



**KOMISIONI QENDROR I ZGJEDHJEVE**  
**KOMISIONERI SHTETËROR I ZGJEDHJEVE**

**National Conference “Out-of-country voting, time is now”**

**Tiranë, May 25, 2022**

**Rogner Hotel**

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Greetings to All,

Thank you Mrs. Speaker of the Assembly for Your participation and addressing this Conference,

Thank you Honorable ambassadors, and also thank you to Your representatives of other diplomatic missions in Tirana, for the attention showing to this important issue related to the future parliamentary elections,

Thank you also for the continued support to the CEC,

Special thanks to the representatives of the organizations representing the diaspora, who participate in this conference, physically, or through the online platform.

Thank you to the representatives of political parties, various public institutions, the media, and others, for their participation and expected contributions to the discussions on the topic of diaspora voting.

Special thanks to the international experts of the OSCE, ODIHR, and IDEA International

The amendments to the Electoral Code of 2020, for the first time, included rules which aimed at enabling Albanian citizens with the right to vote, and permanent residents outside the territory of the Republic of Albania, where they have their

residence.

The inclusion in the Electoral Code of these rules took place just a few months before the expected date of the general elections for the Albanian Parliament on April 25, 2021.

Thus, the Electoral Code defined the CEC as the body responsible for the organization and administration of out-of-country voting, as part of the entire electoral process as a whole. The CEC has the legal competence to prepare, conduct and administer the out-of-country voting.

Based on the amendments to the Electoral Code of 2020, the CEC has reorganized its structure and composition. And this is just six months before the date of the expected elections of April 25, 2021.

Although the time was almost theoretically insufficient, even if only for the preparation of elections within the country, the CEC committed itself seriously and with institutional responsibility to create all the regulatory and technical conditions to enable out-of-country voting in the elections on April 25, 2021.

On the other hand, beyond the public statements made by politics, it was clear that it was not yet prepared to accept and work for the completion of this process. Their attitude also affected the non-conduct of out-of-country voting in those elections.

To be realistic, this attitude of theirs has a justified explanation to some extent.

The uncertainty and distrust that the parties have towards each other about the electoral process within the country are naturally to a higher degree in the case of out-of-country voting. And even more so when the rules for this process have to be approved just 6 months before the date of the general election.

In my view, out-of-country voting, especially in its first time, has as a necessary condition a consensus, not as broad as political, but almost complete, on every preparatory and implementing aspect of this process.

In the conditions when the voting inside the country is accompanied almost always by the opposing of the election result, it is clear that we have to decide on the realization of this process since all relevant, political, and institutional factors have their contributions in this process.

The CEC is determined and has the full conviction that the fulfillment of its institutional responsibilities related to out-of-country voting can not be complete and useful if in the way of their implementation we do not consider all the factors interested in this process.

Political parties, civil society organizations, institutions, and international partner organizations are invited to be part of the preparation of the out-of-country voting process. The entire regulatory framework for out-of-country voting will be consulted at the drafting stage with all stakeholders, including political parties.

We intend to complete this process no later than the fall of next year.

At first glance, it seems to be a long and sufficient time to build the whole regulatory and normative architecture of this process, but it is not so.

We will all have to agree on the rules related to the registration of out-of-country voters, the procedures and way of voting, the calculation and tabulation of the results, etc. We will more or less have to adopt an electoral code just for out-of-country voting. And we all know that this is not a simple thing in Albania.

However, on the other hand, the fall of next year is far enough from the period of the upcoming elections for the Albanian Parliament. This means that in this case, the political parties will find it difficult to well calculate their political electoral interests in their opinions and assessments of the rules to be adopted to out of country voting. Thus we hope to reach a consensus on the rules of out-of-country voting.

I think it would have been more helpful that the Electoral Code must have some detailed adjustments regarding out-of-court voting. However, it has already passed.

Now practically the CEC has to determine every rule for all details of out-of-country voting. And as I mentioned above, this is not an easy venture. The CEC will have to determine its own rules regarding the calculation of the vote of foreign voters in the election results, among other things the CEC has to deal with

Will their vote be counted in the result of the Tirana district? Or will it be counted on the results of the Tirana county in the civil registry where the out-of-country voter is registered?

Someone could say that this is clear. Maybe. But we have found that there are different views on this issue, from political parties to other entities interested in out-of-country voting, even in the CEC itself.

Following this issue, I think we have to reopen the discussion regarding the representation of the diaspora vote. There are different views on this issue. I think it would be of great interest for us to apply a system of representation that which the diaspora has a reserved number of seats in the Assembly.

This on the one hand would fully guarantee their representation, as well as make their voice heard for the development of the country, but on the other hand not to affect the interest of those who live permanently in the country(Albania) and are directly related to what and how is decided by public institutions starting first from the Assembly which is their representative body.

Anyway, this is an issue that implies political interests and will ultimately be what will decide it.

The approval of all bylaws by the CEC within the autumn of the coming year will allow us to better prepare the entire technical and logistical infrastructure of out-of-country voting. This aspect of the out-of-country voting process is also very

important. Political parties and diaspora voters have an interest and need to become familiar with the procedures and the entire technical aspect of voting and for this, they should have sufficient time available.

The preparation of the technical infrastructure also requires an extensive consultation process with all factors. The CEC will establish a periodic consultation structure with all stakeholders for out-of-country voting.

We think that transparency and inclusiveness will give credibility to both the preparation of this process and its implementation. This conference is the first step and indicator of this approach by the CEC.

To conclude, I especially thank the OSCE Presence in Albania and Ambassador Del Monaco for their contribution and co-organization of this conference. Thank you for all the generous support you have given to the CEC in this period. We appreciate that.

Thank you all for being with us today, many successes to achieve our common goals.