

# ELECTIONS INTEGRITY INDEX

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION ELECTIONS IN ALBANIA

21 June 2015



Institute for Democracy and Mediation  
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIS - Albanian Institute of Sciences

AIPS - Albanian Institute of Political Studies

AHC - Albanian Helsinki Committee

BCCD - Observatory for Children's Rights & the Balkan Center for Cooperation and Development

BCCD - Balkan Centre for Cooperation and Development

CFFESD - Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and for Sustainable Democracy

CDO - Coalition of Domestic Observers

CSO - Civil Society Organizations

CEC - Central Election Commission

CVC - Commissions of the Voting Centres

CFFE - Coalition for Free and Fair Elections

DCAE - District Commissions for the Administration of Elections

DOC - Domestic Observers Coalition

EII - Elections Integrity Index

DEA - District Election Administration

IPS - Albanian Institute of Policy Studies

IDM - Institute for Democracy and Mediation

INSIZ - Institute for Development of Electoral System

INFOÇIP - Centre for Information of Public Opinion

FML - Forumi i Mendimit të Lirë

LGU - Local Government Units

OSFA - Open Society Foundation for Albania

MMB - Media Monitoring Board

NDI - National Democratic Institute

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Election's Integrity Index (EII) is an assessment of the quality of elections by the Albanian Civil Society Organizations (CSO). The aim of the EII is to contribute to the improvement of the election in Albania and to strengthen the role of the civil society in the consolidation of the country's democracy.

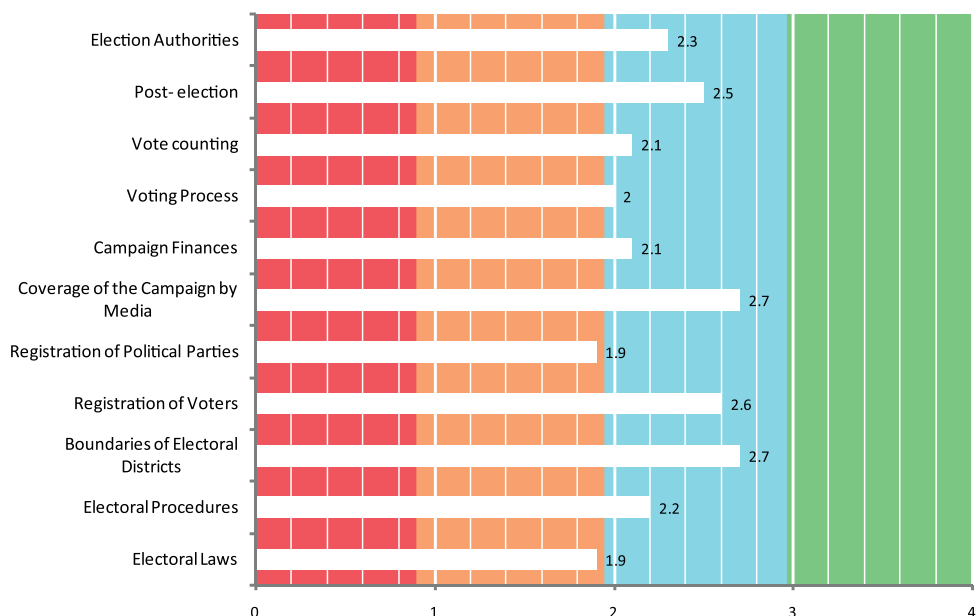
The CSOs increased their participation during the local elections of 21 June 2015 through a series of assessing, monitoring and advocating activities. Thus, the CSOs assumed a greater responsibility and a greater role in their efforts to improve the election process and consolidate democracy in the country.

The number of the CSOs that were actively involved in the elections was bigger than in previous elections. In addition to Tirana based organisation, a considerable number of CSOs based in other cities were also involved.

Financial support for CSOs' activities came almost entirely from foreign donors. Financial support by local was almost inexistent, although funds provided by local donors to the political parties amounted to millions.

The EII assessed the local elections of the 21 June 2015 is based almost entirely on the reports produced by the Albanian CSOs that monitored the election.

In addition to providing a unified effort by domestic actors in assessing the election process the EII constitutes an alternative to the international observers' reports assessment but through a more comprehensive approach. The advantage of the EII is that it avoids the bimodal approach of international observers' reports that tend to assess the elections as 'good' or 'bad' by providing the means to evaluate the progress or regress in various aspects and phases of the elections management.



*Graph 1. The score for the 11 indicator and the performance trend*

The EII assesses the elections based on 11 indicators and 47 performance indicators for each indicator. Indicators cover the pre election period, the day of elections and the post election period. The indicators include: Election Laws; Election Procedures; The boundaries of electoral districts; Registration of Voters; Registration of Political Parties; Media Campaign Coverage; Campaign finances; The voting process; Vote Count; Post elections; Election Authorities.

The indicators are evaluated in a scale from 1, which represents the lowest performance level, to 4 which is the highest. The EII assessed the local elections of 21 June 2015 in the graph below by applying the selected performance indicators (Graph 1).

In addition to the numerical value provided for each indicator assessment the index provides also the performance trend for each indicator by using a colour scale that corresponds to the four assessment categories: poor (1),

sufficient (2), good (3), very good (4).

In sum each indicator was assessed as following.

1. Electoral legislation is incomplete and lacks clarity, which allows for the actors engaged in the electoral administration process to make biased and discretionary decisions. The electoral legislation is not broadly accepted by all actors involved and the participation in its adoption has been partial. The discrepancies in the legislation and the restrictions provided in the electoral code have led to distortion of political competition with especially affecting negative consequences for independent candidates.
2. The election process was managed relatively well by CEC at the central level but numerous problems appeared at the lower levels of the election administration. The CEC organized the required training for the lower levels of the electoral administration and performed better in providing information to voters, including young people who voted for the first time and minorities. However, frequent changes in the composition of committees in the lower levels of the electoral administration, undermined procedures the adequate implementation of the procedures and the quality of elections in general.
3. Although reports issued by CSOs have not dealt extensively with the electoral boundaries, negative aspects were identified such as: a distrust of political parties in the fairness of the process of administrative division and the general rejection of the process; the perception that boundaries have distorted representation, difficulties in planning the campaign in order to fully reflect the changes that resulted from the territorial administrative reform and the lack of adequate communication with voters on its effects by political parties during the electoral campaign; the negative impact in registering and conducting the campaign by the smaller parties and independent candidates. These issues represent some of the main factors related to the electoral boundaries that have negatively impacted the quality of these elections.
4. The Electoral Register needs to be significantly improved, since voter lists have shown continuous irregularities. There have been problems with the information provided to the voters about the lists also as not all voters were informed in advance on the polling station they were assigned to vote. Albanian immigrants' voting remains a problem, and



makes it difficult for these citizens to exercise their right to vote. This has made more difficult the verification of the accuracy of the voters list and the calculation of the real figures of participation of citizen in the elections.

5. The registration of political parties and candidates presented numerous problems. The most high profile problems identified included: the violations of the registration's deadline, the initiation of the electoral campaign prior to the completion of the registration of the political parties and the candidates, the selection of candidates by bypassing procedures and statutory rules of the parties, and procedural difficulties that resulted from CEC decisions.
6. The media showed a high degree of influence by political parties and interest groups in the coverage of the elections and generally failed to provide independent and balanced reporting. The media coverage was driven mostly from the political influence and the financial resources of competitors rather than by the principle of providing public information. One of the main weaknesses was the transmission by the printed and broadcast media of news that were produced by the political parties or candidates themselves, in the form of pre-prepared broadcasts or the publication of information and data taken by the social sites without further verification. The setting of media's agenda by the political parties and powerful groups of interests was evident in the exclusive attention paid to the candidates running for mayor while leaving almost entirely out of the focus the candidates running for the municipal councils. Likewise there was lack of adequate space for the independent candidates.
7. The indicator on the campaign's finances scored the lowest of all the indicators analyzed. The political parties used finances as a mean to influence voters and surpassed the projected expenditures from the budget allocated for the electoral campaign. However the competing parties and the institutions charged with ensuring financial transparency of elections failed to collect, publish, and evaluate the campaign's financing and failing thus to ensure the necessary transparency. In many cases resources of government institutions have been used by candidates.
8. On the day of the elections there were no cases of intimidation of voters aimed at influencing the expression of their free will. In general, voters

had no difficulty to identify polling stations and voting procedures have not negatively affected the vote. There have been problems with the establishment of facilities for people with disabilities and same as in the previous elections voters living abroad did not have the opportunity to vote in their countries where they reside.

9. The speed of vote counting improved significantly compared to previous elections. Although these were not widespread, irregularities in guaranteeing the respect of the security procedures of the ballot boxes, presence of unauthorized people during the counting process, lack of transparency and the creation of obstacles for independent observers and some delays in publishing the results, contributed to a low score of the vote counting process.
10. The election results were widely accepted but a number of complaints were submitted by the candidates in the election administration institutions. However the complaints were processed in accordance with the legal provisions and the decisions made were accepted. Election authorities addressed processed the complaints on time but some complaints were suspended or resolved discretionally. The mandates of elected candidates were certified on time and there were no delays in the formation of elected institutions. There were no violent protests or other public manifestations.
11. The composition of the electoral authorities, based on the principle of appointment by political parties, constitutes one of the main problems for the electoral authorities. Political affiliation of the members of the electoral authorities has made their decisions to be influenced by considerations and interests related to the parties they represent and has undermined the adequate implementation of the electoral legislation. The political affiliation of the electoral authorities has contributed to the distrust of the parties not represented and to the distrust their impartiality. The activity of the electoral officials has been partially transparent

## I. INTRODUCTION

The institution of free and fair elections is one of the main criteria of democracy. However, only the process of holding elections is not enough without a good management of the elections, which should produce credible and acceptable results.

The management of the elections in Albania remains weak and despite ongoing reforms the processes have not managed to create a system of electoral management capable to produce credible and acceptable results.

The involvement of civil society in the electoral process is of fundamental importance in improving the quality of elections and over the last decade, the degree of involvement, and the role of civil society in the electoral process has been increasing. However, civil society's efforts have been fragmented and uncoordinated and thus unable to maximize their effect.

In this context, the EII marks an effort to further contribute in the improvement of the elections management but serves also as a consolidating instrument that maximizes the role of civil society through the coordination and convergence of their activities and actions.

EII on the other hand aims to provide an alternative to election observation reports produced by international organizations. Although international electoral observation has helped to improve elections, they still continue to have drawbacks.

Partly this reflects the inevitable limitations that the observation of elections by the foreign observing missions have, as they cannot force the deeply polarized political parties to cooperate with each other or to eradicate undemocratic practices and the instinct to use any means for holding power or coming to power.

On the other hand the lack of a comprehensive framework for the assessment of the elections by international organizations has lead towards a bimodal evaluation as 'good' or 'bad'. In order to address this weakness the EII provides a comprehensive framework, which allows highlighting the weak areas of the electoral administration and future efforts to be concentrated in improving the weaknesses and consolidating the successful indicators.

In addition, the assessment of the elections by the local civil society actors

provides the opportunity to make assessments that go beyond the political correctness of the international electoral observing missions and can lead to further action by the civil society that may continue even after the elections.

## 1. Methodology

The Electoral Integrity Index employs a methodology that measures the quality of the elections through eleven indicators of the electoral process. The indicators cover the pre election period, the day of elections and post-election period.<sup>1</sup>

The eleven indicators that covering the main observed and monitored areas during the local elections in 2015 are as follows:

1. Electoral Laws
2. Electoral Procedures
3. Boundaries of Electoral Districts
4. Registration of Voters
5. Registration of Political Parties
6. Coverage of the Campaign by Media
7. Campaign Finances
8. Voting Process
9. Vote counting
10. Post- election
11. Election Authorities

For the measurement of each indicator there are allocated three to six performance indicators. In total there are forty seven performance indicators. To each of this performance indicator there are allocated one hundred and two sub indicators. (Graph 2, Appendix 1)

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1 The starting point for this methodology has been “The Electoral Integrity Project” by Pippa Norris, Ferran Martínez of Coma and Max Grömping, “The Electoral Integrity Project, The Year in Elections, 2014”, February, 2015. However the methodology has been adapted in order to enable data operationalisation and to reflect certain aspects that have been evaluated as relevant for the implementation of this project.



*Graph 2. The number of indicators, indicators and sub indicators*

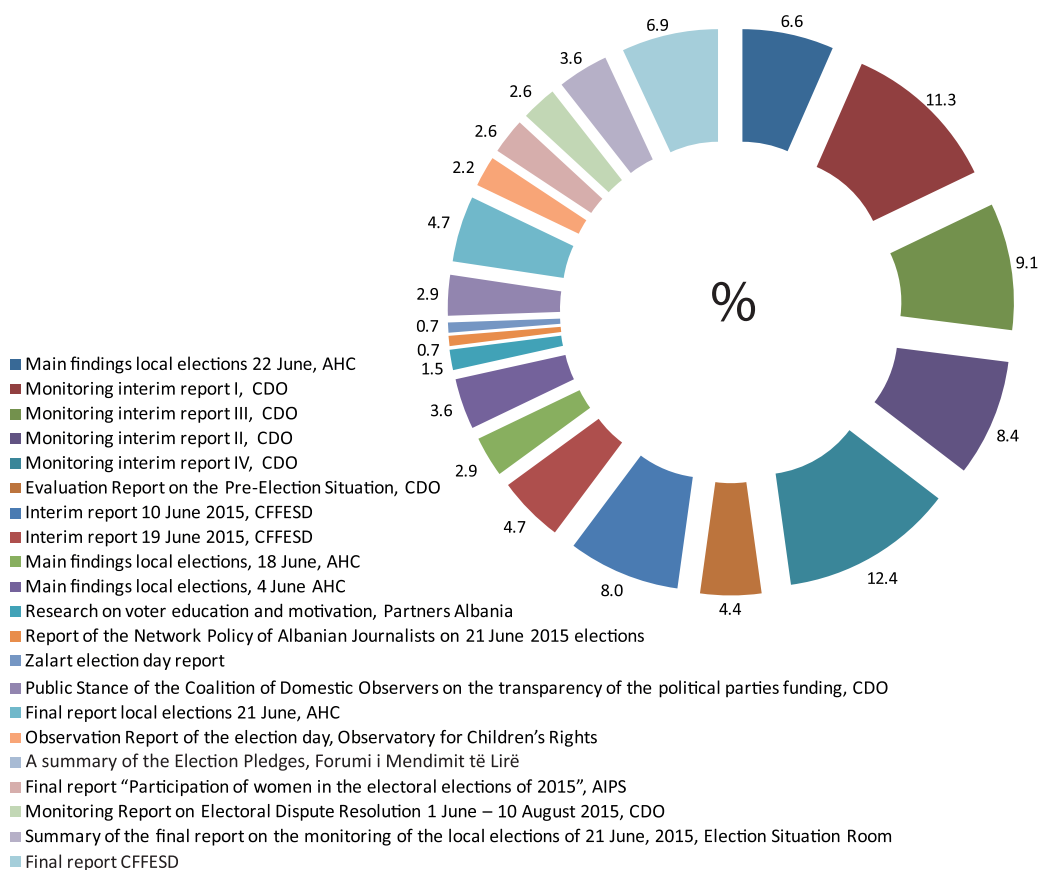
## 2. The Data Collection

The data used for the EII has been obtained from 21 monitoring reports produced by Albanian CSOs that monitored the 21 June 2015 local elections (Appendix 3). When necessary and applicable other data has been used also such as election results, the CEC data, and the official positions of competing political parties.

The amount of data obtained from reports varies according to the focus, scope and methodology used by the CSOs that have issued the reports. Consequently, various reports covered different parts of the process and thus have provided data for the parts that has been in their focus (Graph 3).

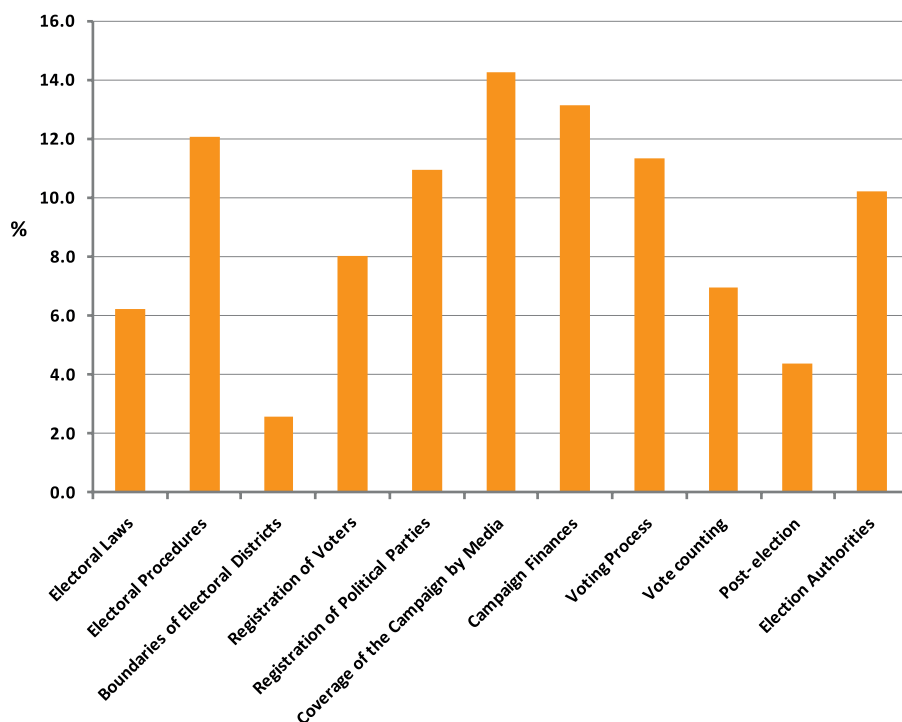
The amount of data collected from each report varies also. Although none of the reports has prevailed in terms of amount of data obtained, some reports have provided more data than others. Thus, 6 reports account for nearly half of the data used for the index.

Given that the reports produced by the CSOs were not planned to cover all indicators and sub-indicators of the EII, the amount of data obtained for each indicator varies (Graph 4). For some indicators, such as electoral boundaries, post election period or electoral laws, reports have provided smaller amount of data. While for other indicators such as Finance Campaign, Media Campaign Coverage or Voting Process, the reports have provided larger amounts of data.



*Graph 3. CSOs reports used to obtain the data and amount of data obtained from each report in %*

However, although the variations changes in the amount of data may have partly influenced the assessment of each indicator or the amount of data has allowed making a more detailed assessment on certain aspects, on the whole the data obtained has been sufficient to produce the index as such.



Graph 4. The data obtained from the reports for each indicator in %

### 3. The Data Processing and Index Calculation

In the first phase a data base compiled with data from the reports produced by CSOs was created. In order to create the database, each report was initially analysed and the data were classified according to selected indicators, namely the electoral laws, election procedures, the registration of political parties, the boundaries of electoral districts, voter registration, registration of political parties, the coverage of the campaign by the media, the campaign finance, the voting process, the post elections, and the election authorities.

The evaluation of the indicators was made by using the scale from 1 to 4, for the 102 sub-indicators and for the 47 performance indicators. 1 refers to the lowest level of performance, while 4 refers to the highest level of performance. The performance was evaluated according the table below:

Nr.	Status	Description	Assessment
1	In no case	The assessment is that in no case is the standard has been applied	1
2	In some cases	The assessment is that the standard has been applied in some cases	2
3	In most cases	The assessment is that the standard has been applied in most of the cases	3
4	In all cases	The assessment is that the standard has been applied in all the cases	4

*Table 1. The approach applied to assess the indicators*

In order to assess the indicators the 102 sub-indicators were initially evaluated and then the 47 performance indicators.

Each sub indicator allocated within index is averaged to create an outcome indicator. To all sub indicator has been given the same value within a performance indicator and similarly the same way has it has been proceeded for the performance indicators.

The calculation is based on the average of each sub indicator, performance indicator and indicator. This allows the measurement of the indicators in the same way. The data collected are considered homogeneous regardless of the amount of data collected for each indicator. The results obtained for each sub indicator served to calculate and evaluate each of the performance indicators, the results of which were then calculated to give the assessment for each indicator (Appendix 2).

#### **4. Advantages and Limitation of the EII**

The purpose of this index is to provide for an assessment framework on the quality of the elections, which would allow identifying the achievements and the weak points of the election administration. The assessment of the elections through numerical indicators will allow having in the future



measurable and comparable indicators to assess the quality and integrity of the elections.

Thus, the EII can help to focus future efforts in improving the indicators that have scored poorly, while working to further consolidate the positive score indicators. The results of the measured indicators can be used by policymakers, election officials and other stakeholders to focus and address also matters of interest identified in the performance indicators or the sub indicators.

EII has made the effort to turn qualitative data such as opinions and assessments of organizations in measurable indicators. By being measurable indicators can be better understood and interpreted even by the larger audiences. Thus only from reading the indicators, it can be reflected on the areas where the electoral process has been managed well and in accordance with the standards or on the areas where there are problems.

However, despite the stated advantages this index has also its limitations. The variations in the amount of data obtained for each indicator and the collection of data for compilation of reports by the CSOs, without being aware of the relevance of the data for the EII is one of the main limitations. This occurred because the EII was conceived and began to be operationalised after the CSOs had started their work on the reports. So this index failed to formulate questions and collect data that could have best served the chosen methodology and approach. As a result the qualitative data provided was based on descriptive information and includes opinions, comments or analysis on certain aspects but without showing that they relied on data that were based in a solid methodology.

At instances the analysis is based on substantive and verifiable data and facts while in other cases the data were superficial. Only partially the reports have used data from statistical surveys or scientific methods. In some cases, when an opinion or data, the way or approach for reaching certain conclusions is not clear, makes it difficult to give a sound explanation for the phenomenon and provide a solid assessment.

However, in addition to providing an assessment of the 21 June 2015 local elections the goal of this EII is to pioneer and approach and methodology that is aimed to be used for the upcoming elections also, while addressing the limitations mentioned above in order achieve a higher degree of methodological convergence of the reports that will be used.

## II. THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY INDEX

### 5. Electoral Laws

In democratic elections the political competition through elections aims to meet several objectives among which the most important are the establishment of institutions that represent accurately the will of the voters. Given that through elections the political actors aim to seize power and influence the design of public policies and management of state resources, electoral processes must ensure that competition be fair and impartial. One of the first steps toward realizing this, are the clear and comprehensive laws.

In order to assess this indicator, the following performance indicators were allocated: The level of acceptance of the election legislation by all entities involved in the election; The level of credibility for the legislation of most of the subjects involved in the elections; Discrimination or not in the legislation for the registration of political parties and/or candidates; Limitations within the legislation regarding pre-election coalitions of political parties; Compatibility with international standards and adequacy in ensuring fundamental human rights; Clarity of the legal framework.

#### **The assessment for the Electoral Laws Indicator is 2.29**

*Electoral legislation is incomplete and lacks clarity, which allows for the actors engaged in the electoral administration process to make biased and discretionary decisions. The electoral legislation is not broadly accepted by all actors involved and the participation in its adoption has been partial. The discrepancies in the legislation and the restrictions provided in the electoral code have led to distortion of political competition with especially affecting negative consequences for independent candidates.*

There are a number of problems identified in the reports such as lack of consensus among political actors for improving the legal framework, which remains incomplete.<sup>2</sup> The current legal framework does not provide equal conditions for all election contestants. Political parties that have no seats in the parliament coalitions or that are not part of any of the large coalitions

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2 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi I, 10 Janar-26 Mars 2015, Koalicioni i Vëzhguesve Vendorë (Interim report I, 10 January - 26 March 2015, CDO)

and the independent candidates must collect a relatively large number of signatures supporting (not less than 1% of voters in a specific District Election Administration (DEA)), in order to be registered. On the other hand large coalitions and big parties who have positions in the Assembly or the independent candidates who hold high office positions are exempt from this rule.<sup>3</sup>

This problem became more emphasized with the new territorial administrative division and the increasing size of the administrative units given that it has become more difficult independent candidates to meet the requirements and making thus the competition between the parties unequal.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, independent candidates and parties running for the first time are not allowed to benefit from public funds to carry out their campaign. Article 87 of the Electoral Code provides that “Political parties participating in the elections, which have received not less than 0.5 percent of the vote nationwide, have the right to use funds from the state budget, based on the number of votes each party gets in the elections”.<sup>5</sup>

A direct consequence of these provisions is the unilateral implementation of the electoral law and the discretion by the electoral administration. There are several decisions of the electoral administration institutions, which indicate that these institutions implement unclear and vague standard in their decisions.

So the CEC decision no. 88 dated 7 April 2015 “On approval of the candidacy models to be used in local government bodies election of 21 June 2015”, added to the confusion because of the differences in the content of the document that was voted by the CEC and the document that was made public. Likewise the Electoral College took a decision which increased the confusion created after the decision of the CEC referring to the decision no. 88 of 7 April 2015, but without repealing this decision. This situation reflected even more uncertainty regarding the standard that the CEC would be using in the future.<sup>6</sup>

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3 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, CFFESD)

4 Përmbledhje e raportit përfundimtar për monitorimin e zgjedhjeve të 21 Qershorit 2015, Dhoma Zgjedhore (Summary of the final report on the monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Election Situation Room)

5 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania CFFESD)

6 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, Koalicioni i Vëzhguesve Vendorë. (Monitoring interim report II, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

The uncertainty, discretion and partisan approach in the implementation of the electoral code was evident even in the adoption of “The CEC Decision no. 13, dated 27.01.2011” through which the CEC attributes to itself the right of unregister the candidates for Mayor, assuming a competence which is not granted by the electoral law.<sup>7</sup>

## 6. Electoral Procedures

Election procedures involve all stakeholders such are the decision-making structures and those that influence or are influenced by this process. Due to its importance in the electoral process, the assessment of the electoral procedures is one of the main indicators for assessing the quality of elections. In order to assess this indicator, the following performance indicators were allocated: Management of elections; Availability of information on voting procedures; Fairness of the election administration; The degree of implementation of the law.

### **The assessment for the Electoral Procedures Indicator is 2.45**

*The election process was managed relatively well by CEC at the central level but numerous problems appeared at the lower levels of the election administration. The CEC organized the required training for the lower levels of the electoral administration and performed better in providing information to voters, including young people who voted for the first time and minorities. However, frequent changes in the composition of committees in the lower levels of the electoral administration, undermined procedures the adequate implementation of the procedures and the quality of elections in general.*

The reports analysed indicate that the CEC made the necessary efforts to manage the electoral process in an adequate manner. The CEC contributed in issuing guidelines and adopting or implementing acts in compliance with the electoral legislation,<sup>8</sup> in training the lower levels of the election administration and took appropriate measures to inform the voters who

7 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi III, 22 Maj -18 Qershor 2015, Koalicioni i Vëzhguesve Vendorë. (Monitoring interim report III, 22 May - 18 June 2015, CDO)

8 Report on the main findings on the local elections 21 June 2015 AHC

voted for the first time and young voters in general.<sup>9</sup> Similarly the CEC arranged and conducted activities to inform minorities.<sup>10</sup>

But delays in the appointment of electoral officials at lower levels damaged the process of voter education and informing and because of delays in the creation District Commissions for the Administration of Elections the (DCAE) and frequent turnover of its members. The appointment of DCAE members at an earlier stage would have allowed them to get better acquainted with the procedures and would have provided for better interaction and exchanges with the respective voters.

Furthermore frequent turnover of commissioners exacerbated this aspect of the electoral administration since in most cases the substitutes lacked proper training and experience. The appointment of DCAE members proved particularly problematic since not only was not realized within 13 April 2015, but changes in the composition of DCAEs continued even during the late May-June 2015 period.<sup>11</sup> Until the day of the elections 272 commissioners were replaced and 48 of them were replaced after having received the trained given by the CEC.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the problems identified during the opening of polling stations, the voting process and during the process closing of polling stations were directly related to the incorrect implementation of the electoral procedures and lack of adequate training.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile the work of election authorities was greatly influenced by the political parties.<sup>14</sup> Another feature of the work of election authorities at all levels has been a considerable lack of transparency, since they failed to fully and timely inform the public on their meetings and its results.<sup>15</sup>

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9 Raport vlerësimi i situatës parazgjedhore, Nëntor 2013 - 9 Janar 2015 KVV, (Assesment report on the pre-elections situation, November 2013 – 9 January 2015, CDO)

10 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi III, 22 Maj -18 Qershor 2015, KVV, (Monitoring interim report III, 22 May - 18 June 2015, CDO)

11 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN (Interim Report, Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania CFFESD)

12 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

13 Report on the main findings on the local elections June21, 2015 Albanian Helsinki Committee

14 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

15 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

## 7. Boundaries of electoral districts

The boundaries of electoral districts and its delineation process are important for the quality of the elections because it can affect the election outcome and consequently the political processes and the legitimacy of the institutions that result from the elections.

The use of executive and legislative competences in delineating district boundaries with the intention to influence the elections' results has been an issue in Albania in previous elections. Therefore the delineation of district boundaries was an issue of concern even before these elections.

Continuous objections were presented by the opposition parties stemming from the concern that the administrative reform that preceded the elections and the number of administrative units created was influenced by electoral interests and took in consideration the support that different parties have in different parts of the country.

One of the negative consequences of distrust on the process of administrative reform was the escalating polarization and lack of cooperation between opposing parties, particularly in the pre-election period. Another consequence which had a negative impact on the political process was the failure of political parties to inform their voters on the effects of the reform for their communities.<sup>16</sup>

Against this context the boundaries of electoral districts constitute one of the key indicators to assess the quality of these elections. In order to assess this indicator, the following performance indicators were allocated: Boundaries have not discriminated political parties; Boundaries did not favour incumbent parties and candidates; Boundaries have been impartial.

### **The assessment for Boundaries of electoral districts Index is 2.13**

*Although reports issued by CSOs have not dealt extensively with the electoral boundaries, negative aspects were identified such as: a distrust of political parties in the fairness of the process of administrative division and the general rejection of the process; the perception that boundaries*

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<sup>16</sup> Përmbledhje e raportit përfundimtar për monitorimin e zgjedhjeve të 21 Qershorit 2015, Dhoma Zgjedhore. (Summary of the final report on the monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Election Situation Room)

*have distorted representation, difficulties in planning the campaign in order to fully reflect the changes that resulted from the territorial administrative reform and the lack of adequate communication with voters on its effects by political parties during the electoral campaign; the negative impact in registering and conducting the campaign by the smaller parties and independent candidates. These issues represent some of the main factors related to the electoral boundaries that have negatively impacted the quality of these elections.*

## **8. Voters registration**

The right of all citizens to elect their representatives for the country's governing institutions through free and fair elections is the cornerstone of democracy. Participation in the election is guaranteed by the electoral law, which defines the modalities for voter registration and the establishment of a general and comprehensive register, known as the voters list.

Voter registration and voters' lists have been a problem in almost all previous elections in Albania since they have been considered by political parties and by local and international institutions as one of the simplest elements to manipulate and that often have been used to manipulate election results.

In order to assess this indicator, the following performance indicators were allocated: Citizens were not listed in the register; Electoral register has been accurate; Inadequate voters were not registered. Sub indicators included issues related to the voters' information on the registration, access to information and ability to remedy.

### **The assessment for the Voters Registration Index is 2.57**

*The Electoral Register needs to be significantly improved, since voter lists have shown continuous irregularities. There have been problems with the information provided to the voters about the lists also as not all voters were informed in advance on the polling station they were assigned to vote. Albanian immigrants' voting remains a problem, and makes it difficult for these citizens to exercise their right to vote. This has made more difficult the verification of the accuracy of the voters list and the calculation of the real figures of participation of citizen in the elections.*

In more the 25% of the polling stations all over the country were identified voters that did not find their name in the voters list.<sup>17</sup> This problem was mostly reflected in the municipalities of Tirana, Durrës, and Shkodër.<sup>18</sup>

In general voters did not receive information from the respective local authorities because of the budgetary restrictions and problems in delegation of responsibilities between the local authorities and the central authorities. This can be regarded as the principal reason why the voters did not find their names in the lists.<sup>19</sup>

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Local Government Units (LGU) have the legal obligation to provide a written notice to each voter residing in the territory of LGUs, in the period from 14 January to 15 March 2015.<sup>20</sup> The Ministry of Internal Affairs has received the monetary funds, but these funds were not made available in accordance with the legal provisions.<sup>21</sup> Only in a few cases there is evidence that the voters have been informed on the voter's list in municipalities such as Lushnja, Berat and Korçë.

The failure to inform voters has also led to a declining interest in the electoral process and underestimation for participation in it.<sup>22</sup>

## 9. The registration of the Political Parties

In order to participate in elections and to seek political representation through legitimization in elections, the political parties and candidates must be registered in the institutions of electoral administration and compete freely.

The registration of political parties and candidates is conducted according to rules established by law and these rules must be implemented in such a

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17 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

18 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

19 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

20 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi I, 10 Janar - 26 Mars 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report I, 10 January - 26 March 2015, CDO)

21 Main findings of the monitoring of the preparatory process for the 21 June 2015 local elections, 4 June 2015, AHC

22 Main findings of the monitoring of the preparatory process for the 21 June 2015 local elections, 4 June 2015, AHC



way that they do not discriminate or create unfair advantages to political parties, different social groups or specific candidates.

If political parties or candidates believe that the electoral rules are discriminatory for some and favour some and for others, or are implemented in such a way, then it is likely to damage the quality of the elections and the legitimacy of institutions deriving from them.

In order to assess the indicator on the registration of political parties the following indicators are used: Opposition candidates are not prohibited from running in elections; Women had equal opportunity to compete; Ethnic and national minorities had equal opportunity to compete; Parties and candidates are not restricted from holding electoral rallies; Only the leaders of the main parties choose candidates.

### **The assessment of the Parties Registration Indicator is 2.09**

*The registration of political parties and candidates presented numerous problems. The most high profile problems identified included: the violations of the registration's deadline, the initiation of the electoral campaign prior to the completion of the registration of the political parties and the candidates, the selection of candidates by bypassing procedures and statutory rules of the parties, and procedural difficulties that resulted from CEC decisions.*

The analysis of the indicators shows that in these elections the implementation of the law relating to the registration of political parties and candidates has been selective; sometimes the law was interpreted differently by the CEC or the Electoral College. In addition, many candidates of smaller parties were penalized due to the decision made by the CEC. This situation has caused confusion among candidates on the documentation they needed to provide for the registration. CEC's decisions sometimes have primarily penalized candidates of small parties that were registered to compete outside the coalition or who would like to compete as independent candidates.<sup>23</sup>

Problems were identified with the application of law by the electoral management institutions: the Electoral College, the CEC or DCAEs. The CEC decision no. 88 dated 07/04/2015 prevented parties who owned seats on municipal councils or as mayors to enter the race without collecting signatures of 1% of the voters of the electoral district. The Electoral College

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23 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report II, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

contested the CEC decision, but without rescinding this decision. This situation led to confusion among candidates and on the documentation they needed to provide in order to register. Furthermore, after this decision was contested, the CEC or the respective DCAE brought as an argument the failure to meet the deadline for registration of candidates, although they were responsible for the delays caused. The inadequate decision-making of the CEC and the whole situation penalized primarily the small parties that were registered to compete outside the coalition or the independent candidates.<sup>24</sup>

There were problems identified with the registration within the deadlines by the political parties and candidates. According to the reports there have been violations of the law with regards to time set for the start of the election campaign. Both coalitions presented their candidates at least one month before the official date on which the election campaign should be launched.<sup>25</sup> According to the Electoral Code, the election campaign should have begun on 22 May 2015 but the Socialist Party (SP), the Democratic Party (DP) and the Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI) violated this provision and started campaigning before this date, with party leaders through organizing electoral tours in the major cities.<sup>26</sup>

The process of nomination of candidates for mayor has been assessed as non-transparent and inconsistent with the statutory norms of political parties. In most cases the candidates are have been selected directly by the leaders of the political parties or resulting from agreements between the heads of two or more parties of the same coalition”.<sup>27</sup>

The inclusion of minorities has been less problematic and was noted that there were no groups or minorities that are discriminated or prevented from participating in elections. The Strategy for Voters Education, approved and implemented by the CEC planned the undertaking of concrete steps to inform and sensitize specific groups, including ethnic and ethno cultural minorities, in regards to whom the strategy includes the providing of information in the

24 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report II, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

25 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report II, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

26 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

27 Përmbledhje e raportit përfundimtar për monitorimin e zgjedhjeve të 21 Qershorit 2015, Dhoma Zgjedhore, (Summary of the final report on the monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Election Situation Room)

respective languages.<sup>28</sup>

Women also had higher chance to compete in these elections. The improvement of gender quotas is highlighted in many reports.

## **10. Media Coverage of the Campaign**

In elections the media plays an important role because the information and the messages communicated by the media have a critical impact in shaping the public opinion and the voters' preferences for political parties and candidates.

For this reason, the media should be free and should not be under the influence of political parties, candidates or interest groups that might aim to promote their agendas or thwart competitors through various forms of media manipulation.

In order to assess the indicator the campaign's media coverage the following performance indicators were used: Newspapers have provided balanced electoral news; TV news have not favoured the ruling party; Parties/candidates had fair access to broadcasting and political advertising; Journalists have provided fair coverage of elections; Social media is used to transmit electoral frauds. Similarly sub indicators have been used as: Major party candidates are favoured more than those of smaller parties; Independent candidates are treated equally in the media coverage of the campaign; Candidates or political parties are treated equally by the public media; Informing the public about the candidates/parties has been sufficient, objective and balanced; Legal provisions are implemented to determine the participation of parties/candidates in broadcasting and political advertising; No violations were recorded on the timing in regards of the political parties/candidate's electoral presentations in the media; The media has distorted candidate's message; The Media Monitoring Board has been impartial and professional; There have been social platforms to gather information on the electoral campaign; Social media platforms have been successful and effective and have influenced voters.

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28 Raport vlerësimi i situatës parazgjedhore, Nëntor 2013 - 9 Janar 2015, KVV, (Monitoring interim report on the pre-elections situation, November 2013 - 9 January 2015 , CDO)

**The assessment of the indicator on Campaign's Media Coverage is 2.67**

*The media showed a high degree of influence by political parties and interest groups in the coverage of the elections and generally failed to provide independent and balanced reporting. The media coverage was driven mostly from the political influence and the financial resources of competitors rather than by the principle of providing public information. One of the main weaknesses was the transmission by the printed and broadcast media of news that were produced by the political parties or candidates themselves, in the form of pre-prepared broadcasts or the publication of information and data taken by the social sites without further verification. The setting of media's agenda by the political parties and powerful groups of interests was evident in the exclusive attention paid to the candidates running for mayor while leaving almost entirely out of the focus the candidates running for the municipal councils. Likewise there was lack of adequate space for the independent candidates.*

Regarding the level of objective and balanced information by the media on the candidates and political parties, it was assessed that media has only partially performed this role. One of the problems identified is the practice of broadcasting electoral meetings by the televisions, by using the signal produced by the electoral headquarters through central directing or already pre-prepared broadcasts by the political parties.<sup>29</sup> The television channels broadcast media products prepared by the political parties without verifying or analyzing the data or the messages transmitted by merely airing these party-made media products.

Another weakness of the campaign's media coverage and the influence of political parties in setting the agenda of the media was the almost exclusive focus on candidates for mayors who competed in the elections. Most of the media reports during the electoral campaign were focused almost entirely on covering the candidates for mayors and there was lack of information and space for candidates running for the city council members. Consequently voters had not any, or had very little information on the candidates running for the councils including general information such as education background, their contribution to the society or their electoral platforms to

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<sup>29</sup> Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report III, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

serve the community.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, the campaign media coverage for the independent candidates was poor. Reports indicate that independent candidates did not have sufficient access to the national media so they were treated unequally comparing to the candidates supported by political parties.<sup>31</sup> Due to financial and structural constraints the campaign of independent candidates was covered to a small extent by the media.<sup>32</sup>

The activity of the Media Monitoring Board (MMB) is another important indicator to assess the Index related to the degree of media coverage because of its monitoring role. However the role of MMB appears vague and the institution has significant lack of qualified staff, equipment and proper methodology in order to effectively monitor the number and quality of broadcasting during the elections.

Another additional media element that has been used to cover the elections has been the use of social networks platforms, the preference towards which has been increasing significantly.<sup>33</sup> Social networks have been widely by the political parties or the individual candidates, as well as the media channels that have used social platforms for disseminating their news but also to relay information collected through the profiles of the parties or candidates.<sup>34</sup>

However, beside the potential to improve communication by creating space for everyone to communicate their messages, social networks bore also the risk of communicating untrue or partially true messages and information. It is noted that the print and TV media have often reported information and messages obtained from social media without prior and independent verification.

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30 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

31 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

32 Raport i dytë ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Second Interim Report, CFFESD)

33 Raport i dytë ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Second Interim Report, CFFESD)

34 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi III, 22 Maj - 18 Qershor 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report III, 22 May - 18 June 2015, CDO)

## 11. Campaign Finances

The finances of the elections campaigns have a huge impact on the quality of the elections. Elections campaigns have become more and more costly and state funds provided to political parties manage to cover only a small part of these campaign costs.

Consequently, political parties and candidates are increasingly relying on donations to raise the funds necessary to do an effective campaign and to convey their messages to voters.

This approach carries the risk of elections campaigns being funded by dubious financial sources or through promises of favours from candidates to different donors, promises which are later fulfilled through corrupt practices and misuse of influence through state institutions.

For these reasons, campaign finances have a significant impact on the quality of the elections because the use of inequitable funding issues in the campaign can distort election results and therefore lead to distorted representation in the institutions emerging out of the election.

On the other hand state authorities and citizens have a legitimate interest to ensure that elections campaign financing is honest, transparent and limits the possibility for corruption.

The assessment of the indicator on the campaign finances was made by using the following performance indicators: Parties and candidates have equal access to funds provided through public finances; Parties and candidates have equal access to political donations; Parties and candidates have published and made transparent financial accounts; Wealthy individuals weren't used to "buy" the elections; State resources are not used illegally for campaigning.

### **The assessment for the Campaign's Finances is 1.84**

*The indicator on the campaign's finances scored the lowest of all the indicators analyzed. The political parties used finances as a mean to influence voters and surpassed the projected expenditures from the budget allocated for the electoral campaign. However the competing parties and*

*the institutions charged with ensuring financial transparency of elections failed to collect, publish, and evaluate the campaign's financing and failing thus to ensure the necessary transparency. In many cases resources of government institutions have been used by candidates.*

Reports indicate that in these elections the transparency of campaign finances was lacking. Only one independent candidate has made public the financial contributions from donors.<sup>35</sup>

This lack of transparency is explained by identifying several reasons. First, the law on party finances was poorly implemented. More specifically, the reports highlight that a practical element provided by the Law on Political Parties is the publication of the Bank Account by any running political entity in the official website of the Central Election Commission. Actually, in the official website of the Central Election Commission there were made public only the bank accounts of four electoral subjects running on the elections.<sup>36</sup> Secondly, the lack of correct application of the law by the electoral authorities, since the CEC did not publish what was the amount of funds assigned to electoral subject that obliged to return the difference of funds given in advance and what entities benefited from the state budget according to the results of the parliamentary elections of 23 June 2013.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, there is a legal vacuum regarding the regulation of cases when senior officers, public officials, and even the party leaders themselves, provide financial donations to election subjects, cases that are not addressed in the Electoral Code.<sup>38</sup>

Problems were identified also with regard to the use of state resources by political parties. As in previous elections even in these ones it the public administration officials were involved in the electoral campaign of candidates for running

35 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

36 Qëndrim publik i koalicionit të vëzhguesve vendorë mbi transparencën e financimit të partive politike KVV. (Public statement of the Coalition of Domestic Observers on the transparency of political parties finances) <http://www.zgjedhje.al/uploads/File/2014-2015/KVV-Qendrim%20Publik%20mbi%20transparencen%20e%20financimit%20te%20partive-01-08-2015.pdf>

37 Qëndrim publik i koalicionit të vëzhguesve vendorë mbi transparencën e financimit të partive politike KVV. (Public statement of the Coalition of Domestic Observers on the transparency of political parties finances) <http://www.zgjedhje.al/uploads/File/2014-2015/KVV-Qendrim%20Publik%20mbi%20transparencen%20e%20financimit%20te%20partive-01-08-2015.pdf>

38 Qëndrim publik i koalicionit të vëzhguesve vendorë mbi transparencën e financimit të partive politike KVV. (Public statement of the Coalition of Domestic Observers on the transparency of political parties finances). <http://www.zgjedhje.al/uploads/File/2014-2015/KVV-Qendrim%20Publik%20mbi%20transparencen%20e%20financimit%20te%20partive-01-08-2015.pdf>



for mayor. In addition fulfilments of legal and institutional obligations were presented during the campaign as a mean to influence the voters.<sup>39</sup> In the same way public facilities such as schools, seaports or public health care institutions were used as campaign venues in favour of certain candidates.<sup>40</sup>

The official position of candidates and political parties were used to influence the vote of the central and local public administration employees, by putting pressure on them to attend electoral activities that took place during the official working time and by inducing them to vote for these candidates.<sup>41</sup>

Institutions and governmental resources have been used by the political parties and candidates to distribute donations and provide relief on candidates' behalf for the families affected by floods in several cities.<sup>42</sup>

## 12. The Voting Process

The voting process lasts for a relatively short period of time and includes only the polling day, but it embodies all the preparations done throughout the electoral process. The good conduct of the voting process depends on the degree of preparation and the measures taken, but all the actors involved in the electoral process have a role in the voting process. The quality of elections during the voting process can be negatively affected due to the pressure on voters through various forms such as intimidation, failure to establish the necessary conditions for secret voting, difficult access to polling stations, inability to freely express their will because of the difficulty to understand and interpret the ballot or ballots, etc.

The assessment of the indicator on the voting process was made by using the following performance indicators: Voters were not threatened with violence at polling stations; There were no invalid votes; The voting procedure has been easy; Voters were offered an uninfluenced choice in the ballot

39 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi IV, 19 - 26 Qershor 2015, KVV. (Monitoring interim report IV, 19 - 26 June 2015, CDO)

40 Përmbledhje e raportit përfundimtar për monitorimin e zgjedhjeve të 21 Qershorit 2015, Dhoma Zgjedhore, (Summary of the final report on the monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Election Situation Room)

41 Përmbledhje e raportit përfundimtar për monitorimin e zgjedhjeve të 21 Qershorit 2015, Dhoma Zgjedhore. (Summary of the final report on the monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Election Situation Room)

42 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)



box; Specific voting facilities were available for persons with disabilities; Citizens living abroad could vote.

### **The assessment on the Voting Process Index is 2.55**

*On the day of the elections there were no cases of intimidation of voters aimed at influencing the expression of their free will. In general, voters had no difficulty to identify polling stations and voting procedures have not negatively affected the vote. There have been problems with the establishment of facilities for people with disabilities and same as in the previous elections voters living abroad did not have the opportunity to vote in their countries where they reside.*

The reports assess the voting process from opening until the closing as normal, without interruption and calm.<sup>43</sup> However, there were some procedural irregularities and some isolated incidents, as in the case of citizens in 22 polling stations, who were asked to leave and were not given the right to vote, despite holding a court decision and a valid identification.<sup>44</sup> The opposite happened when citizens had no valid identification or court decision, and nevertheless, were allowed to vote.<sup>45</sup> The inking procedure was not fully applied as it was observed by reports to have been performed on 93 % of the cases all over the country.<sup>46</sup>

There have been no direct cases of direct intimidation of voters, but there were identified situations where tension was created in the vicinity of polling stations by groups of individuals who have stood for a long time at the centre's entrances.<sup>47</sup>

There were cases when identification of observers representing various political parties was difficult because they did not wear the authorization badges from the Central Election Commission in visible places. It had been difficult for independent observers to distinguish in a polling station between

43 Raporti i vëzhgimit afatshkurtër të zgjedhjeve vendore, 21 qershor 2015, Observatori për të drejtat e fëmijëve; (Short term monitoring report of 21 June 2015 Local Elections, Observatory for Children's Rights)

44 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

45 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

46 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

47 Raporti i vëzhgimit të ditës së zgjedhjeve, BSSD. (Monitoring report on the day of the elections BCCD)

ordinary citizen voters and observers accredited by a political party.<sup>48</sup>

For a large number of voters, there have been difficulties in finding their names on the voting list, in about 25 % of polling stations throughout the country.<sup>49</sup>

People with disabilities have had difficulties in participating to the voting process because the polling stations throughout the country had not anticipated providing for such measures and conditions to enable the secret voting for people with disabilities.<sup>50</sup> It was found that 57% of polling stations nationwide were not accessible to disabled voters.<sup>51</sup> The local administration failed in the attempt to remove barriers for disabled voters, failing therefore in providing comprehensive full and equal participation to the elections.<sup>52</sup>

Even during closing of the voting process, there were irregularities related to delays in the closing of the voting process and allowing voting after the closure time.<sup>53</sup>

Regarding the voting of people living outside the territory of Albania, these voters could not vote in the countries where they live. Even in these elections, voters living abroad had to come in Albania to vote, imposing thus a high cost on them for exercising this constitutional right.

### 13. Vote Counting

Vote counting is one of the most important stages in the election process. The lack of transparency and manipulation of the vote counting process, delays in the counting of votes and in the publication of results affect the quality of election.

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48 Raporti i vëzhgimit të ditës së zgjedhjeve, BSSD. (Monitoring report on the day of the elections BCCD)

49 Raport Monitorimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015, në Shqipëri, KZLN

50 Raport i ndërmjetëm, Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015, KZLN, (Interim report, Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

51 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

52 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

53 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale të 21 qershorit 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

In previous elections in Albania the counting process has proved to be the most problematic. It has in fact undermined the quality of the elections and has been a source of prolonged institutional crises. Different forms of manipulation of the vote counting process have been switching ballot boxes, change ballots in the ballot box or throwing them after the polls closure, the lack of transparency in the process of counting and exchanging the votes by the counters, restrictions on giving access to independent observers, lengthy delays in counting which made it difficult for the observers to monitor these processes, etc.

The assessment of the indicator on the vote counting was made by using the following performance indicators: Ballot boxes have been secure; The results have been published without delay; The votes are counted fairly; International electoral observers did not encounter restrictions; Domestic electoral observers did not encounter restrictions.

### **The assessment of the indicator on Vote Counting is 2.69**

*The speed of vote counting improved significantly compared to previous elections. Although these were not widespread, irregularities in guaranteeing the respect of the security procedures of the ballot boxes, presence of unauthorized people during the counting process, lack of transparency and the creation of obstacles for independent observers and some delays in publishing the results, contributed to a low score of the vote counting process.*

Regarding the security of the voting ballots it has been observed that the procedures were not rigorously respected. Commissioners and observers did not receive copies of the codes in 16% of polling stations and 10% of them had commissioners who were not present during the opening of the voting boxes.<sup>54</sup> During the counting, only 21 were declared irregular due to lack of original copies of the decisions of the Commissions of the Voting Centres (CVC), the lack of serial numbers or damaged security codes in the accompanying documentation of ballots (DCAEs 71, 74, 2, 26, 39, 43, and 68).<sup>55</sup>

Domestic and international observers monitored the vote counting process

54 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale të 21 qershorit 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

55 Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

and were generally provided sufficient access to the polling stations.<sup>56</sup> But there have been cases where independent monitors were prevented from observing the opening procedures of voting boxes.<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile there have been problems with granting access to observers during the counting of votes. Reports indicate that there have been cases where local observers as well as international observers have been forced to go out of the counting stations.<sup>58</sup> During the counting process there have been cases where problems have led to the termination of the counting process and expulsion of observers to restore order. In some cases it was also required the police intervention to restore the continuing of the process of vote counting.<sup>59</sup>

The vote count was slow and has been dragged by long pauses and other issues. Party supporters and militants have created tensions in the surrounding areas of DCAEs and in many cases the observers of the political party observers communicated with the members of vote counting, slowing the process even more.<sup>60</sup>

Regarding the publication of results it was noted that there were delays in publishing the results after the end of the counting process. This problem has been observed in all municipalities that had more than one District Election Administration (DEA), cases in which it is the duty of the CEC to prepare a summary table and announce the final score.

## 14. Post elections

Post elections developments are critical to the integrity of the electoral process since they are directly linked to the acceptance of the result by the candidates and the normal process of the formation of institutions emerging from the elections. Traditionally, elections in Albania have had various

<sup>56</sup> Report on the main findings on the local elections June21, 2015 Albanian Helsinki Committee

<sup>57</sup> Monitorimi i Zgjedhjeve Lokale, 21 Qershor 2015, në Shqipëri, Raporti Përfundimtar, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Final Report, CFFESD)

<sup>58</sup> Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi IV, 19 - 26 Qershor 2015, Koalicioni i vëzhguesve vendorë. (Interim report IV, 19 - 26 June 2015, CDO)

<sup>59</sup> Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi IV, 19 - 26 Qershor 2015, Koalicioni i vëzhguesve vendorë. (Interim report IV, 19 - 26 June 2015, CDO)

<sup>60</sup> Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi IV, 19 - 26 Qershor 2015, Koalicioni i vëzhguesve vendorë. (Interim report IV, 19 - 26 June 2015, CDO)

problems at this stage of the process and have contributed negatively to the general assessment and quality of the elections.

In order to evaluate the post elections indicator the following indicators were analyzed: Parties and candidates have rejected the results; Electoral activities were peacefully conducted; Elections did not cause violent protests; Disagreements were resolved through legal means.

### **The assessment for the Post election Indicator is 2.17**

*The election results were widely accepted but a number of complaints were submitted by the candidates in the election administration institutions. However the complaints were processed in accordance with the legal provisions and the decisions made were accepted. Election authorities addressed processed the complaints on time but some complaints were suspended or resolved discretionally. The mandates of elected candidates were certified on time and there were no delays in the formation of elected institutions. There were no violent protests or other public manifestations.*

In total there were presented 92 post elections complaints to the CEC which ruled accordingly. 20 complaints were appealed to the Electoral College against CEC decisions by the parties competing in the elections of which the Electoral College accepted nine cases.

The relatively small number of complaints and the rapid ruling by the respective bodies contributed to removing the obstacles towards the final tabulation and the certification of mandates. The CEC certified the final election results on 10 August, about six weeks after the election and the process of allocation of seats continued normally without creating obstacles to the establishment of municipal councils and with newly elected mayors taking office without delays.<sup>61</sup>

The major political parties did not disagree with the outcome and had no problems accepting the results. However, the main opposition parties have contested the overall quality of the elections, by questioning the legitimacy of the election and the guarantee of the citizens' vote, what affects negatively this indicator.<sup>62</sup>

61 Komisioni Qendror i Zgjedhjeve (Central Elections Commission), <http://www.cec.org.al/sq-al/Njoftime/deklarata-shtypi>

62 <http://www.pd.al/2015/09/basha-per-here-te-pare-ne-13-vite-shqiperia-shenohet-si-nje-vend-ku-nuk-garantohet-vota-e-lire-e-qytetareve/>

## 15. Electoral Authorities

The elections management includes several institutions that enable the realization of the entire electoral process. Electoral authorities should be impartial and refrain from interfering in the process and results of the elections, implement promptly and effectively the legislation and electoral procedures and be transparent so that their activity and performance could be monitored and assessable by other actors.

The assessment of the indicator on electoral authorities has been made by analyzing the following indicators were: Electoral authorities have been non-partisan; Election authorities have distributed information to citizens; Authorities have allowed public discussions on their performance; Electoral authorities have performed well.

### **The assessment for the indicator on Electoral Authorities is 1.93**

*The composition of the electoral authorities, based on the principle of appointment by political parties, constitutes one of the main problems for the electoral authorities. Political affiliation of the members of the electoral authorities has made their decisions to be influenced by considerations and interests related to the parties they represent and has undermined the adequate implementation of the electoral legislation. The political affiliation of the electoral authorities has contributed to the distrust of the parties not represented and to the distrust their impartiality. The activity of the electoral officials has been partially transparent.*

The activity of the electoral authorities has been partially transparent as there have been cases where commissions have not allowed the observation of their activities and the decisions were not published or were published late. Although the electoral legislation stipulates that public meetings of DCAEs are public, in many cases the electoral commissioners did not let other people's participation in meetings, including CFFESD's long-term observers, without presenting accreditation by the Central Electoral Commission.<sup>63</sup>

The performance of the electoral authorities has been poor in many cases especially the DCAEs, which operated without a well defined agenda, didn't

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63 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015, KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

respect the schedule and manifested communication problems.<sup>64</sup>

The degree of cooperation and coordination between the components of the electoral authority has showed numerous problems. Eleven DCAEs showed their dissatisfaction with the cooperation with the CEC and seven DCAEs were dissatisfied with the assistance they received from the local authorities to solve these problems.<sup>65</sup>

There have been cases of submitted complaints or disputes that were not reflected in the verbal notes due to insufficient knowledge of the legal framework or because of the political differences of the DCAEs' members.<sup>66</sup>

The insufficient performance of the electoral authorities was evident also with regard to the organisation activities for informing the citizens.<sup>67</sup>

### **III. THE INDEX OF CSOS INVOLVEMENT IN MONITORING THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OF 21 JUNE 2015**

#### **16. The importance of the Civil Society in the Elections**

CSOs that monitor elections play an important role in their evaluation and can contribute significantly and positively to the outcome of the electoral process, the promotion of democratic standards, political rights and good governance. Proper organization and preparation of the CSOs creates them obvious advantages compared with foreign observers, because these CSOs know the political culture, language and territory. In this context, the importance of the role of CSOs in the election process is also related to other factors, such as the number of observers, their territorial scope, focusing on certain aspects of the observation, continuing election tracking even after the completion of the electoral process of the various problems in order to improve the electoral process. Members of civil society organizations, as citizens embody the idea that society should take responsibility for improving their own political processes.

64 Raport i ndërmjetëm monitorimi II, 27 Mars - 21 Maj 2015, KVV, (Interim report IV, 27 March - 21 May 2015, CDO)

65 Raport i ndërmjetëm Vëzhgimi i zgjedhjeve lokale të 21 qershorit 2015 KZLN, (Monitoring of 21 June 2015 Local Elections in Albania, Interim Report, CFFESD)

66 Raport monitorimi mbi drejtësinë zgjedhore 1 qershor - 10 gusht 2015 KVV. (Monitoring report on electoral justice, 1 June - 10 August, CDO)

67 Main findings of the monitoring of the preparatory process for the 21 June 2015 local elections, 4 June 2015, AHC

## **17. The role of the Albanian Civil Society in the Elections**

The involvement and commitment of civil society organizations in Albania in the monitoring and observation of electoral processes dates since 90s, although in this period the number of CSOs has been very limited, about 2-3. During this period it began the creation, capacity building and the first experiences of specific CSOs in observing the electoral process, although the number of observers was too small and professionalism was at a low level. The electoral process was monitored partially, paying greater importance only to the observation of the day of elections and the level of transparency and political independence were often a concern.

After 2000's the number of CSOs involved in election observation grew. Also there was a growing collaboration between the organizations which included independent observers. In this context one of the first collaborations between the organizations has been in the Parliamentary Elections of June 2001. After this cooperation in the local elections of 2013, 18 Albanian CSOs were introduced as participator in the Albanian Domestic Observers Forum. These CSOs jointly monitored elections and presented their findings in a joint report. Experience and lessons learned, were further developed during the observation of the parliamentary elections of July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005. The member organizations of the Forum of Domestic Observers, on the eve of the elections called all other organizations to join their initiative. In this way it was formed the Coalition of Domestic Observers (CDO),<sup>68</sup> which monitored and observed the elections that followed, as one of the key civil society groups that observed the electoral process in Albania. CFFESD in 2012,<sup>69</sup> started its operations by engaging actively in the election monitoring of 2013 and 2015.

## **18. The number of the CSOs involved and their geographical scope**

The local elections of 21 June 2015 were observed by a total of 53 civil society organizations in the entire country. As quoted above, some of them are organizations with long experience in the process of monitoring elections,

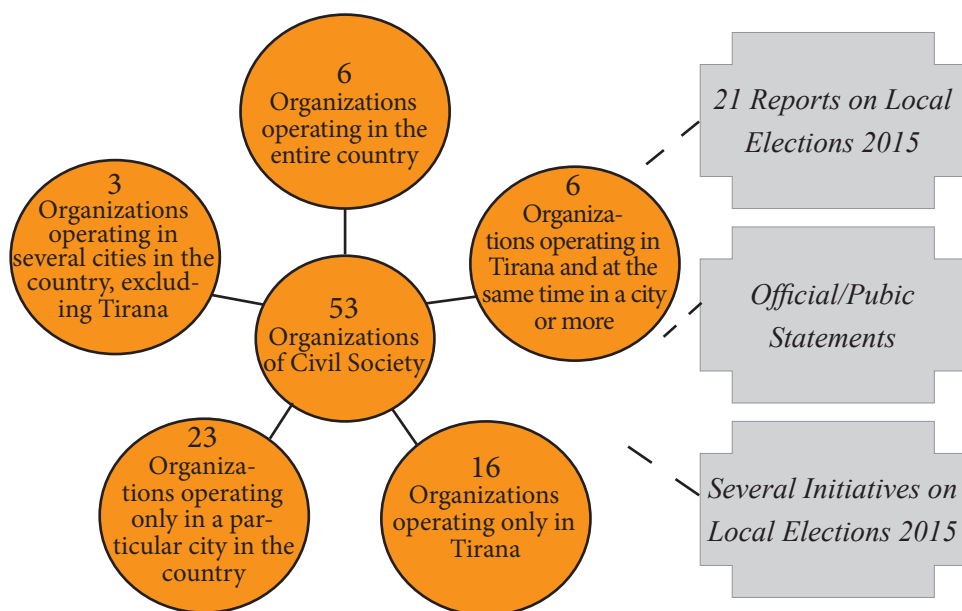
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68 [www.zgjedhje.al](http://www.zgjedhje.al)

69 [www.kzln.org.al](http://www.kzln.org.al)



while others are engaged for the first time through projects, their initiatives, or as part of civil society election observation coalitions. Of these six organizations have a range of activities in all the cities and the country, while a total of 16 civil society organizations involved in election monitoring are located in Tirana. In addition, 23 organizations operate only in a particular city in the country, 6 in Tirana and at the same time in a city or more and 3 in several cities excluding Tirana. The main part of the commitment and activity of local organizations have been the partner organizations of the Coalition of Domestic Observers (CDO)<sup>70</sup> and CFFESD.<sup>71</sup> Thus civil society organizations through its partner organizations are attempting to provide a comprehensive coverage of the electoral process in Albania.



*Graph 5. CSOs geographical distribution and activities performed*

<sup>70</sup> Data on 15 local partners organizations of CDO is received from official webpage of CDO as below: <http://www.zgjedhje.al/faqe.php?id=1&l2=98&gj=sh#>

<sup>71</sup> Beginning from 6th June 2015, CFFESD is composed by 30 partners member organizations: <http://www.kzln.org.al/index.php/partneret>

## 19. Activities Conducted

To introduce the main findings and recommendations of the observation of local elections in 2015, civil society organizations have used three main approaches: 1) Reports; 2) Several Initiatives on Elections and 3) Official/Public Statements.

Certain organizations, CDO, CFFESD and AHC have presented interim and final reports. These reports were presented and made public during the pre-election situation, election day and after the electoral process, during which the final reports were published. Other organizations involved in the observation of local elections in 2015, have published reports on specific topics of the election within the projects that these organizations have developed. Can be mentioned the Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS),<sup>72</sup> Partners Albania,<sup>73</sup> Za’Lart,<sup>74</sup> Forumi i Mendimit të Lire (FML), Network Policy Albanian Journalists and the Observatory for the Children’s Rights<sup>75</sup> & Balkan Centre for Cooperation and Development (BCCD). The total number of all these reports on the elections in 2015 was 20 (Appendix 1) presents a summary of the number of reports prepared and published by civil society organizations within the framework of local elections of 2015.

Besides the presentation of these reports prepared and published regarding the local elections of 2015, the organizations expressed through declarations/public attitudes, official documents or various meetings regarding the issue of standards of the electoral process. In these cases, these materials have been published as Annex Reports of elections or through the Organization’s official websites. The organizations presented reports on the elections through conferences/press releases presenting their findings observers or being pronounced on various issues.

Meanwhile civil society organizations are engaged in the election process through various other initiatives. Albanian Institute for the Development of Elections (INSIZ) has taken the initiative of establishing for the first time in Albania the Election Situation Room, an initiative supported by the Open

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<sup>72</sup> [www.isp.com.al](http://www.isp.com.al)

<sup>73</sup> [www.partnersalbania.org](http://www.partnersalbania.org)

<sup>74</sup> [www.zalart.al](http://www.zalart.al)

<sup>75</sup> [www.observator.org.al](http://www.observator.org.al)

Society Foundation for Albania and run from 7 founding members: Albanian Institute of Sciences (AIS), the Institute for Development of Electoral System (INSIZ), Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (CFFESD), Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS), INFOÇIP, Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) and Forumi i Mendimit të Lirë (FML). The Election Situation Room, was conceived as a platform for coordination between civil society actors, local, engaged in observation of elections in Albania, which will serve and make possible the election's observation in real time through a mechanism of rapid response to problems encountered during the electoral process. At the same time Election Situation Room aimed to aid the coordination of civil society organizations, enabling the addressing various issues related to the elections as a single item. During the planned activities within the Election Room were held three conferences. On 7 July 2015 the Election Room published a closing report on the observation of local elections in 2015, the object of which was to analyze the electoral process and that not only register the violations and presented problems during the electoral process of 2015, but also presented a series of recommendations for their improvement. Other initiatives within the elections were conducted by the Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS),<sup>76</sup> Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC), INFOÇIP,<sup>77, 78</sup> etc.

However a more comprehensive commitment of CSOs would give civil society in Albania a greater role not only in the development of electoral processes, but also on the need to move to a higher level of involvement of its implementation capacity in election monitoring. At the same time the survey reports of CSOs would have to pay attention to the coverage and treatment of other topics, part of the electoral process, as well as creating a more sustainable network of collaborators throughout the country.

## 20. Financial Support

Mostly of the projects regarding the local elections of 21 June 2015 was financed by international donors in Albania (Appendix 2). Some of them

<sup>76</sup> Pse Voton. Gjerat jane mire keshtu si jane! (Why vote, things can be fine the way they are!)

<sup>77</sup> Raising citizens' awareness to participate in voting in the Local Elections of 21 June, 2015

<sup>78</sup> [www.infocip.org](http://www.infocip.org)

are organizations and international programs specialized in the field of observation and monitoring of elections, which had contributed for a long time in the electoral process in Albania in particular, OSCE/ODIHR, the UNDP, the Council of Europe, USAID, Small Grants Programme of the Commission for Democracy of the US Embassy in Tirana, NDI etc. International financial support aimed to promote civil society's efforts to address the most important aspects of the electoral process in Albania. These aspects are focused on different areas among which the main changes are: 1) Technical assistance to the CEC; 2) Providing local observers; 3) encouraging civic engagement.





## **IV. APPENDIXES**





### **Appendix 1: The Methodology of the Electoral Index**

For the design of the Electoral Integrity Index is used a methodology which measures the integrity of elections through eleven indicators of the electoral process, starting from the electoral legal framework to the post-election procedures.









To measure each indicator are given three to six indicators of performance. A total of forty-seven performance indicators. To each performance indicator has been allocated sub-indicators of performance. Measuring performance indicators and sub-indicators is performed with an assessment in four stages: from 1 to 4 where 1 point refers to the lowest level performance indicator, while 4 refers to the highest level of performance the indicator.

The used data is taken from reports produced by civil society organizations that have covered the local elections of 2015. Other data as election statistics, election results, etc., will be used where necessary and applicable. The table below contains a full description of the indicators and the indicators to be used for evaluation.

Indicators	Performance Indicators	Sub Indicators	Assessment for the Performance Indicators and Sub Indicators	Assessment for the Indicator
1. Electoral Laws	1-1. Electoral laws are fair to the smaller political parties;	<p>1. Electoral legislation is accepted by all parties.</p> <p>2. Electoral legislation has the confidence of the majority of parties participating in the elections.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> 
	1-2. Electoral laws have not favored the ruling party or parties;	<p>1. There are no discriminatory conditions in the legislation for the registration of political parties and/or candidates.</p> <p>2. The legislation does not restrict the space of the political parties to form pre-electoral coalitions.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p> 
	1-3. Electoral laws have not restricted the rights of citizens;	<p>1. The legislation meets the international standards and ensures the observance of fundamental human rights adequately.</p> <p>2. The legislation is clear, is not subject to interpretation and provides sufficient guarantees for the respect of civil and political rights</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Very Good (4)</p> 





2.Electoral Procedures 2.Electoral Procedures	2-1. Elections were well managed;	1. There were not recorded incidents and problems in the electoral process.  2. During the election process the requirements of law have been respected.	1 2 3 4	Insufficient (1) 
	2-2. Information on voting procedures has been widely available;	1. Voters were informed about the various procedures of the electoral process.  2 There are no voters or group of voters who do not receive or understand information on elections	1 2 3 4	Sufficient (2) 
	2-3. Election Authorities have been fair;	1. Election officials are independent and have not been under political pressure.  2 Election officials operating in the polls had proper training and experience.	1 2 3 4	Good (3) 
	2-4. The elections were conducted in accordance with the law	1. Respective legal provisions are implemented on the election.  2. There was not any problem with implementing legislation for electoral subjects.	1 2 3 4	Very Good (4) 





# ELECTIONS INTEGRITY INDEX









3. Boundaries of Electoral Districts	3-1. Boundaries have not discriminated political parties;	<p>1. Electoral boundaries are widely accepted by political parties and candidates.</p> <p>2. The boundaries do not create discriminatory conditions or disadvantages to political parties and / or candidates.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> <p></p>
	3-2. Boundaries did not favor incumbent parties and candidates;	<p>3. Boundaries have not distorted representation on electoral legislation in relation to the entities in the elections.</p> <p>2 Electoral boundaries did not favor certain parties or candidates.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Sufficient (2)</p> <p></p> <p>Good (3)</p> <p></p>
	3-3. Boundaries have been impartial;	<p>1. Electoral Districts guarantee a fair representation by maintaining a ratio of voted-voters.</p> <p>2 Electoral Zones guarantee a fair representation reflecting the internal displacement of the population.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Very Good (4)</p> <p></p>
4. Voters Registration	4-1. Citizens were not listed in the register;	<p>1. Voters are informed of their registration in the list of voters in the timeline defined by law</p> <p>2. Voters were not prevented to make the necessary corrections in the voter list</p> <p>3. Voters who by mistake did not have their names on the list were not prevented from voting</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> <p></p> <p>Sufficient (2)</p> <p></p> <p>Good (3)</p> <p></p> <p>Very Good (4)</p> <p></p>











4. Voters Registration	4-2. Electoral register has been accurate	1. Voters registration System ensures their correct registration. 2. The voters List is public and can be easily accessible from the voters.	1 2 3 4	Insufficient (1) 
	4-3. Inadequate voters were not registered	1. In the voters lists there are no spread (inaccuracies and/or publications). 2. The legal framework for the complaint l and appeal to the court regarding voter registration is complete and clear	1 2 3 4	Sufficient (2)   Good (3)   Very Good (4) 
5. Political Parties Registration	5-1. Opposition's candidates have not been banned from running for elections;	1. The election administration, CEC and / or DCAEs, did not create unjustified obstacles or delay to parties / candidates in order to be registered.  2. There has been no selective application and / or unfair law relating to the registration of political parties and candidates.	1 2 3 4	Insufficient (1)   Sufficient (2) 
	5-2. Women had equal opportunity to compete;	1. Gender quotas in candidates lists of political parties are respected 2. Medias have treated in equally and in non-discriminatory way women and young candidates.	1 2 3 4	Good (3)   Very Good (4) 





5. Political Parties Registration	5-3. Ethnic and national minorities had equal opportunity to compete;	1.Minorities and citizens living abroad were informed on the procedures given in the electoral process 2. Minorities and Albanian citizens living abroad were involved in electoral activities.	1 2 3 4	
	5-4. Only the leaders of the main parties choose candidates;	1. Management structures of the parties were involved in the candidate selection process.		Insufficient (1) 
		2. Candidates were given sufficient space to present their alternatives and programs.	1 2 3 4	Sufficient (2) 
		3. Voters are familiar with transparent procedures on the selection of candidates for the competition.		Good (3) 
	5-5. Parties/candidates are not restricted from holding electoral rallies	1. Legal provisions that regulate the authorization for election rallies or meetings were accordingly implemented. 2. No negative and personalized campaigning was conducted. 3. The electoral campaign has started in timeline defined by the electoral law.	1 2 3 4	Very Good (4) 





6. Electoral Media Coverage	6-1. Newspapers have given electoral balanced news;	<p>1. The Media has not been pressured</p> <p>2. Major party candidates are favored more than those of smaller parties.</p> <p>3. Independent candidates are treated equally in the media coverage of the campaign.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p> 
	6-2. TV news have not favored the ruling party	<p>1. Candidates or political parties are treated equally by the public media.</p> <p>2. The informing of the public about the candidates / parties was insufficient, objective and balanced.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 
	6-3. Parties/ candidates had fair access to broadcasting and political advertising ;	<p>1. Legal provisions that determine the participation of parties / candidates in broadcasting and political advertising were implemented.</p> <p>2. No violations were recorded on the timing and content of the political parties / candidates electoral presentations made in the media.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	

6. Electoral Media Coverage	6-4. Journalist have properly covered the elections;	<p>1. The media has not distorted the messages of the candidates.</p> <p>2. Media Monitoring Board has been impartial and professional.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p> 
	6-5. Social Media was used to transmit electoral frauds;	<p>1. There have been social platforms to gather information on the electoral campaign.</p> <p>2. Social media platforms have been successful and effective and have influenced the voters.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 
7. Electoral Finances	7-1. Parties/candidates had equal access to public subsidies;	<p>1. There has been a fair distribution of resources and public funds.</p> <p>2. Campaign finance rules are clear and complete.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 









7. Electoral Finances	7-2. Parties/ candidates had equal access to political donations;	1. Public funds have been granted on time according to the law. 2. Funds have been enough to conduct an effective campaign.	1 2 3 4	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 
	7-3. Parties/ candidates transparently publish financial accounts;	1. From the expenditures made by the political parties there was not lack of transparency about the funding of the campaign. 2. Campaign expenditures were justified through the declared funding sources.	1 2 3 4	
	7-4. Rich individuals did not “buy” the election;	1. Rules on campaign financing were applied equally to all competing parties. 2. There were registered people whose purpose was to manipulating voters via financial means.	1 2 3 4	
	7-5. State resources are not used illegally for campaigning;	1. Political parties in power use state resources and means. 2. Governmental resources have been distributed fairly. 3. The government has used the public administration during the electoral campaign. 4. There have been no dismissal / pressure of state administration employees who resisted the order of the government to be involved in the campaign.	1 2 3 4	









8. Voting Process	8-1. Voters are not threatened with violence at polling stations;	<p>1. On election day the situation was calm and there were no problems that could have a negative impact on the voting process.</p> <p>2. There were not people who made illegal acts and attempting to influence the voters' will.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> 
				<p>Sufficient (2)</p> 
	8-2. There weren't invalid votes;	<p>1. The name of the voter has been checked before voting.</p> <p>2. There were no people who wanted to vote more than once.</p> <p>3. There have been efforts by committee members to stop family or group voting.</p> <p>4. There have been efforts by committee members to stop voting in the family or group.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Good (3)</p> 
	8-3. Voting Procedures have been easy;	<p>1. Instructions on voting procedures were clear.</p> <p>2. The law requirement on the voting procedures was implemented.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Very Good (4)</p> 





8. Voting Process	8-4. Voters were offered an uninfluenced choice in the ballot box;	<p>1. There was no interference by unauthorized persons in voting.</p> <p>2. During the voting process, voters were pressured.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	
	8-5. Specific voting facilities were available for persons with disabilities;	<p>1. The electoral legislation creates the conditions that enable participation in the voting of voters with physical disabilities.</p> <p>2. There were clear voting procedures and easy access to the polls for this category of voters was provided.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p> 
	8-6. Citizens who live abroad could vote;	<p>1. The electoral legislation creates real opportunities for voters living abroad to vote.</p> <p>2. There were no irregularities in voter lists about Albanian citizens living abroad.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Very Good (4)</p> 

9. Vote Counting	9-1. The ballot boxes have been safe;	<p>1. The ballot boxes have been placed according to the instructions of the CEC.</p> <p>2. There were no boxes with incomplete documentation and if so which of the cases can be identified.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 
	9-2. The results are published without unjustified delay;	<p>1. Observers were denied the right to participate in the result announcing process.</p> <p>2. Published results have been detailed for each polling station.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	
	9-3. Votes are counted fairly;	<p>1. There are clear guidelines for assessment procedures and counting.</p> <p>2 DCAE has implemented the correct legal procedures for counting the votes.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	
	9-4. International election observers are not limited;	<p>1. International election observers were denied / restricted the right to participate in this process.</p> <p>2. Dissatisfaction by international observers have been recorded regarding their participation in the election process.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	



9. Vote Counting	9-5. Election domestic observers are not limited	<p>1. Domestic observers were denied / restricted the right to participate in the process.</p> <p>2. Domestic election observers have not reported dissatisfaction with their participation in the election process.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 
10. Post-Election	10-1. Parties/ candidates have not contested the results;	<p>1. The complaint procedures were comprehensible and in accordance with the electoral law.</p> <p>2. Judicial or administrative authorities have not refused to receive complaints and have addressed them at the right time.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p>  <p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 

10. Post-Election	10-2. Electoral activities were conducted peacefully/undisturbed	<p>1. Electoral activities were conducted smoothly and without orderly problems.</p> <p>2. Law enforcement forces have guaranteed the normal development of the electoral activity.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> 
	Post-Election	<p>1. There were no obstructed, detained or arrested candidates or activists by security forces.</p> <p>2. There were no reports of pressure, intimidation or harassment of candidates, activists and/ or voters.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Sufficient (2)</p>  <p>Good (3)</p> 
	10-4. Disagreements were resolved through legal means;	<p>1. Complaints are reviewed and decisions are made at the estimated time.</p> <p>2. Sanctions for violations of the electoral law are implemented.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Very Good (4)</p> 
11. Electoral Authorities	11-1. Election authorities have been non-partisan;	<p>1. Elections commissions have taken decisions by voting according to political lines.</p> <p>2. Election Commissions have implemented the law correctly and impartially.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> 
				<p>Sufficient (2)</p> 
				<p>Good (3)</p> 
				<p>Very Good (4)</p> 

11. Electoral Authorities	11-2. Election authorities have distributed information to citizens;	<p>1. It has been campaigned for voters' education and participation in the polls.</p> <p>2. Changes in the electoral procedures have been made public.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Insufficient (1)</p> 
	11-3. Authorities have allowed public discussions on their performance;	<p>1. Commission's work has been transparent.</p> <p>2. The commissions have allowed medias to report their activities.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Sufficient (2)</p> 
	11-4. Election authorities have performed well;	<p>1. The authorities' decision making has been collegial.</p> <p>2. Coordination among election commissions and regional or local officials whose duty is to support the commission has been effective.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Good (3)</p>  <p>Very Good (4)</p> 

## Appendix 2. Assessment for the sub indicators, performance indicators and indicators

Sub-Indicators Performance		Performance Criteria		Indicator	Assessment
1.1.1. Electoral legislation is accepted by all parties.	2	1-1 Electoral laws were fair to the smaller political parties;	2.5	1.Elections Laws	2.5
1.1.2. Electoral legislation has the confidence of the majority of parties in the elections.	3				
1.2.1. In the Legislation for the registration of Political Parties and/or Candidates there are no discriminatory Conditions.	2	1-2 Electoral laws have not favored the ruling party or parties;	2		
1.2.2 The legislation does not restrict the space of the political parties to form pre-electoral coalitions.	2				
1.3.1. The legislation meets international standards and ensures the observance of fundamental human rights adequately.	3	1-3 Electoral laws have not restricted the rights of citizens;	3		
1.3.2. The legislation is clear, is not subject to interpretation and provides sufficient guarantees for the respect of civil and political rights	3				

2.1.1. There were not recorded incidents and problems in the electoral process.	3	2-1 Elections were well managed;	2.5	2.Elections Procedures	2.4
2.1.2. During the election process the requirements of law have been respected.	2				
2.2.1. Voters were informed about the various procedures of the electoral process.	3	2-2 Information on voting procedures has been widely available;	3.5		
2.2.2. There are no voters or group of voters who do not receive or understand information on elections	4				
2.3.1. Election officials are independent and have not been under political pressure.	2	2-3 Election Authorities have been fair;	1.75		
2.3.2. Election officials operating in the polls had proper training and experience.	1.5				
2.4.1. Respective legal provisions are implemented on the election.	2	2-4 The elections were conducted in accordance with the law;	2		
2.4.2. There was not any problem with implementing legislation for electoral subjects.	2				

3.1.1. Electoral boundaries are widely accepted by political parties and candidates.	2				
3.1.2. Borders do not create discriminatory conditions or disadvantages to political parties and / or candidates.	2	3-1 Borders have not discriminated political parties;	2		
3.2.1. Borders have not distorted representation on electoral legislation in relation to the entities in the elections.	2				
3.2.2. Electoral boundaries did not favor certain parties or candidates.	2	3-2 Borders did not favor in office candidates ;	2	3. Electoral Zones Borders	2.1
3.3.1. Electoral Zones guarantee a fair representation by maintaining a ratio of elected- voters.	2				
3.3.2. Electoral Zones guarantee a fair representation reflecting the internal displacement of the population.	2.5	3-3 Borders have been impartial;	2.25		

4.1.1. Voters are informed of their registration in the list of voters in the timeline defined by law	1	4-1 Citizens were not listed in the register;	1.7	4. Voters registration	2.5
4.1.2. Voters were not prevented to make the necessary corrections in the voter list.	2				
4.1.3. Voters who by mistake did not have their names on the list were not prevented from voting	2				
4.2.1. Voters registration system ensures their correct registration.	3	4-2 Electoral register has been accurate	3		
4.2.2. The voters List is public and can be easily accessible from the voters.	3				
4.3.1. In the voters lists there are no spread inaccuracies and/or publications.	3	4-3 Inadequate voters were not registered	2.75		
4.3.2. The legal framework for the complaint l and appeal to the court regarding voter registration is complete and clear	2.5				

5.1.1. The election administration, CEC and / or DCAEs, did not create unjustified obstacles or delay to parties / candidates in order to be registered.	3	5-1 Opposition's candidates have not been banned from running for elections;	2.5	5. Political Parties registration	2.1
5.1.2. There has been no selective application and / or unfair law relating to the registration of political parties and candidates.	2				
5.2.1. Gender quotas in candidate lists of political parties are respected	2.5	5-2 Women had equal opportunity to compete;	2.25		
5.2.2. Medias have treated equally and in a non-discriminatory way women and young candidates.	2				
5.3.1. Minorities and citizens living abroad were informed on the procedures given in the electoral process.	3	5-3 Ethnic and national minorities had equal opportunity to compete;	2.5		
5.3.2. Minorities and Albanian citizens living abroad were involved in electoral activities.	2				
5.4.1. Management structures of the parties were involved in the candidate selection process.	2	5-4 Only the leaders of the main parties choose candidates;	1.7		
5.4.2. Candidates were given sufficient space to present their alternatives and programs.	2				
5.4.3. Voters are familiar with transparent procedures on the selection of candidates for the competition.	1				
5.5.1. Legal provisions that regulate the authorization for election rallies or meetings were accordingly implemented.	2				
5.5.2. No negative and personalized campaigning was conducted.	2	5-5 Parties/candidates are not restricted from holding electoral rallies;	1.7		
5.5.3. The electoral campaign has started in accordance with the timeline defined by the electoral law.	1				



6.1. The Media has not been pressured.	3	6-1 Newspapers have given electoral balanced news;	2	6.Electoral Media Coverage	2.45
6.1.2. Major party candidates are favored more than those of smaller parties.	1.5				
6.1.3. Independent candidates are treated equally in the media coverage of the campaign.	1.5				
6.2.1. Candidates or political parties are treated equally by the public media.	2	6-2 TV news have not favored the ruling party	2		
6.2.2. The informing of the public about the candidates / parties was insufficient, objective and balanced.	2				
6.3.1. Legal provisions that determine the participation of parties / candidates in broadcasting and political advertising were implemented.	3	6-3 Parties/candidates had fair access to broadcasting and political advertising ;	2.75		
6.3.2. No violations were recorded on the timing and content of the political parties / candidates electoral presentations made in the media.	2.5				
6.4.1. The media has not distorted the messages of the candidates.	3	6-4 Journalist have properly covered the elections;	2.5		
6.4.2Media Monitoring Board has been impartial and professional.	2				
6.5.1. There have been social platforms to gather information on the electoral campaign.	3.5	6-5 Social Media was used to transmit electoral frauds;	3		
6.5.2.. Social media platforms have been successful and effective and have influenced the voters.	2.5				

7.1.1. There has been a fair distribution of resources and public funds.	2	7-1 Parties/candidates had equal access to public subsidies;	2.5	7. Electoral Finances	1.8
7.1.2. Campaign finance rules are clear and complete.	3				
7.2.1. Public funds have been granted on time according to the law.	1	7-2 Parties/candidates had equal access to political donations;	1.5		
7.2.2. Funds have been enough to conduct an effective campaign.	2				
7.3.1. From the expenditures made by the political parties there was not lack of transparency about the funding of the campaign.	1	7-3 Parties/candidates transparently publish financial accounts;	1		
7.3.2. Campaign expenditures were justified through the declared funding sources.	1				
7.4.1. Rules on campaign financing were applied equally to all competing parties.	2	7.4 Rich individuals did not “buy” the election;	2		
7.4.2. There were registered people whose purpose was to manipulating voters via financial means.	2				
7.5.1. Political parties in power use state resources and means.	2	7-5 State resources are not used illegally for campaigning;	2		
7.5.2. Governmental resources have been distributed fairly.	1.5				
7.5.3. The government has used the public administration during the electoral campaign.	2				
7.5.4. There have been no dismissal / pressure of state administration employees who resisted the order of the government to be involved in the campaign.	2.5				

8.1.1. On election day the situation was calm and there were no problems that could have a negative impact on the voting process.	3.5	8-1 Voters are not threatened with violence at polling stations;	3.25	8.Voting Process	2.4
8.1.2. There were not people who made illegal acts and attempting to influence the voters' will.	3				
8.2.1. The name of the voter has been checked before voting.	3	8-2 There weren't invalid votes;	2.75		
8.2.2. There were no people who wanted to vote more than once.	3				
8.2.3. There have been efforts by committee members to stop family or group voting.	2				
8.2.4. There have been efforts by committee members to stop voting in the family or group.	3				
8.3.1. Instructions on voting procedures were clear.	2	8-3 Voting Procedures have been easy;	2		
8.3.2. The law requirement on the voting procedures were implemented.	2				
8.4.1. There was no interference by unauthorized persons in voting.	2.5	8-4 Voters were offered an uninfluenced choice in the ballot box;	2.25		
8.4.2. During the voting process, voters were pressured.	2				
8.5.1. The electoral legislation creates the conditions that enable participation in the voting of voters with physical disabilities.	1	8-5 Specific voting facilities were available for persons with disabilities;	2		
8.5.2. There were clear voting procedures and easy access to the polls for this category of voters was provided.	1				
8.6.1. The electoral legislation creates real opportunities for voter living abroad.	2	8-6 Citizens who live abroad could vote;	2		
8.6.2. There were no irregularities in voter lists about Albanian citizens living abroad.	2				

9.1.1. The ballot boxes have been placed according to the instructions of the CEC.	2.5	9-1 The ballot boxes have been safe;	2.75	9. Vote Counting	2.8
9.1.2. There were no boxes with incomplete documentation and if so which of the cases can be identified.	3				
9.2.1. Observers were denied the right to participate in the result announcing process.	3.5	9-2 The results are published without unjustified delay;	3.5		
9.2.2. Published results have been detailed for each polling station.	3.5				
9.3.1. There are clear guidelines for assessment procedures and counting.	3	9-3 Votes are counted fairly;	2.75		
9.3.2. DCAE has implemented the correct legal procedures for counting the votes.	2.5				
9.4.1. International election observers were denied / restricted the right to participate in this process.	3	9-4 International election observers are not limited;	2.5		
9.4.2. Dissatisfaction by international observers have been recorded regarding their participation in the election process .	2				
9.5.1. Domestic observers were denied / restricted the right to participate in the process.	2	9-5 Domestic election observers are not limited	2.5		
9.5.2. Domestic election observers have not reported dissatisfaction with their participation in the election process.	3				

10.1.1. The complaint procedures were comprehensible and in accordance with the electoral law.	3	10-1 Parties/candidates have not contested the results;	2.5	10. Post Elections	2.3
10.1.2. Judicial or administrative authorities have not refused to receive complaints and have addressed them at the right time.	2				
10.2.1. Electoral activities were conducted smoothly and without orderly problems.	2.5	10-2 Electoral activities were conducted peacefully/ undisturbed;	2.75		
10.2.2. Law enforcement forces have guaranteed the normal development of the electoral activity.	3				
10.3.1. There were no obstructed, detained or arrested candidates or activists by security forces.	2.5	10-3 Elections did not cause violent protests;	2.25		
10.3.2. There were no reports of pressure, intimidation or harassment of candidates, activists and / or voters.	2				
10.4.1. Complaints are reviewed and decisions are made at the estimated time.	1.5	10-4 Disagreements were resolved through legal means;	1.75		
10.4.2. Sanctions for violations of the electoral law are implemented.	2				

11.1.1. Elections commissions have taken decisions by voting according to political lines.	1.5	11-1 Election authorities have been non-partisan;	1.75	11. Electoral Authorities	1.9
11.1.2. Election Commissions have implemented the law correctly and impartially.	2				
11.2.1. It has been campaigned for voters' education and participation in the polls.	2	11-2 Election authorities have distributed information to citizens;	2		
11.2.2. Changes in the electoral procedures have been made public.	2				
11.3.1. Commission's work has been transparent.	1.5	11-3 Authorities have allowed public discussions on their performance;	1.75		
11.3.2. The commissions have allowed medias to report their activities.	2				
11.4.1. The authorities' decision making has been collegial.	2	11-4 Election authorities have performed well;	2		
11.4.2. Coordination between election commissions and regional or local officials whose duty is to support the commission has been effective.	2				

### Appendix 3: Reports produced by the Civil Society Organizations on Local Elections of 21 June, 2015

	Civil Society Organization	Reports & Projects of CSO on Local Elections 2015
1.	Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and for Sustainable Democracy (CFFESD)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First Interim Report “Monitoring of Local Elections of 21 June 2015 in Albania” (11 June 2015)</li> <li>2. Second Interim Report (19 June 2015)</li> <li>3. Final Report (9 September 2015)</li> </ol>
2.	Coalition of Domestic Observers (CDO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluation Report on the Pre-Election Situation (November 2013 – 9 January, 2015)</li> <li>2. Monitoring Interim Report I (10 January - 26 March, 2015)</li> <li>3. Monitoring Interim Report II (27 March - 21 May, 2015)</li> <li>4. Monitoring Interim Report III (22 May - 18 June, 2015)</li> <li>5. Monitoring Interim Report IV (19-26 June, 2015)</li> <li>6. Public Stance of the Coalition of Domestic Observers on the transparency of the political parties funding – published 1.08.2015</li> <li>7. Monitoring Report on Electoral Dispute Resolution (1 June – 10 August 2015)</li> </ol>
3.	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main Findings of the Monitoring of the Preparatory Process for the 21 June, 2015 Local Elections; (Press Statement dated: 4 June, 2015)</li> <li>2. Main Findings of the Monitoring of the Preparatory Process for the 21 June, 2015 Local Elections; (Press Statement dated: 18 June, 2015)</li> <li>3. Report on the Main Findings on the Local Elections, 21 June, 2015</li> <li>4. Final Report on the Conduct of the Electoral Process of 21 June, 2015</li> </ol>

4.	AIS - ZA'LART	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interim Report on Citizen's Perception on electoral process 2015</li> <li>2. Final Report on Citizen's Perception on electoral process 2015 (22 May-26 June 2015)</li> </ol>
5.	Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS)	Final Report – "Participation of Women in the Electoral Elections of 2015"
6.	Albanian Institute for the Development of Elections (INSIZ)	Election Situation Room
7.	Forumi i Mendimit të Lirë (FML)	"Monitor your City Hall" – A Summary of the Election Pledges by candidates in Tiranë, Elbasan, Lezhë dhe Vlorë.
8.	INFOÇIP Centre for Information of Public Opinion	Assessment of the legal framework adopted in 1995 – 2015 on the functioning of the local government in the Republic of Albania. Online publication of the legal framework on the functioning of the local government in the Republic of Albania
9.	Network Policy of Albanian Journalists	Report of the Network Policy of Albanian Journalists – 1 July, 2015
10.	Observatory for Children's Rights & the Balkan Center for Cooperation and Development (BCCD)	Short-Observation Report of Local Elections of 21 June, 2015
11.	Election Situation Room	Final Report on the monitoring of the local elections of 21 June, 2015



## Appendix 4: The Projects on Local Elections of 21 June 2015 and the Financial Donors

No.	Donors	Projects	Organizations of Civil Society
1	Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA)	Election Situation Room	INSIZ
		Citizens monitor the Elections	ZA'LART
		National Index of Elections' Integrity	Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM)
2	The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program of the US Embassy in Tirana	Citizens monitor Elections	ZA'LART
		Local Elections of 21 June, 2015	Domestic Observers Coalition (DOC)
		Main Findings of the Monitoring of the Preparatory Process for the 21 June 2015 Local Elections; (Press Statement dated: 4 & 18 June, 2015)	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
		Raising citizens' awareness to participate in voting in the Local Elections of 21 June, 2015	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
3	National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Why vote, things can be fine the way they are!	Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS)
		Observation of the Local Elections of 21 June 2015	CFFESD – Technical Assistance

4	The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Observation of the Local Elections of 21 June 2015	CFFESD - Financing
5	Austrian Agency for Development	Local Elections of 21 June 2015	Domestic Observers Coalition (DOC)
6	Assist Impact Albania	Observation of the Local Elections of 21 June 2015	CFFESD – Support
7	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Strengthening Electoral Processes in Albania (SE-PIA)	Partners Albania
		Research on voter education and motivation prior to the June 2015 local elections in Albania	
8	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	Final Report – “Participation of Women in the Electoral Elections of 2015”	Albanian Institute of Political Studies (AIPS)
9	Civil Rights Defenders	Report on the Main Findings on the Local Elections, 21 June 2015	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
10	Kingdom of Sweden	Report on the Main Findings on the Local Elections, 21 June 2015	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
11	European Union	Monitoring Report on Electoral Dispute Resolution (1 June – 10 August 2015)	Domestic Observers Coalition (DOC)

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