to the news media as to

the general fairness of the election based on your individual experiences. Only a cumulative assessment can lead to a credible evaluation of the election process. Inform journalists that you cannot make any statements pending closure of the polls and de-briefing of the entire delegation.

- \* After the Election, observers will be afforded the opportunity to report their findings to OSCE-ODIRH and IFES officials and, if they wish, to participate in the formation of the final mission statement. Follow the guidance of OSCE-ODIHR concerning the reporting of the delegation's cumulative findings. Observers are also reminded that pending the completion of the tabulation process and announcement of final results, utmost care must be taken in making both official and individual statements.

With respect to the domestic media, please keep in mind that many media outlets remain in the hands of the state and that others are affiliated with political interests. As such, they may not be independent or objective. At the same time, some journalists may have little experience with codes of conduct practiced by the journalistic community in long-standing democracies. This extends to objectivity, accuracy, fairness, and ethics. In addition, while selective editing can result in a misrepresentation of your position, dubbing for the Albanian television audience provides yet another level of opportunity to adjust or enhance your statements. For this reason, it might be a good idea to sit down with your assigned translator to review OSCE-ODIHR guidelines for dealing with the media and to reinforce the notion that any statements should be "translated" and not "interpreted".

For further information concerning dealing with media inquiries, please refer to the OSCE-ODIHR provided briefing materials or request further instruction from an OSCE-ODIHR representative.

#### RIGHTS OF OBSERVERS AS PER THE LAW ON ELECTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

The public nature of election commission meetings is established under Article 44 of the "Law on Elections for the People's Assembly of the Republic of Albania." Observers are permitted to attend election commission meetings, to make remarks, and, at their request, these remarks can be included in the official minutes of the meeting.

According to Article 66, the following "electoral subjects" are entitled to serve as domestic observers at polling sites on election day:

- \* Political parties;
- \* Coalitions (blocs) of political parties;
- \* Independent candidates.

These observers must be authorized by the Zonal Election Commission (Article 66) and accredited by the Central Election Commission (Article 90).

Article 89 stipulates that the following persons and entities are entitled to serve as international observers:

- \* Representatives of OSCE member states, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and other organizations dedicated to human rights;
- \* Representatives of foreign political parties and blocs and individuals invited by Albanian political parties and blocs;
- \* Specialists in the field of elections and authorized by local and international organizations.

International observers are accredited through the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Albania.

According to Article 90 of the election law, accredited observers:

- \* Have the right to move freely through the territory of the Republic of Albania;
- \* Observe the course of activities carried out during the campaign period and on election day;
- \* To ask questions, gather information, and publicly convey their opinions.

Article 90 also stipulates that observers are obligated to "remain impartial" at all times. Wearing any distinguishing sign or symbol of a political party or bloc or participation in election propaganda activities while serving as an observer is strictly prohibited (Article 48).

In addition to providing credentials to observers, the Central Election Commission also issue the necessary accreditation to representatives of the mass media. Rules governing participation of domestic and international observers are determined by the Central Election Commission.

## 2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ELECTION SYSTEM

Among the rights granted by the "Constitutional Laws" of the Republic of Albania, which are in effect as the Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania was abrogated in 1993 and a new Constitution has yet to be adopted, and impacting citizens as voters are:

- \* Recognition that the observation and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens are the obligation of the state;
- \* Guarantees of fundamental human rights and liberties for all individuals;
- \* Adoption of political pluralism and multi-partyism as the basis of the political system;
- \* Establishment of the rights of citizens to participate in managing state affairs both directly and through their representatives;
- \* The right to elect and to be elected;
- \* Guaranteed freedoms of thought and speech;

- \* The right of association;
- \* The right of peaceful assembly, without weapons;
- \* Freedom of the mass media and prohibition of censorship;
- \* Freedom of movement.

The "Constitutional Laws" provide for universal suffrage through voluntary, equal, and direct participation in elections by secret ballot. The temporary restriction of rights is envisioned in Article 41 of the "Constitutional Laws" as necessitated by national emergency or war. Freedoms of conscience and expression are among those fundamental rights which cannot be waived under any circumstances.

The "Law on Elections for the People's Assembly of the Republic of Albania" provides the ground rules for parliamentary elections and protects the constitutional rights of citizens to elect and be elected. According to Article 2, all Albanian citizens have the right to elect and be elected if they:

- \* have reached the age of 18 as of the date of elections;
- \* have Albanian citizenship; and,
- \* have permanent residence in the Republic of Albania for no less than 6 months.
- \* Deprived of their electoral rights are those:
  - \* under arrest;
  - \* serving a jail sentence;
  - \* declared incapable by a court of law.

The right to be elected is further restricted by the "Law On Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity . . ." and the "Law On the Control of Officials . . ." According to these laws a Verification Commission was established to review the communist era police files, for the purposes of establishing complicity in genocide and other human rights abuses and/or affiliation or collaboration with the Political Bureau or State Security and/or denouncement of accused persons, for all persons nominated as candidates. Persons implicated by these laws are barred from holding elected office B as well as senior government, judicial, and media posts -- until the year 2001. Persons found to have collaborated with the State Security, but have acted against Communist rule or denounced their role in a public manner, or have not exercised their profession within the last 20 years, are found to be exempt from these restrictions.

#### ELECTION ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Elections are administered by a three tiered hierarchy of election commissions including the Central Election Commission (CEC), Zone Election Commissions (ZEC), and Polling Site Commissions (PSC). This structure is supported by government ministries and municipal authorities. As a result

of amendments to the "Law on Elections for the People's Assembly . . .", which took effect 16 May 1997, the CEC has been established as a permanent commission.

Each of Albania's 115 constituencies, is served by a Zone Election Commission (ZEC). The boundaries of the constituencies must be decided upon by the President of the Republic, based on proposals of the Council of Ministers, not later than 45 days prior to the election with ZEC membership being established not later than 28 prior to the election.

At the lowest level are Polling Site Commissions (PSC), which must be established 30 days before elections. In villages, PSCs are set up for every 100 to 1000 voters. In the cities, PSCs are set up for every 800 to 1200 voters in cities, or if there are fewer than 800 people residing in the city, a distinct PSC is still established for that city. In instances where there are surpluses of less than 400 voters in municipalities or communes, they are served by the nearest PSC, whereas surpluses of more than 400 people, are served by separate PSCs. If a residential area consisting of more than 50 people is located farther than 3 km from the nearest polling station, a separate PSC must be established.

According to the law, election commissions are independent bodies, performing state functions in an impartial manner. Representatives of the military and other institutions responsible for maintaining public order, the National Information Services, and candidates for the People's Assembly are barred from holding seats on election commissions at all levels. Commissions are formed on a multi-party basis which Albania is pivotal to the management of elections in a free and transparent manner.

#### WORKING ORGANIZATION WITHIN ELECTION COMMISSIONS

Election commission meetings are open to the public. Observers participating in meetings are permitted to make remarks and, at their request, these remarks can be incorporated into the official minutes of the meeting. A quorum is achieved if more than half of the members are present. Decisions at meetings are based on a 2/3s majority of those present and must be signed by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. In the exercise of their duties, election commission members are not permitted to display party symbols or to engage in campaign activities.

Election commission members are legally responsible for implementation of the law and persons obstructing the work of election commission members in the exercise of their duties are subject to imprisonment. Decisions of election commissions can be appealed.

Members of commissions can be relieved of their duties by the body which approved the composition of the commission based upon a request of the member or with the proposal of the political party or bloc they represent. Political parties or blocs do not, however, have the right to unilaterally remove their member.

#### CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION

The CEC is the chief election authority and has considerable power over the review, appointment, and activity of lower level election commissions in the Republic of Albania. As a result of revisions to the election law establishing the CEC as a permanent legal entity, the CEC will consist of a



Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary, and 14 members. CEC members will serve for a term of 7 years and enjoy the right of reappointment. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman are appointed by the main party of power and opposition party. The Secretary of the CEC concurrently serves as the Director of the Directorate of Elections and Referenda at the State Secretariat of Local Government. Remaining seats on the commission are distributed equally among political parties in the government and opposition coalitions and their share of seats is based on performance in recent local government elections. Political parties which have registered candidates for the parliamentary elections, but which do not qualify for seats on the commission are entitled to send an observer to all CEC sessions.

Specific duties of the CEC include:

- \* Enforcement of strict and uniform application of the law on the entire territory of the Republic of Albania;
- \* Development of rules governing ZECs and monitoring their activities;
- \* Review of complaints alleging irregular or illegal acts brought against ZECs;
- \* Registration and announcement of political parties, political blocs, and independent groups, and their symbols and logos;
- \* Control of the registration process for candidates running in single-mandate constituencies;
- \* Development of rules governing the participation of domestic and foreign observers in elections and issuance of credentials;
- \* As required in the post-election period, examination of the voter registry and issues a report to the responsible government body on any irregularities;
- \* Announcement of the results of the elections and registration deputies of the People's Assembly;
- \* Issuance of the certificate of election to deputies elected according to the party list.

CEC decisions can be appealed to the Constitutional Court within 3 days of their announcement. The Court must render its final decision within 3 days and announced to the public immediately.

#### ZONE ELECTION COMMISSION

Once boundaries have been determined, the establishment of Zone Election Commissions (ZEC) can proceed. According to the law, constituency boundaries must be finalized at least 45 day out from the election. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the ZECs are appointed by the President. Each political party or bloc which has nominated a candidate in a constituency is entitled to appoint a member to the respective ZEC. According to the law, the proposed composition of the ZECs must be submitted to the CEC 30 days in advance of the election and approved by them not later than 28 days before the election. Secretaries of the ZECs

are selected among the ZEC members and must have a legal background.

The ZEC is responsible for:

- \* Ensuring the strict and uniform application of the election law within the constituency;
- \* Supervising the activity of Polling Site Commissions;
- \* Requesting that responsible government bodies make necessary corrections in the voter's lists;
- \* Registering and announcing candidates for deputies in single-mandate constituencies;
- \* Registering representatives of candidates for deputy and supplying them with certification;
- \* Aggregating vote totals from the PSCs and announcing the results of elections in the single-mandate constituency;
- \* Reviewing complaints alleging illegal or irregular actions of the part of PSCs;
- \* Issuing certificates to deputies elected in single-mandate constituencies;
- \* Forwarding all election records and documentation to the CEC in accordance with the law.

ZEC decisions can be appealed to the CEC within 3 days of their announcement. The CEC must examine the complaint and issue a decision within 3 days.

#### POLLING SITE ELECTION COMMISSION

PSCs are comprised of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary and a representative of each political party or bloc which has nominated a candidate in the constituency in which the PSC is located. The membership of each PSC must be approved by the respective ZEC based on CEC regulations governing the ZECs and not later than 10 days before the election.

The PSCs are tasked with:

- \* Ensuring the free and peaceful conduct of elections in polling stations in accordance with the law;
- \* Enforcing strict implementation of voting procedures;
- \* Registering voters who have come to the polling place with a special voting certificate or court decisions allowing them to vote and to be added to the list in that polling place;
- \* Counting votes which have been cast according to the single-mandate constituency ballot and the party list ballot;
- \* Recording complaints and requests of commission members and voters,

examining them, and taking the appropriate action.

During elections, instructions of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the PSC are binding for all citizens in the polling station and can be annulled only by a majority decision of PSC members.

#### THE ROLE OF FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

The Council of Ministers is appointed to provide the material and financial means necessary for the implementation of the election law. State administrative bodies are obligated to undertake administrative and logistical support of the organization of the elections in accordance with the CEC and ZEC. In addition, the local government structure plays a crucial role in the preparation of elections. Albania is divided into 12 Prefectures, a prefect being appointed by government. Within the Prefectures, there are a total of 27 districts. Below these are some 63 municipalities and 310 rural communities. Mayors and Council Members from the municipalities and rural communities work the prefects to compile of voters' lists. In previous parliamentary elections, election materials and documents, including ballots, to the respective Prefecture. However, according to the amended election law, these are now to be forwarded to the CEC. At the same time, however, there are still some "dangling" references to the prefectures in the election law regarding the collection and storage of election materials and documents.

#### SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

Albania is a parliamentary republic, national sovereignty deriving from and belonging to the Albanian people. Legislative authority is invested in the 155 member People's Assembly, which is to be elected by popular vote every four years. It is comprised of 115 deputies elected according to majoritarian system with the remaining 40 elected according to proportional representation via national party lists. A candidate in a single mandate constituency is elected if he wins more than half of the valid votes. In the event that no candidate receives more than 50% of the valid votes, run-off elections among the two leading contenders are held one week after the first round of voting. In the run-off, the candidate obtaining the largest number of votes is declared the winner. In the event of a tie, the deputy is chosen by lot.

According to 7 June 1997 ruling of the Albanian Constitutional Court, the party mandates will be distributed according to a pure proportional system. Previously, a dual system of proportionality was employed whereby the two political parties with the greatest number of votes would have 10 seats pre-apportioned to them, or 25% of the total. Remaining mandates, or 75% of the seats, would then be allocated to the remaining parties which passed a 2% national threshold. The Court found that the dual system was unconstitutional, violating the principle of equality of votes. It ruled that each electoral subject [political party, bloc, or independent group] will take seats in the parliament in proportion to the number of votes accumulated providing for all participants equality before the law.

As a result, mandates will distributed according to the following formula: The total number of votes won by electoral subjects surpassing the 2% threshold will be divided by the number of votes received by each qualifying electoral subject multiplied by the total number of seats (40). Since these are unlikely to be integers and all of the seats will not be

allocated at the end of this process, remaining seats will be distributed based on the highest decimal numbers. At most, one mandate will be awarded per electoral subject using the decimal process. If for any mathematical reason parity exists, lots will be drawn in accordance with the election law. In the event that an electoral subject has fewer names on the party list than the number of mandates it has received, the losing candidate(s), nominated by the electoral subject for a single-mandate seat, who has received the highest number of votes is awarded the seat(s).

Among the powers of the People's Assembly:

- \* It defines the main directions of domestic and foreign policy;
- \* It adopts and amends the Constitution and federal laws;
- \* It adopts draft economic and social programs including economic indicators and the state budget;
- \* It declares partial or general mobilization of the armed forces, a state of emergency, and a state of war and fulfills obligations derived from international treaties;
- \* It ratifies or denounces treaties;
- \* It grants amnesty;
- \* It takes action upon people's referenda;
- \* It elects and removes the President of the Republic of Albania;
- \* It controls the activity of Albanian Radio, Albanian Television, the Albanian New Agency and other official media outlets;
- \* It determines the territorial-administrative structure of the country;
- \* It decides upon the creation or dissolution of ministries or other government bodies of equal status.

The People's Assembly must convene within two months of its election and must hold at least 4 sessions per year. At its first session, the People's Assembly elects a commission to examine the mandates of the new deputies. At its proposal, the People's Assembly confirms or annuls the deputies' mandates. The People's Assembly elects its leadership, which consists of the Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen. Sessions of the People's Assembly are called by its Leadership, the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, or by one fourth of the deputies. A quorum is reached when a majority of the deputies are present. Sessions of the People's Assembly are open to the public unless otherwise stipulated.

The legislative process may be initiated by the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, deputies, and an initiative group of 20,000 citizens with the right to vote. Laws and acts of the People's Assembly, with the exception of Constitutional laws, are adopted if voted for by a majority of the deputies present, but not less than one-third of the total membership of parliament. Laws are to be announced not later than 15 after adoption and enter into force 15 days after being published in the official gazette.

Deputies of the People's Assembly enjoy immunity. Deputies are not to be obstructed from performing their duties or obtaining access to information, with the exception of state secrets. Deputies bear no legal responsibilities for votes cast, positions adopted, or activities undertaken in the performance of official duties.

#### NOMINATION AND REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES

Consistent with Constitutional Law guarantees, any Albanian citizen who has the right to be elected in accordance with the election law, can be a candidate for the People's Assembly as a representative of an electoral subject, ie. a political party, group of parties, or independent candidates. No candidate is permitted to run in more than one single-mandate constituency, although candidates running in a constituency race can also run on the party list. Candidates winning in the single-mandate constituency are withdrawn from the party list for the purpose of proportional allocation of party seats.

Candidates running for single-mandate seats must register with the ZEC not later than 20 days prior to election day. To affect registration, candidates must submit:

- \* A written application from the nominating electoral subject, requesting registration of the candidate. It must include the candidates full name, birthdate, and place of residence. This must be submitted in duplicate;
- \* A statement of acceptance of nomination from the candidate for the specific constituency in which s/he will be registered. This must be submitted in duplicate;
- \* A copy of the decision by the State Verification Commission on the basis of the "Law on Public Control of Officials . . ." and the "Law on Genocide" . . .;
- \* A petition signed by no less than 400 voters of the respective constituency in support of the nominated candidate (voters are not permitted to sign more than one candidacy petition).

With respect to the collection of voters' signatures, petitions must contain the name and symbol of the electoral subject nominating the candidate or clearly indicate that the candidate is running as an independent. The petition must contain the full name, address, identification card or birth certificate number, and the signature of the voter. The signatory must reside within the constituency. If the ZEC identifies any irregularities in the list, it requests that the electoral subject make necessary corrections within two days. If the electoral subjects fail to make the necessary corrections the nominated candidate's registration is denied. If all conditions of the law are fulfilled, the ZEC must register candidates for deputy and announce their names and the nominating electoral subjects to the public not later than 17 days in advance of the elections. Certification must be provided by the ZECs to all candidates. All petitions in favor of a candidates nomination are ultimately forwarded to the CEC and kept on file and can be inspected with its authorization.

Only those electoral subjects who register candidates in 25 of the 115 single-mandate constituencies and in no less than 10 districts of the country are permitted to forward candidates for inclusion in the national party list ballot. Each electoral subject can submit a list of up to 100 names. If a political bloc meets the above criteria, each of its member parties is entitled to put forward its own list. In addition to its proposed list of candidates, qualified electoral subjects seeking access to the national party list ballot must submit to the CEC:

- \* A copy of the decision of the State Verification Commission based on the "Law on Control of Officials . . . ; and the "Law on Genocide . . . ;"
- \* A statement of the candidate accepting nomination to the party list of behalf of the nominating electoral subject.

The list of candidates must contain the authorizing signature and official stamp of the respective electoral subject. The list and all supporting documents must be submitted to the CEC not later than 20 days prior to the election. Electoral subjects retain the right to make changes to their party list but not later than 17 days before the election.

As noted earlier, all perspective candidates must be approved by a State Verification Commission on the basis of the "Law On Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity . . ." and the "Law On the Control of Officials . . ." The government appointed Commission, which does not operate in a transparent manner, makes determinations about whether a person is on the so-called "genocide list" by majority vote of its membership. It is not known how many people are on the "genocide-list," although some 200 candidates were denied registration on these grounds in the previous parliamentary election and some 30 candidates have been disqualified to date in the current election campaign. Candidates do have seven days to file an appeal of the Verification Commission's decision with the Cassation Court. The Court must render a decision within 15 days. Depending upon the timing of each of these actions, however, a decision might not be forthcoming in sufficient time to gain access to the ballot if the Court ruled in the complainants favor.

#### THE PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign commences with the announcement of elections and ends 24 hours prior to election day. Every electoral subject and all citizens enjoy the right to campaign through rallies, meetings, radio, television, press, and other media. All campaign materials of candidates and electoral subjects must include the name of the electoral subject and can be placed in public locations identified by local governments. Equal conditions must be offered to all electoral subjects for the posting of campaign materials. Campaign activities which are in violation of the law, which disrupt public order, or which slander or otherwise attack the personal dignity of candidates are prohibited. Defacing or removing campaign materials is not permissible until the end of the campaign period. Similarly, disruption of legal campaign rallies and meetings is prohibited. Campaign activities are forbidden within military units and detachments. Local government authorities and representatives of state bodies are prohibited from engaging in campaign activities. It is not permitted to publish any public opinion polls within eight days of the election.

## ALLOCATION OF MEDIA TIME

Political parties which in the recent local elections obtained more than .5% of the votes will receive state allocated media time totaling four hours. One half of this time will be given to governmental coalition parties and the other half to opposition parties. Within this division, the amount of time awarded to each political party will be proportionate to the percentage of votes which they received in the local elections but with no political party receiving less than 15 minutes. Other political parties participating in parliamentary elections will have at their disposal 10 minutes. The content to be aired during this broadcasting time is subject to CEC approval. To regulate strict compliance with these time limits, an Electronic Media Supervisory Commission is established. The Commission will also be responsible for monitoring the content of news and information programs. It will be comprised of representatives from each political party in the Reconciliation Government. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Commission will represent the largest party of power and of the opposition respectively. The Commission reports to the CEC.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCING

The Council of Ministers is responsible for the allocation of state funds to support the campaigns of political parties. The total allocation will be dependent upon the performance of the political party in the parliamentary election and will be proportionate to the percentage of the total votes received. A cash advance is provided to all political parties which obtained in excess of 1% of the votes in recent local elections. Parties failing to surpass the 2% threshold in the parliamentary elections will not qualify for state subsidies and must return the amount of their cash advance in full.

## ROLE OF THE POLICE DURING THE CAMPAIGN

According to a regulation issued by the Ministry of Interior in carrying out the "Law on Elections to the People's Assembly . . . ," police officers are strictly prohibited from engaging in campaign activities. Police are to take all necessary steps to ensure the legal nature of campaign activities and are to provide for public order during campaign activities. They are also charged with protecting election observers and journalists during the course of the election campaign.

## REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Voters' lists must be compiled for each polling station and must include the voter's full name, date of birth, and registration number. In cities and rural communities, voters' lists are the responsibility of the mayor and secretary of the council body. The mayor establishes and serves on a registration committee which includes representatives of the council body and the two largest political forces represented in that body. This committee facilitates and oversees the activities of special working groups tasked with compiling the voters' lists.

Once voters' lists have been compiled in quadruplicate, they are sent to the respective prefecture for review and preliminary correction. All four copies of the voters' lists must be signed by the mayor and the secretary of the prefecture. Three copies of the confirmed list are returned to the responsible municipal or community authority, one of which is retained by

them, one of which is forwarded to the polling station, and one of which is provided to the district's civic office. Voter's lists are made public by the municipal or community authority which compiled them and not later than 17 days prior to the election. The prefectures must submit information on the number of voters in each constituency to the State Secretariat for Local Government not later than two days after the announcement of voter's lists.

Military personnel on active duty are registered to vote within their military units or detachments. Military commanders are responsible for providing lists of personnel living in their units or detachments to municipal or community authorities responsible for the compilation of voters lists. All other military personnel are registered in voters' lists in their place of permanent residence.

Albanians who currently maintain residence outside the Republic of Albania, but who plan to stay in the territory of the Republic for the election, are, at their request, included in the voters' list of the polling site serving their former address. Albanians living abroad who do not plan to return to the territory of the Republic for the elections are effectively disenfranchised as there is no provision for voting abroad. An estimated 15% of the population has gone abroad in search of work. Recent press reports indicate that this number is being augmented by the large numbers of citizens currently seeking tourist visas to neighboring countries as the elections approach in anticipation of potential violence. All will be affected by this omission of the law.

Persons temporarily residing in hospitals, sanatoriums, health and rehabilitation centers, re-education camps, and pre-detention centers are placed on voters' lists compiled by the directors of these institutions. Directors are required to inform the responsible municipal or community authorities so that corrections can be made to the voters' lists in which affected persons were originally registered.

Voters who must travel beyond the boundaries of their constituency as a result of being appointed to an election commission or to serve as an election observer can, upon written request of their electoral subject, be issued a special certificate to vote in the place where s/he will be on election day. Such voters are listed in the supplementary voters' list of the polling site where they cast a ballot based upon presentation of the special certificate and identification card. A notation "moved" is placed next to the voter's name in the voters' list of the polling site where s/he normally votes.

Changes can be made to the voters' lists based on omissions, duplications, inaccuracies, loss of voting rights, death, or relocation but not later than 24 hours prior to the election. Every voter has the right to make a written request to correct errors and omissions in the voters' lists. This request is made of the municipal or community authority responsible for announcing the voters' list and must be reviewed and acted upon within 2 days of receiving the request. This decision can be appealed to a district court which obliged to review the complaint in a public judicial setting and render a decision within 3 days. This decision is final and must be immediately implemented by the appropriate Polling Site Commission. At the request of a voter, the Zone Election Commission may intervene with the municipal or community authorities responsible for announcing voters' lists in order to correct mistakes or shortcomings in the lists.



Voter's lists are available to all electoral subjects upon request and payment of a fee to cover duplication costs. Copies of the lists must be provided within 5 days of the placement of the request.

### 3. OPENING OF THE POLLS

According to Chapter IX of the election law, voting hours are from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm. There has been some discussion of adjusting the voting hours due to security concerns. Currently, there is a curfew in effect beginning at 8:00 pm. Some election officials have expressed reservations about keeping the polls open past nightfall.

The PSC begins its work at 7:00 am by checking the ballot box to ensure that it is empty. The empty ballot box is then closed and sealed with the official stamp of the polling station. The Chairman, in the presence of commission members, then stamps all of the ballots, the number of which is recorded in the official protocol, signed by all members of the commission present. During this process, it is possible for ballots to be declared invalid if they are found to have irregularities in size, color, form, paper quality, or contents, or have been damaged in some way. These ballots are marked "unusable." Once these steps have been completed, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, and the Secretary, in the presence of commission members, affix their signatures to the ballots. order for a ballot to be considered valid, it must contain both the official stamp of the PSC and the requisite signatures.

At approximately 7:30 am, in accordance with a regulation issued by the Ministry of Interior, the uniformed and armed police detail responsible for the security of the polling site arrives. Police personnel must display their personal number and identity card on their left side. Police personnel to are to introduce themselves and familiarize themselves with the full membership of the commission. They are charged with preventing masked persons or persons with firearms from entering the polling station and are obligated to periodically report to the Chief of Police concerning the security situation at the polling station.

The polling place must be devoid of any campaign materials. It should have secrecy booths , which are to be provided to the PSC in proportion to the number of people on its voters' list. The commission desk, at which voters will be received, signed in, and issued ballots should be placed in such a manner as to allow members of the commission and observers to move around it. Ballot boxes must also be in full view of all present.

Accredited observers are permitted to observe the course of activities on election day and have the right to ask questions, gather information, and express their opinion.

Once necessary tasks have been completed in the proper order and at 8:00 am, the Chairman announces the poll open.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVERS

- \* Begin your observations even before you arrive at the polling site. Survey the town or neighborhood for evidence of campaigning or suspicious activity nearby. Take note of any busses or carloads of voters approaching the polling site or any unusual number of voters

coming to the polling site from one particular location;

- \* Note the location, accessibility, and sufficiency of the polling site. Observe indications of disorganization such as unusually long lines or people who appear to be milling around without a purpose. Also note the presence of and role of police officers. Are their government at the polling station? Are they attempting to direct the activities of the commission members?;
- \* Campaigning is prohibited 24 hours prior to the election and campaign materials are prohibited within the polling site. Look for the presence of unauthorized partisan campaign materials such as candidate pamphlets, party literature, or unofficial voter instructions. Take note of campaign activities or incentives which may be being offered to voters as they come to the polling site;
- \* Upon entering the polling site, identify yourself, show your credentials, and ask to speak with the Chairman of the Commission. With the least possible disruption of election preparations or processing of the voters, speak with other members of the commission and observers. Look for peculiar signs of tension or dissension;
- \* Confirm that all persons working as election officials and issuing or handling ballots are duly appointed members of the PSC;
- \* Notice whether there are individuals or groups lingering about who are not officials, voters waiting to vote, or accredited observers.
- \* Take note of the layout and organization of the polling site, including the division of tasks among commissions members, placement of the commission table and election materials, secrecy cabins, and ballot box. Determine if the layout provides for a reasonable flow of traffic, efficiency, and adequate security of materials. Is secrecy of the vote protected? Is the ballot box in plain view of commission members and observers. Are members of the commission representing electoral subjects or other observers being hindered or restricted in their observations in any way?
- \* Do members of the PSC arrive on time? Are they able to complete the necessary tasks in time to open the polls at 8:00 am as required by law? Are the tasks completed in the proper sequential order?;
- \* Ask the Chairman how many ballots were initially received by the polling site and the total number of voters on the voters' list.

#### 4. THE BALLOT

Design of the ballot is determined by the Council of Ministers. Ballots shall be of the same form, size, color, and paper quality. According to Article 68, the ballot is to be clearly divided into two parts. On the left side is the single-mandate constituency portion of the ballot and on the right side is the party list portion of the ballot. For the single-mandate constituency, next to the full name of each candidate is printed the symbol of the electoral subject which nominated him or the notation "independent." On the party list portion of the ballot appear the symbol and name of electoral subjects. On each side of the ballot the order of candidate names and electoral subject names is listed alphabetically. On each portion of

the ballot and at the beginning of each entry there is a separate area for voters to make their mark in favor of their choice. According to press reports, green has been selected as the color for the ballots as it has no political connotations. An actual ballot for each constituency is posted outside the voting premises of each PSC for familiarization by voters (Article 71).

#### INVALIDATION OF BALLOTS

Ballots can be declared invalid prior to the opening of the polls during the counting and checking process if they are found to have irregularities in size, color, form, paper quality, or contents, or have been damaged in some way. These ballots are marked "unusable." During election day, ballots which are "spoiled" by voters either by being filled out incorrectly, torn, or otherwise damaged are invalidated and set aside. If a voter casts his or her ballot openly, it will be immediately invalidated by the PSC Chairman who will tear the ballot and issue the voter a new one. A protocol is prepared on torn ballots. Following the closure of the polls, ballots can be invalidated if they do not bear the official stamp of the PSC and requisite signatures of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary of the commission. Voted ballots are also considered valid only if there appears one mark for the candidate on the left portion of the ballot and one electoral subject on the right portion of the ballot. In every other case, including instances where the voter has clearly marked each choice but made additional marks on the ballot, ballots are considered invalid (Article 74).

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVERS

- \* Observe the handling and method of issuance of the ballots. Are they handed to the voter by the official, or is the voter allowed to take the ballot from the pile himself?;
- \* Note whether the ballots are maintained in tidy, secure piles. Are they secured from being handled by unauthorized persons?
- \* Determine if the ballots have been appropriately stamped with the official seal of the PSC and signed by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary. Determine when the required marks are affixed, before opening of the polls or as ballots are issued;
- \* Inquire as to when the ballots and other voting materials were received and how they were secured prior to election day.

#### 5. PROCESSING OF VOTERS

Voters are processed as they appear at the polling site. The PSC is obligated to verify the identity of voters and has the right to request that voters present an identity card, passport, military certificate, or birth certificate with a photo ID. Once the voter's identity has been established, the voter signs the voters' list. In accordance with Article 65 of the election law, the voter's identification number is then entered into the voters' list. Once this is completed, s/he is given a ballot.

The voter is to proceed to the secrecy booths to cast his or her vote. As stipulated in the Constitutional Laws, each person is to vote individually and secrecy of the ballot is to be upheld. Open, family, or proxy voting

are not permitted. If a voter requires assistance, s/he can select a person to accompany him or her into the secrecy booth. In such cases, permission must be requested of the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of the PSC and a notation is made in the voters' list concerning person who is selected by the voter to assist. This person is precluded from assisting more than one voter. If voters are required to wait in line to enter a secrecy booth, the line must form at an approximate distance of 3 meters from the booth. Once the voter has marked and cast his ballot into the ballot box, the last page of his identification document is stamped (Article 65).

#### EXCEPTIONS TO THE ROUTINE

If a voter casts his or her ballot openly, it will be immediately invalidated by the PSC Chairman who will tear the ballot and issue the voter a new one. A protocol is prepared on torn ballots. Ballots which are "spoiled" by voters either by being filled out incorrectly, torn, or otherwise damaged are invalidated and set aside.

Although the election law makes reference to supplementary voters' lists, upon which would be entered data on persons who, for example, had special certificates to vote outside of their assigned polling site (Article 25), no mention is made to the processing of such voters or other criteria for entries to the supplementary voters' list in Chapter IX "Voting" of the election law. Regulations on the compilation of voters' lists also envision that citizens voting in places of temporary residence will be added to supplemental voters' lists but similarly fail to elaborate on procedures for dealing with additions by way of the supplemental voters' list on election day.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVERS

- \* Ask how many voters are on the voters' list and how many have actually presented themselves to vote. Write down the numbers and make a note of the time. As you proceed throughout the day, you will get a feel for the turnout trend. How many names appear on the supplemental voters' list and why have they been added to this list?
- \* Ask if anyone (and how many) has been turned away because their name did not appear on the list or they did not have appropriate ID. Ask how these situations were handled and the problems were resolved;
- \* Watch to see if voters are attempting to vote on behalf of others. Observe whether officials are allowing them to do so.
- \* Observe whether or not the secrecy of the voters' votes is being maintained or whether people are being allowed to enter the voting booth together or to vote in the open;
- \* Ask if anyone seems to be assisting more than one voter;
- \* Ask the Chairman if there have been any disturbances, irregularities, or complaints. Ask how they have been resolved;
- \* Note whether or not the members of the PSC who have been appointed by electoral subjects are playing any substantive role in the processing of voters or does their role appear to be nominal?;

- \* If confidentiality and discretion are possible, try to ask the members of the commission who represent electoral subjects or partisan observers if they are generally satisfied with the processing of the voters and the performance of the commission. Sense any unusual tension that might exist;
- \* Determine if undue pressure appears to be being applied to voters or if instructions given to voters appear to be tainted with bias;
- \* Note whether voters seem familiar with the ballot format and understand how to fill it out. Have there been a high number of spoiled ballots?;
- \* What role is being played by the police detachment. Are their activities limited to keeping order, or are they engaging in any improper activities such as influencing voters, intimidating commission members, or otherwise expressing political sentiments or attempting to run the polling site?;
- \* Check the seals on the ballot boxes. Are they secure, or do they appear to have been tampered with?;
- \* Ask when the PSC was formed, when they received ballots and necessary election materials, whether or not they have received any training, and if they were familiar with recent amendments to the election law.

#### 6. CLOSURE OF THE POLLS AND COUNTING OF VOTES

Ballots are counted at the polling station by the PSC members immediately after closure of the polls at 9:00 pm. Any voters remaining in the polling site at that time who have not yet cast their ballots are allowed to vote. Immediately after voting has ended, the PSC Chairman, in the presence of the commission and accredited observers:

- \* Declares the end of voting;
- \* Counts the number of voters who have participated in balloting based on the entries in the voters' lists, which must be signed by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary and any member of the commission wishing to do so. The voters lists are then placed in an envelope which is sealed and stamped and signed by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and the Secretary of the PSC, and any member of the commission wishing to do so.
- \* Counts the unused ballots which are then placed in an envelope which is sealed and stamped and signed by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and the Secretary of the PSC and any member of the commission wishing to do so.

These actions must be completed in order and recorded in the final protocol of results.

Only at this stage in the process is the counting of voted ballots to proceed. The following ordered steps are then taken by the PSC:

- \* The ballot box is opened and a member of the PSC who has been selected by lot removes one ballot and gives it to the Chairman who in an

audible voice declares whether or not the ballot is valid and in favor of which candidate and electoral subject it is. The ballot is then shown to all members and observers. Only after each vote has been recorded is the ballot set in a specified place and the next ballot taken from the ballot box;

- \* All ballots found in the ballot box are counted in the manner. Ballots of irregular color, form, contents, or paper quality are counted. Ballots of standard form which are otherwise invalidated are counted. And, standard form and valid ballots in favor of each of the candidates and electoral subjects are counted.
- \* The total number of votes is compared with the number of signatures appearing in the voters' lists. If there is a discrepancy, the counting process is repeated.

Data obtained during this process is entered into the official protocol of results.

#### COMPLETION OF THE PROTOCOL

Upon the completion of vote counting, the PSC chairman completes the remaining line items of the official protocol. Official protocols must contain the following information:

- \* PSC number and ZEC number;
- \* The time of the opening and closing of the polls;
- \* The number of voters in the voters' list;
- \* The number of voter's in the supplementary voters' list;
- \* The number of voter's based on signatures in the voters' lists;
- \* The number of ballots received;
- \* The number of ballots "destroyed" before and during the voting process;
- \* The number of unused ballots;
- \* The number of ballots found in the ballot box;
- \* The number of ballots of irregular form, color, content, or paper quality;
- \* The number of standard form ballots;
- \* The number of invalidated standard form ballots;
- \* The number of standard form and valid ballots of each of the candidates in the single-mandate constituency and each electoral subject on the party list;
- \* The number of protocol copies prepared;

- \* Information concerning comments or complaints forwarded by members of the commission and observers and the decision rendered in response to them;

The official protocol is then signed by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and the Secretary of the PSC and bears the official stamp. Each member of the PSC is obliged to sign the copies of the protocol and has the right to attach remarks. If the latter is the case, the member makes the notation "remarks" next to his signature. Although s/he is obliged to sign, the election law stipulates that "the absence of one member's signature in the protocol does not invalidate it". Each member of the PSC who has signed the protocol has a right to take a copy of it.

The count having been completed, the PSC posts the results on an obvious location outside the polling station. The Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and the Secretary of the PSC then personally deliver to the ZEC at least two copies of the official protocol of results, ballots, stamps, ballot boxes, voters' lists and other polling site materials and documentation to the ZEC. They can be accompanied by any member of the PSC who wishes to do so. All materials must be delivered to the ZEC within 24 hours of the closing of the polls.

#### AGGREGATION OF THE VOTES

The ZEC then aggregates vote totals based on the results of each PSC and records them in the official protocol of results for the constituency. This official protocol includes:

- \* PSC number of ZEC number;
- \* The time of the opening and closing of the polls;
- \* The number of voters in the voters' list;
- \* The number of voter's in the supplementary voters' list;
  - \* The number of voter's based on signatures in the voters' lists;
  - \* The number of ballots delivered to the PSCs;
  - \* The number of ballots destroyed before and during the voting process;
  - \* The number of unused ballots;
  - \* The number of ballots found in the ballot box;
  - \* The number of ballots of irregular form, color, content, or paper quality;
  - \* The number of standard form ballots;
  - \* The number of invalidated standard form ballots;
  - \* The number of standard form and valid ballots of each of the candidates in the single-mandate constituency and each

electoral subject on the party list;

- \* The number of protocol copies prepared;
- \* Information concerning comments or complaints forwarded by members of the commission and observers and the decision rendered in response to them;

The protocol of the ZEC also includes:

- \* The full name of the winning candidate in the respective single-mandate constituency or, if no candidate wins a majority of the votes the full names of the two front-runners who will proceed to a second round of voting.

As soon as the aggregation of votes is completed by the ZEC, results are posted in an obvious location outside the ZEC office. The Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Secretary of the ZEC and any member wishing to accompany them delivers all protocols and other election materials and documents to the CEC not later than 24 hour from receiving results from all PSCs in the constituency. At the same time, Article 79 implies that ballots and election commission stamps would be collected by the prefectures.

In constituencies where a second round of elections is necessary, they will be conducted one week after the first round of elections.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVERS

- \* Plan to arrive at the polling site shortly before closing of the polls. It is likely that for security reasons access to the polling site after closure of the polls may be restricted, but accredited observers are entitled to observe the count;
- \* Observe whether PSC members and observers representing electoral subjects are present and whether restrictions are being imposed by the leadership of the PSC which hinder their view of the process;
- \* Note whether the unused ballots are canceled, defaced, or destroyed after being counted;
- \* How are votes being tallied. Is this process chaotic?;
- \* Carefully observe the method and standards for identifying invalid ballots and whether such ballots are being appropriately segregated. Are standards uniformly applied? Does their appear to be any bias in the invalidation of ballots? Does their appear to be a consensus among commission members about what constitutes an invalid ballot? If a portion of the ballot is invalidated, say for excess marks on the single-mandate constituency ballot, is the party list portion invalidated also even if completed correctly? Does the number of invalidated ballots seem unusually high?;
- \* Do there appear to be stacks or clumps of ballots in the ballot box?;
- \* Observe whether the ballots are handled, stacked, or sorted in a methodical way which provides for ease of counting, and a fundamental basis of order, and reasonable security;



- \* Observe whether ballots are allowed to be handled by persons other than members of the PSC. Note if officials make any other marks or notations on the ballot;
- \* Note how disputes among commission members or complaints raised by observers are resolved;
- \* Ask the Chairman how ballots, voting materials, voter lists, and protocols are to be packed. Ask what arrangements have been made for transport and security at the point materials are ready for transfer to the ZEC. Clarify whether or not some of the voting materials such as official PSC stamps and ballots will go to the prefectures rather than to the ZEC;
- \* Make note of how long it takes the commission to complete the count;
- \* Determine whether the number of votes cast equals the number of signatures in the voters' list. Ask the Chairman what the percentage of voter turnout is. Does it match?;
- \* Observe whether or not PSC official seem comfortable with completion of the official protocol form. Does there appear to be any confusion. Are numbers being arbitrarily adjusted to "make the math work" or to shift votes between candidates and electoral subjects?;
- \* Copy down the information contained in each line item of the official protocol including the results for the single-mandate constituency and the party list ballot in that polling site;
- \* Observe who receives copies of the official protocol of results and whether there are any disputes concerning who is entitled to an copy of the protocol. Are their enough copies of the protocol forms for each members of the commission to be provided with a copy of the results.;
- \* Note whether, upon completion of the protocol, the results are posted outside the polling site;
- \* Ask PSC members which issues or procedures caused them the most confusion during the conduct of the poll;
- \* Ask for their thoughts about any improvements they would like to see implemented in the future;
- \* If possible, accompany the group turning in the copies of the official protocol and election materials and documents to the respective ZEC to monitor the efficiency, security, impartiality, and transparency of the aggregation process.