



INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES

REPUBLICAN REFERENDUM ON THE DRAFT LAW “ON INTRODUCING AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN”

(5 June 2022)

STATEMENT

Following the invitation extended by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to observe the Republican Referendum on the draft law “on introducing amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Referendum) held on 5 June 2022, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) deployed an International Referendum Observation Mission (Mission), which started its deliberations on 2 June 2022.

The Mission was composed of the officials from the Secretariat of the OTS, and the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) carried out its activities in accordance with the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as generally recognized rules of international law on the organization and conduct of voting processes.

In the framework of observation of the pre-referendum process, the Mission had a meeting with the Secretary of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CEC), Mr. Mukhtar Yerman, who provided the members of the Mission with detailed information about preparations for the Referendum. During the meeting, members of the Mission were acquainted with the plan of the main activities for preparing and holding the Referendum.

The Mission also met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Adil Tursynov, who shared information about the measures carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at preparing diplomatic

missions and consular offices of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Kazakh citizens living abroad to cast their votes. The Mission took note that 65 polling stations were established in 52 diplomatic missions to ensure the involvement of Kazakh citizens living abroad in the voting process.

The CEC administered the Referendum impartially and met the legal deadlines. Public meetings were conducted in an efficient and collegial manner and were open to the media. The local commissions worked in a professional way and enjoyed the confidence of local stakeholders. 10 out of 15 of the observed referendum boards were chaired by women.

The Central Election Commission conducted a voter information campaign, including televised and online content focused on Referendum Day procedures. The authorities made necessary efforts to provide unbiased information about the issue to be decided. The broadcast media provided citizens with extensive data related to the Referendum.

The Mission also believes that several issues, such as the equal opportunities for those “in favor” of the draft law and those “against,” voter education on the substance of the procedural consequences of the Referendum would benefit from specific attention and be quite contributive to the voting process and general turnout of voters.

Throughout the Referendum Day, the Mission has observed the voting procedures in 15 polling stations in Kazakhstan. Necessary information and materials about the Referendum procedures were presented inside the polling station. The precinct commissions provided full access to international and local observers for active observation in all locations covered by the Mission.

The Referendum was well-organized and professionally administered, without any significant irregularities. Voting and counting procedures were followed, and the transparency of the process was ensured. Voting was conducted smoothly. No case of illegal intervention by administrative or law enforcement authorities in the work of referendum commissions was observed. Mission was given full access to the polling stations and received detailed information from the polling station officials. No obstacles to the right of free voting were monitored either.

The Referendum Law of Kazakhstan provides all necessary opportunities for observation by representatives of local public associations and international

observers. The Mission witnessed active participation of the national observers, which reinforces the transparency and public accountability of the Referendum.

The Mission observed that there were no serious technical problems that would affect the results of the Referendum. The Mission also notes that public order was secured at the visited polling stations. Furthermore, the Mission did not detect any campaign materials, coercion by any political group, and leakage of voting bulletins during the Referendum.

At the same time, the Mission considers it appropriate to review the practice of including voters who wish to vote in any polling station outside their permanent registration to a supplementary voter list on voting day.

The mission welcomes the efforts of the Central Election Commission for having created conditions for ensuring the rights of disabled citizens, providing polling stations with all necessary materials and technical equipment, and training on the preparation of members of the commissions using practice-oriented methods.

Furthermore, at the end of the voting day, the Mission observed the counting process in one of the polling stations. The precinct commissions implemented the counting of votes per the rules set out by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Observation Mission of the Organization of Turkic States assessed the compliance of the Referendum on June 5, 2022, with international standards and national legislation. The Mission will share its detailed assessment and recommendations on the Referendum in the coming days with the Member States and relevant International Organizations.

The OTS Mission congratulates the brotherly people of Kazakhstan for the successful holding of the Republican Referendum and reiterates the hope that this transition to more democratic governance and a new format of interaction between the state and society would contribute further to increasing welfare in the country.