

**International Election Observation Mission
of the Organization of Turkic States**

Presidential Elections in Turkmenistan

13 March 2022

STATEMENT

Following an invitation from the Central Commission for holding Elections and Referenda in Turkmenistan (CEC), the Secretariat of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) headed by Secretary General deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the Presidential Elections in Turkmenistan on 12 March 2022.

The Mission was composed of officials from the Secretariat of the OTS and carried out its activities in accordance with the national legislation of Turkmenistan, as well as generally recognized rules of international law on the organization and conduct of elections.

The Mission was informed on the ongoing reforms in the country, new electoral code, participation of international observer missions in the elections, and preparations for the voting process for the Turkmen citizens living abroad.

As for the preparations for the elections, over 2618 electoral districts and precincts were formed and this included 41 polling stations in 30 countries, which facilitated the voting process and broadened the reach of the elections to the citizens living abroad, meaning that the elections were inclusive;

The authorities have allocated significant resources for training of the participants in the electoral process. It is important to underline that the realization of such a large-scale training was one of the key elements of the smooth flow of the elections;

Mission was informed that, all candidates are nominated for the first time, which means the renewal of the political establishment and enhanced course of Turkmenistan;

The nomination of candidates by the political parties and initiative groups of citizens of velayats is an important step for a more inclusive representation of all elements of the society.

Each candidate was allocated with 15 minutes for their pre-electoral campaign in the media outlets, which means that the candidates were presented with equal opportunities and impartiality was ensured;

On the Election Day, the Mission visited 11 polling stations in total: 8 in Ashgabat and 3 in Akhal velayet. Tabulation of ballots and results was conducted in time according to the national election legislation. All necessary administrative measures were taken to ensure the free will of the people during the voting day. The Mission did not find any evidence of intervention of administrative or law enforcement authorities in the activities of the polling stations.

The CEC made a great effort to prepare the elections. Noteworthy changes included anti Covid-19 measures, training thousands of polling officials and conducting an intensive voter information campaign.

In line with the electoral code, necessary conditions were provided to national and international observers to conduct impartial observation of the Elections. The Mission has witnessed participation of the national and international observers, which reinforces the transparency and public accountability of the Elections.

The Mission did not detect any serious issues, which would affect the results of the election. The Mission observed no campaign materials visible inside or outside the polling stations, nor were there any campaign activities taking place nearby the polling stations. For young citizens, who obtained the right to vote for the first time, a special attention and encouragement was given at the polling stations. The Mission observed no attempt by any outsider to influence voters on how to vote, was given full access to the polling stations, and received detailed information from the polling station officials.

Electoral participation was high and the polls have been prepared in compliance with the electoral code. The widespread coverage of the elections by the media outlets of the country can be noted as an element contributing to the legitimacy and transparency of the election process.

Elections took place under improved legislation and with great tolerance of independent voices demonstrated genuine competition and full respect of election day procedures. The elections showed that the ongoing reforms need to continue and be accompanied by more opportunities for grass-root civic initiatives.

The Mission will share with the Member States and relevant International Organizations its assessment of and recommendations on the Presidential Elections in the coming days.

In conclusion, International Election Observation Mission of the OTS affirms that the OTS EOM assessed compliance of the election process with international standards and domestic legislation. Therefore, congratulate Turkmenistan and the Turkmen people for the successful elections and reiterate our hope that the results of the elections would contribute to further development of the country.