



Golos Movement for Protection of Voters' Rights
golosinfo.org

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Analytical report

On the implementation of recommendations from the final reports of the OSCE/ODIHR following the Russian presidential elections of 2004 and 2012, and the State Duma deputy elections of 2003, 2011, and 2016

More than half of the 121 recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR on elections have not been implemented. The Golos Movement analysed the reports of the organization following the results of five federal elections in Russia from 2003 to 2016. The worst situation can be found in the regulation of agitation and media work: only six of the Bureau's 25 recommendations were implemented to some extent. In addition, the problem of using administrative resources remains unresolved. Most effective is the reform of procedures governing the voting and counting process. Mostly, technical problems are solved that do not affect the design of the electoral system and the established practices.

The Golos Movement for Protection of Voters' Rights has analysed the recommendations of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), presented in the final reports of the Election Observation Missions in the Russian Federation. Golos plans to perform a similar monitoring of the recommendations issued by international observers representing the Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States; however, on the Parliamentary Assembly's official website, we have discovered¹ only one report pertaining to the monitoring of the Russian elections, and containing a single recommendation.² We consider the practice of analysing the implementation of recommendations very important, and we hope that OSCE/ODIHR will look into the possibility of organizing such monitoring.

Altogether, we have analysed five final reports³ by the OSCE/ODIHR, covering the Russian presidential elections of 2004 and 2012, and the State Duma elections of 2003, 2011, and 2016, which contained a total of 121 recommendations. Some of the recommendations were reiterated in several reports from different years. The greatest number of recommendations, 31, were made after the presidential elections. In other years, the number remained stable and fluctuated from 20 in 2012 to 26 in 2003. Our analysis shows that 15 recommendations (12.4%) were fully implemented, 41 recommendations (33.9%) were partially implemented, and 65 recommendations (53.7%) were not implemented at all.

Golos' experts have divided all of the recommendations into 14 groups, in accordance with their areas of expertise.

The first group, "Election System Design," includes 12 recommendations, of which only one has been implemented, albeit after being repeated twice in different reports. The recommendation in question concerned the repeal of the "Against all" vote. That being said, experts of the Golos Movement believe that this recommendation had a negative effect on the development of Russia's

¹ http://iacis.ru/international_institute/documents/otchet_y_mimrd/

² https://iacis.ru/upload/iblock/d89/zaklyuchenie-_vybory-v-rf_red_dlya-podpisey.pdf

³ <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/russia>

electoral and political system, as it significantly narrowed the voters' choices and led to an increase in absenteeism. An additional recommendation, to change party-specific legislation to remove a number of discriminatory norms regarding political parties, was partially implemented. Following the mass protests of 2011 and 2012, the minimum number of political party members was reduced dramatically, allowing even small groups of like-minded people to unite. Nonetheless, in practice, opportunities to refuse party registration on political grounds remain. There is still a ban on the creation of parties based on regional and ethnic origin, which can be attributed to apprehensions regarding the potential growth of separatist sentiments in the country. At the same time, a number of important recommendations regarding the simplification of electoral legislation and its unification within a single code, boosting competitiveness of elections and guaranteeing citizens the rights of association and expression of their opinions, have not been implemented. Moreover, we have seen a strong degradation in almost all of these areas over the last 14 years.

The second group, “Administrative Resource,” contains seven recommendations, of which only two have been partially implemented. These recommendations concern certain changes in the work of the Central Election Commission following its latest reorganization and the attempts of its management to win back the citizens' trust in the electoral system. That being said, on a fundamental level, there have been no improvements in reducing the abuse of administrative resources.. Moreover, the situation today is in many ways worse than it was in 2003. The use of official status and public resources in the interests of specific candidates in the course of an election campaign remains the key problem that substantially violates the principle of candidates' and parties' equality and corrupts competition at elections on all levels.

The third group of recommendations, which concerns the registration of candidates, contains 10 suggestions, of which three have been partially implemented: the number of required signatures in support of a candidate's nomination in the presidential elections has been reduced; a new regulation, allowing candidates to rectify deficiencies in documents submitted for registration, was instituted in 2006; and elections in single-mandate constituencies were reinstated. Nevertheless, here, too, the changes are

more of a formal nature, while the candidates' actual situation has been worsened by law enforcement practices. For example, the reappearance of single-mandate constituencies on the eve of the 2016 elections did not bring about increased competition and greater parliamentary representation. On the contrary, real political competition was absent in the overwhelming majority of single-mandate constituencies. The recommendations on improving the level of neutrality in the election commissions' activities in the candidate registration process were not implemented. The elections of 2016 demonstrated that the collection of voter signatures remains a practically insurmountable barrier for the overwhelming majority of independent candidates. The restrictions on electoral rights, including the right to be elected, remain disproportionate to the citizens' violations of the law and allotted punishment.

The fourth group of recommendations, "Voter Registration and Voter Lists," includes five suggestions. In accordance with recommendations made in 2003 and 2004, the procedures for voter registration have been improved, leading to more accurate voter lists. Unfortunately, the recommendations on improving the level of openness and efficiency in working with voter lists have yet to be implemented.

The fifth group, "Voting Process," combines 15 recommendations. Only two of them can be judged as fully implemented. Now, the electoral legislation clearly specifies the number of ballots the election commission has to bring when travelling for "home voting." Furthermore, the lack of introduction of new methods of remote voting which would guarantee the secrecy of vote, can be seen as a peculiar way of implementing a respective OSCE/ODIHR recommendation addressing this issue.

Recommendations to educate voters about the need to observe vote secrecy can be judged as partially fulfilled. There has been a gradual abandonment of absentee voting ballots, the number of special polling stations has been reduced, and the existing polling stations are slowly being equipped to welcome voters with physical disabilities. That being said, the problems with mobile voting remain unchanged. Such voting practices continue to draw numerous admonitions from the participants of the electoral process and election observers, especially when it comes to proactivity and voluntariness of the applications submitted by voters.

The list of reasons for absentee and preliminary voting remains too expansive and undefined. The secrecy of the vote is systematically violated. The Golos Movement would specifically like to underscore potential challenges pertaining to the OSCE/ODIHR recommendation to implement voting by post in Russia, as we believe that, under existing conditions, voting by post may create additional opportunities for ballot-stuffing.

The sixth group of recommendations, “Vote Counting,” included seven suggestions. Six of them have been partially implemented. In particular, the scale of training of election commission members to make sure that they better observe the procedures of vote counting, has been expanded substantially. There has been a certain simplification and automatization in the procedure of filling out the protocols. In cases of complaints from election observers and participants of the electoral process, a vote recount can be held at polling stations equipped with touch-screen voting machines. Experience has shown, however, that the training activities themselves bring very modest results. This is most likely a result of the fact that the first group of recommendations, aimed at simplifying the existing election legislation, has not been implemented. Moreover, we believe that in recent years election legislation has become even more convoluted. The recommendation to change the report form sheet to include a line for the number of voters added to the voting list on the day of the election has not been implemented.

The seventh group of recommendations, dedicated to non-party observation, includes seven suggestions. This is where the greatest rollback is visible. Only one of the suggestions — concerning the value of independent observers in the election process — can be considered provisionally implemented as the new staff of the Central Election Commission publicly declares the importance of independent observation. At the same time, however, the legislative initiatives of 2003-2017 have dramatically worsened the position of independent observers, making genuine civic control near impossible from a legal point of view. In 2005, a statutory provision, which allowed civic organizations to dispatch their observers to polling stations, was removed from Russian legislation. Since then, Russian citizens have been forced to search for other ways to enter polling stations as either observers

representing participants of the electoral process or as representatives of the media, whose right to be present at the polling stations was also challenged by the new regulations. In December 2017, the law on the Russian presidential elections was hastily amended, giving the Civic Chamber of Russia and the civic chambers of its constituent regions the right to nominate election observers. This cannot, however, be viewed as even a partial implementation of recommendations regarding civic election observation. The civic chambers are primarily assembled by government authorities, and cannot be called civic institutions independent of the state. Instead of providing civic organizations with the right directly to send observers to polling stations, the authorities invented an administrative filter in the form of civic chambers. There is a great probability that this institution will be used to imitate civic control in the public space.

The eighth group, “Election Commissions,” contains 10 suggestions. Only two of them have been implemented in full: Territorial Election Commission protocols now contain information about the movement of absentee voting certificates, and the guidance materials for Polling Election Commissions (PECs) have been made more concise. We consider six of the recommendations to be partially implemented: beginning in 2003, information about voting results with a breakdown by polling stations has been swiftly published; statutory provisions regulating the assistance of government officials to election commissions in organizing the elections have been added to the legislation; over the last two years, the Central Election Commission has done a better job of conforming to the requirements of objectivity and impartiality. At the same time, the principal problem, in our view — the absolute dependence of election commissions on the executive branch — has not been resolved.

The ninth group contains seven recommendations regarding the guarantees of women’s and ethnic minorities’ rights to participate in the political process. Over the last 14 years, the situation regarding the provision of voting rights to internally displaced persons has improved significantly. First, the number of people in this category has been greatly reduced. Second, the organizers opened special polling stations where citizens without registration can vote. This, however, led to opportunities for

multiple voting at such stations. In addition, the restoration of single-mandate constituencies in the elections of State Duma deputies has allowed for partial resolution of the problem of ethnic minority representation. The problem with the use of hate speech on the campaign trail has not been resolved, however, and in recent years has become even more relevant. Furthermore, Russia remains at the bottom of the international rating based on proportion of women elected to the national parliament.

The most sizable was the tenth group of recommendations, containing suggestions on issues of election campaigning and media coverage. It should be noted, however, that a significant number of the 25 recommendations in this group are repeated from election to election, chiefly because most of the recommendations have not been implemented over the course of this decade-and-a-half period. In particular, there is a considerable imbalance in Russia in the way the activities of candidates and parties are covered. The state-owned federal media and smaller outlets controlled by local administrations often blur the line between agitating for a candidate and providing information about the activities of government officials in order to create favourable publicity for specific participants of the electoral process. Furthermore, after introducing bans on the criticism of opponents and the use of third-person images, the current legislation has significantly reduced the number of campaigning instruments. The only positive adjustment has been the abolishment of the provision that political parties that failed to collect 2% of votes, given under the federal proportional system, had to pay back the cost of the free advertising to the state-owned mass media.

The eleventh group of recommendations, “Technological Equipment of Election Commissions,” had two suggestions, of which one was implemented — transparent ballot boxes have been introduced, and the installation of touch-screen voting machines continues. The recommendation to introduce independent certification of software and equipment used in the electoral process can be regarded as partially implemented.

The twelfth group, “Complaints, Investigations, Punishment,” combines 11 suggestions. One of them was fully implemented, as the Russian legislation was augmented with a provision specifying personal administrative or criminal liability for

multiple voting and ballot rigging. Recommendations on the investigation of cases of abnormal voter turnout have been partially implemented. For example, following the September 10, 2017 elections in the Saratov Region, all the chairmen of the Territorial Election Commissions in the region were fired due to the falsification of election results. However, no one is trying to puzzle out the reasons for the ‘distinct electoral culture’ in the dozen or so regions which traditionally demonstrate abnormal voting results. Recommendations on proprietary monitoring of mass media by the election administration have been partially implemented, but a severe imbalance in the coverage of candidates’ activities remains. Recommendations on the intensification of election commission members’ training and improving the transparency of complaint reviews have also been partially implemented. It is currently impossible to carry out these recommendations in full due to the excessive number of complaints and reports submitted to the Central Election Commission.

The thirteenth group, which reviews issues pertaining to the financial transparency of campaigns, contains just one recommendation, envisioning the enhancement of the financial transparency of electoral funds, and it has not been implemented. The Golos Movement has regularly pointed out the existence of shadow financing and hidden state financing of election campaigns. A separate issue concerns campaign financing through civic organizations whose financial reports are unavailable to the public. Requirements of public financial reporting at regional and local elections differ significantly, and the Taxpayer Identification Numbers of many corporate sponsors are missing, making their straightforward identification difficult. The election commissions tasked with reviewing the financial reports lack the sufficient authority for a genuine fight with shadow financing.

The fourteenth group of recommendations, concerning the actions of the police at polling stations, can be judged as partially implemented. It contains just two practically identical recommendations that envision a more detailed regulation of law enforcement agencies’ activities at polling stations. Nonetheless, problems with the police’s lack of understanding of electoral legislation remain, as law enforcement officials are unfamiliar with the rights and obligations of the election commission members,

public observers, candidates, and their authorized representatives. Furthermore, the police are often reluctant to react to the election observers' and voters' requests to receive their statements about violations of the law, and to draw up the relevant protocols.

Overall, it can be said that, over the last few years, progress has been made in regard to some recommendations, the majority of which are of a technical nature. At the same time, a number of fundamental issues have not been resolved, and there has been measurable deterioration in several of them. The latter trend primarily concerns the rights of election observers, the degree of actual competition in elections, and the misuse of public resources and abuse of official functions.

The report was prepared by the expert group in the persons of Stanislav Andreichuk, Andrei Buzin, Vitaly Kovin, Arkady Lyubarev, Grigory Melkonyants, and Denis Shadrin.

Election by years/ Recommendations by no.	Recommendation	A note on implementation and comments (indicator of implementation: "fulfilled", "partially fulfilled", "not fulfilled" and clarifications)
1. Election System Design		
2003/10	A wide-ranging review of the election legislation should be undertaken in an attempt to clarify and simplify complex provisions, in order to enhance public understanding of legal provisions relating to elections, and to facilitate voter education and training of election officials.	<p>Failed to implement. To be more exact, we believe that the situation has worsened. Over the last 14 years, approximately 100 laws were adopted, introducing changes to the electoral legislation, but the majority of changes were mercenary-minded. As a result, the electoral legislation became unstructured and even less coherent. The Central Election Commission of Russia regularly trains persons responsible for organizing and conducting elections, but when it comes to observing the statutory requirements, there are still major shortcomings. The candidate registration procedures remain complex and restrictive. Regulation governing election campaigning also contains groundless restrictions, such as the ban on the use of images of third persons and criticism of opponents.</p>
2004/1	A wide-ranging review of the election legislation should be undertaken with a view to clarifying and simplifying complex provisions, enhancing public understanding of legal provisions relating to elections, and facilitating voter education and training of election officials.	
2011/6	Consideration could be given to consolidating all electoral laws in a unified code to simplify and ensure consistency of the legal framework.	
2016/1	Consideration should be given to simplifying the legal framework for elections, especially with respect to the complex and restrictive procedures for	

	candidate registration, campaigning, and media coverage.	
2003/11	The Law on Political Parties should be reviewed, and serious consideration should be given to removing provisions that discriminate against the establishment of political parties by groups representing regional, local, or minority interests.	Partially implemented. Initially, in 2004, the situation worsened dramatically, and by 2009 the number of political parties had been reduced to 7. Nonetheless, in 2012, the law on political parties was improved, and rules for the creation of political parties were simplified. However, the recommendation to abolish the provisions that prohibit the creation of parties by groups that represent regional and local interests has not been implemented. Furthermore, the law still contains provisions that allow executive power bodies selectively to register political parties, de facto discriminating against parties created by disliked politicians.
2003/13	Legal provisions regulating the application of out-of-country votes to specific single-mandate electoral districts should be reviewed to ensure transparency in the process. There should be consistency in the procedures for allocating votes for single-mandate constituencies between out-of-country voters and those using absentee voting certificates outside their home constituency.	Failed to implement. The application of out-of-country voters to different single-mandate constituencies became less logical. In reality, foreign polling stations fail to ensure compliance with the rules of voting in single-mandate constituencies, similar to those that are used inside the country.
2003/14	Consideration should be given to removing provisions allowing for a vote “against all,” since it	Implemented. The “against all” vote was removed from federal and regional ballots in 2006. As of 2015, it can be

	appears impossible to take into account the political will of the “against all” votes in the proportional race.	used at some of the local elections, if there is a separate provision. That being said, we believe that this recommendation is not based on provisions of international law and fails to take into account specifics of Russian elections.
2004/3	Consideration should be given to removing provisions allowing a vote “against all.”	
2011/2	State authorities, election administrations, and other state institutions should demonstrate the commitment to properly and effectively implement the principles of democratic elections envisaged by the legislation, including guaranteeing the freedoms of association, assembly, and expression.	<p>Partially implemented. Due to changes in the staff of the Central Election Commission of Russia, the supreme body of election administration has declared its commitment to the international standards of democratic elections, and has taken a number of steps to improve the electoral system’s public image. However, the Commission’s actual influence on the situation is very limited.</p> <p>Regarding other government bodies and subordinate election commissions, see our comment in Recommendation 2003/1.</p> <p>Regarding the freedom of assembly, the situation continues to worsen: a law has been adopted, which extends restrictions on outdoor events to meetings that deputies may hold with their voters.</p>
2016/2	Authorities should align legislation concerning the freedoms of association, assembly, and expression with international standards. Authorities should not interpret the law to limit the basic rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution and international standards.	
2016/3	Authorities should demonstrate full respect of fundamental freedoms and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens as foreseen by the	Failed to implement. Political competition is still being severely restricted by all kinds of methods. For example, in the regional head elections, the average effective

	legislation. A competitive political environment which could result in viable political alternatives is of crucial importance.	number of candidates, calculated using the Laakso and Taagepera formula, has gone down from 2.5 in 2001-2005 to 1.7 in 2012-2017. The absence of competition is visible both in election results and in the size of the candidates' electoral funds and the sources of their financing. Thus, at the gubernatorial elections of 2017, the aggregate fund of United Russia candidates was almost triple the aggregate fund of all the other candidates.
2016/5	Consideration could be given to decriminalizing the libel and insult of state officials as well as repealing the legislation placing disproportionate limitations on free speech and expression, including on the Internet.	Failed to implement.
2. Administrative Resources		
2003/1	The federal and regional authorities should ensure that all legislative restrictions against the use of administrative resources in any election campaign are strictly enforced. The CEC and other relevant bodies should take a proactive role in monitoring, investigating, and punishing the abuse of administrative resources.	Failed to implement. Reports on the use of administrative resources for election campaigning continue to arrive from a number of regions and concern elections at different levels. For the elections of September 10, 2017, abuses of administrative resources took various shapes and forms: state grant schemes for election campaigning; participation of government officials, regional and municipal staffers, and employees of state-funded organizations in agitprop activities and events; use of state and municipal premises in the interests
2012/1	Existing legislative safeguards should be interpreted in such a way as to prevent the inherent conflict of interest between executive government positions that	

	<p>should be independent, and those of candidates pursuing political advantage. Such provisions could also be expanded to include enforcement mechanisms.</p>	<p>of select candidates; ceremonial activities and “working visits” of the acting regional heads who were taking part in gubernatorial elections; use of public holidays and state-sponsored events in the interests of administrative candidates; and use of common images and symbols in the government’s social advertising and campaign materials of the administrative candidates.</p>
<p>2016/13</p>	<p>Authorities, political parties, and candidates should take further steps to safeguard against the misuse of administrative resources to ensure an equitable campaign environment.</p>	<p>Using the advantages of an official position during an election campaigning period remains a popular practice in Russian elections. Officials, state and municipal employees, and the staff and workers of state-financed organizations take active part in agitprop events in the interests of candidates from the United Russia party. Public celebrations organized by the authorities using budgetary funds are widely used for campaigning. This is especially true for the elections of regional heads, which occurred in 16 Russian regions this year.</p> <p>The special attributes of gubernatorial elections are the dramatic increase in ceremonial and “official” activities of the acting and temporary acting regional heads, and the subsequent preferential media coverage of their work. During the pre-election period, the number of “working trips” related to the governors’ functions is ramped up. Official and semi-official media, regional TV stations, and</p>

		<p>municipal newspapers actively canvas for the administrative candidates under the guise of informing voters about their official activities.</p>
<p>2003/17</p>	<p>The election legislation should be amended, or the CEC should issue instructions, to establish regulations for the presence of local or state administration officials and their roles in election campaigns and election administration bodies.</p>	<p>Partially implemented. The current legislation contains a number of provisions that specify the groups and individuals involved in the preparation and organization of elections, including a list of those who have the right to be at polling stations during voting and vote counting.</p> <p>However, this year’s analysis of 22 election commissions in Russian regions which organized large-scale elections, allows for the conclusion that the effective procedure of the commissions’ assembly does not sufficiently take into account the interests of non-parliamentary parties and civil society.</p> <p>Despite all the efforts of Russia’s Central Election Commission to reduce the share of state and municipal employees in the commissions’ composition, the tendency for disproportionate strengthening of United Russia’s position within the commissions remains, helped by the incorporation of party members and functionaries into the commissions under the guise that they represent civic organizations, municipal units, and other nominating</p>

		<p>parties.</p> <p>In 2016-2017, we began to observe a positive trend towards increasing the representation of parties outside of the “federal four” in the composition of regional election commissions, but so far this has happened without taking into account the real political weight of specific non-parliamentary parties and the support that they enjoy from voters.</p> <p>At the same time, we are forced to acknowledge that the decisive role in appointing staff and especially the leadership of election commissions is played by the regional authorities, while the Central Election Commission’s influence on this process remains rather limited.</p> <p>The dependence of several election commissions on the regional authorities came to light in the course of the 2017 elections. This primarily concerns the territorial election commissions of Moscow, as well as the election commissions of the Altai Region, whose controversial actions and decisions provoked a negative reaction on the part of election participants, the expert community, and the Central Election Commission of Russia. We believe that practical conclusions regarding these elections</p>
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		commissions should be drawn based on results of the election campaign of 2017.
2003/24	State authorities should refrain from interfering in the activities of journalists and other media personnel with a view to influencing elections. There should not be any intimidation, threats, closures, or pressure on the media by any member of the state or local administration.	Failed to implement. Media domination by administrative candidates is widespread. It's typical for the state-owned and administration-controlled media, especially regional TV, to continue actively covering the official functions of acting governors running for re-election under the guise of informing the public, and thus create a positive image for them and de facto provide free-of-charge, budget-sponsored PR to these administrative candidates.
2004/28	State authorities should refrain from interfering in the activities of journalists and other media personnel with a view to influencing elections. There should not be any intimidation, threats, closures, or pressure on the media by any member of the state or local administration.	
2011/1	Stronger efforts should be made to ensure sufficient separation between the state and party, as required by paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.	Failed to implement. Administrative candidates rarely organize official campaign events, and many refuse to partake in political debates. Instead, the number of so-called "working trips" related to their official functions goes up dramatically. Such functions happen regularly, are marketed as working meetings with heads of regions or other officials, and are widely covered by the regional media on an almost daily basis. State and municipal officials take active part in these "work functions." Information about such meetings is published in the

		<p>official media and websites, and distributed in the form of press releases by the regional government press services.</p> <p>The use of public functions and events organized by the regional or municipal authorities with public funds for election campaigning purposes remains widespread. Minors are often drawn into participating in such functions.</p> <p>The agitprop materials of the United Russia party and its candidates often contain information about the programs funded by state or municipal budgets, presenting them as the party's own achievement.</p> <p>The practice of using common images and symbols in the communications of authorities and the agitprop materials of specific candidates and parties also persists.</p>
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3. Registration of Candidates

2003/3	<p>The election authorities should apply in an equal and non-selective manner the criteria for registration of electoral participants, with non-registration or de-registration being imposed for substantial violations only. All electoral participants should be permitted an adequate opportunity to remedy minor defects in their applications for candidacy.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. Moreover, the situation has worsened dramatically over the last 14 years: the right to register on the basis of an electoral deposit has been abolished; the maximum permissible reject rate in the signature sheets was made more stringent; the required share of signatures for certain categories of candidates was increased to 3% of all listed voters; the number of documents that have to be submitted by the candidates</p>
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		was increased; and defects in any of the documents can be enough to refuse registration. The last item is left to the discretion of the election commission that organizes the relevant elections, which leads to the arbitrary and often biased interpretation of statutory provisions.
2004/4	Consideration should be given to lowering the signature requirement for self-nominated candidates to provide equal opportunities for candidates, while recognising the need for a sufficiently high signature threshold to discourage spurious nominations.	Partially implemented. The number of signatures required of self-nominating presidential candidates has been reduced from 2 million to 300,000. However, no level playing field has been created, as the candidates nominated by non-parliamentary parties have to collect 100,000 signatures, while the candidates nominated by the parliamentary parties are freed from this obligation. That being said, it's difficult to explain the threefold difference in the number of signatures required in support of self-nominating candidates and of the candidates representing non-parliamentary parties, as the minimum size of a political party is equal to the minimum size of the initiative group in support of the self-nominating candidate.
2016/11	Consideration should be given to simplifying the candidate registration procedures, including by lowering the number of required supporting signatures for self-nominated candidates to comply with international good practice.	
2004/5	Provision should be made to allow correction of any formal or minor errors in the nomination and registration process, even a few days after the deadline for the submission of nomination and registration documents.	Partially implemented, and mostly pro forma. In 2006, provisions that allow the candidates to correct the errors were introduced, but they don't apply to all of the errors, while the legal practices are contradictory, and in recent years the authorities have been taking a harder line.

2004/20	Methodology for verification of signature lists and the publication of the results of verification should be re-visited. Verification of signatures for the purposes of registration should be qualified so as to ensure that minor, formal errors do not result in the signature lists being declared invalid.	Failed to implement. There was no improvement in the legislation, and in actual practice the situation continues to worsen.
2012/6	Consideration could be given to amending the support signature verification procedures with a view to simplifying them and to preventing the invalidation of signatures due to technical or minor errors.	
2016/12	The reasons for invalidating signatures should be reconsidered, as they unduly limit the right of voters to support prospective candidates. It is recommendable to allow for the submission of a higher number of excess signatures and to verify as many signatures as necessary in order to determine whether the number of valid signatures meets the required threshold.	
2011/7	Russian citizens that hold dual citizenship should not be prevented from standing for office.	Failed to implement.
2011/8	Election legislation should be amended to allow independent candidacy in line with paragraph 7.5 of	Partially implemented. For the State Duma elections, the proportional representation system was replaced with a

	the Copenhagen Document.	mixed one, allowing independent candidates to run. The use of a fully proportional representation system at the regional and municipal elections has also been reduced. At the same time, during the State Duma elections of 2016, just 19 people out of more than 300 candidates that had to collect the signatures for their nomination were able to take part, while the regional head elections in most of the regions do not envisage the self-nomination option.
2016/9	Restrictions on voter and candidate rights should be reviewed to ensure their proportionality. Restrictions on candidate rights for people with dual citizenship, residency permit in another state, or expunged criminal records should be removed. Restrictions on electoral blocs could be lifted. In line with international obligations, restrictions on the suffrage rights of persons with mental disabilities should be removed, whilst necessary support mechanisms to exercise the right to vote should be provided.	Failed to implement.
4. Voter Registration and Voter Lists		
2003/7	At the start of the election campaign and ahead of election day, the CEC should make public announcements about the current total number of registered voters eligible to participate on election day and its breakdown by polling stations. The CEC	Partially implemented. The Central Election Commission of Russia publishes information on the numbers of voters in each of the constituent regions as of January 1 and July 1 of each year. This information is used to compile the Electoral Register in the GAS Vybory

	<p>should also revise the format of results protocols to include data on the number of voters added to the voter lists of every polling station on election day.</p>	<p>System, and prior to the elections, the Register is used to compile voter lists for polling stations.</p> <p>The territorial election commissions have the breakdown of voter numbers by polling stations prior to election day, but this information usually remains unpublished.</p> <p>The accuracy of voters' representation in the Register leaves a lot to be desired: it would be advisable if changes to the Register were made faster. In connection with the ongoing migration processes, the number of voters reflected in the protocols on voting results can vary significantly from the number of voters included in the voter list prior to the start of voting (at the last federal elections, the difference amounted to approximately 500,000 people).</p> <p>The suggestion to include in the final protocol the voters that were added to the voter lists separately has not been implemented.</p>
2003/18	<p>A wide-ranging review of the voter registration procedures should be undertaken in order to achieve more accurate voter lists.</p>	<p>Implemented. The procedures for registering citizens are carried out by the registry authorities, such as the Interior Ministry, civil registry offices, and military enlistment offices. The Electoral Register is compiled on the basis of information collected by the registry authorities.</p> <p>Inaccuracies in the voter lists are the result of slow transmittal of information from the registry authorities to the election commissions, and of the failures to observe</p>
2004/18	<p>A wide-ranging review of the voter registration procedures should be undertaken in order to achieve more accurate voter lists.</p>	

		<p>the statutory requirements on introducing changes to the voter lists.</p> <p>Since 2003, some progress has been made in this direction: the input of the Electoral Register into the State Automated System “Vybory” allowed for faster and more accurate compilation of voter lists. Therefore, there is no need for a wide-scale revision of registration procedures, but there should be greater adherence to the laws in the process of making changes to the voter lists.</p>
2004/19	<p>Voter list modifications between the time of submission of the list to the PECs and election day should be publicly announced. There should be periodical publication of revised figures, at minimum aggregated by TEC.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. Although information about changes to the voter lists is partially collected, it is not publicized. When the voter lists are rectified during the voting period, no on-the-spot changes in the Electoral Register are made.</p>
2012/8	<p>The legal framework for adding voters to voter lists shortly before election day could be further detailed and should be strictly enforced. There needs to be an efficient and functioning mechanism in place to ensure that names of such voters are marked accordingly in voter lists in their precincts of origin to avoid the possibility of double voting.</p>	

5. Voting Process

2003/4	The CEC should issue specific instructions to PEC officials that require them to prevent open voting and group voting. The CEC should also provide voter education on the obligation to vote in secret. TECs should ensure that a sufficient number of adequate polling booths are allocated to each polling station.	<p>Partially implemented. The education of voters regarding the secrecy of the vote is obtrusive and endless, but no noticeable measures to provide greater secrecy of the vote have been adopted. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that current violations of the secrecy of the vote have less to do with technical issues and more with the way the employers coerce their workers to vote.</p> <p>The number of voting booths required for secret ballot can be judged as sufficient.</p>
2004/11	The CEC should take appropriate measures to prevent open voting and group voting. In addition to reiterating instructions to PEC officials and ensuring their adequate training in these matters, the CEC should examine whether the standard requirements for facilities at polling stations are adequate to prevent open voting and group voting, especially in conditions of high turnout. The CEC should also provide voter education on the obligation to vote in secret.	
2016/21	The practical aspects in the organization of voting should be reviewed to ensure the secrecy of the vote, as provided by OSCE commitments and the law. The significance of ballot secrecy should be emphasized during training of election commissions and in voter education materials.	

<p>2003/5</p>	<p>The CEC should issue revised instructions on the procedures for mobile voting in order to strengthen the safeguards for the secrecy of the vote and against fraud. Mobile ballots should only be issued for the number of voters who have requested the service.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. The Central Election Commission has issued a number of law-based instructions on mobile voting, but civic observers still register violations when this kind of voting takes place.</p> <p>In addition to direct violations of the law that can still be observed (mobile voting in place of other people), there are two problems that remain unregulated by law:</p> <p>A) Voting in hard-to-reach and underpopulated locations, whose resident voters have trouble getting to the voting premises. In regions where such locations are numerous (Voronezh, Tambov, Volgograd, Pskov, and other regions), mobile voting can account for 15-20% of the total number of votes cast. Under such conditions, mobile voting is often exercised when such locations are visited with a ballot box;</p> <p>B) In cities, voting is conducted using the lists compiled by social welfare authorities as well as other lists, which include all of the voters under the welfare authorities' care, often without these people knowing that this happens.</p> <p>Cases A and B demand additional statutory regulations, including expanded options for public control of such voting.</p>
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2003/19	The CEC should revise voting procedures to specify exactly when the ballot papers are to be stamped and signed by the PEC members.	Failed to implement. The recommendation concerns the fact that the law doesn't specify when the official seal and signatures of the commission members have to be affixed to the ballot.
2004/12	The CEC should ensure that any decision to introduce new technologies for voting should pay due attention to guaranteeing the secrecy of the vote.	Implemented. Since the recommendation was made, no new methods of remote voting have been introduced.
2004/14	The CEC should issue revised instructions on the procedures for mobile voting in order to strengthen the safeguards for the secrecy of the vote and against fraud. Mobile ballots should only be issued for the number of voters who have requested the service.	Implemented. The law has set limits on the number of ballots that the field team may take with it. The instructions manual prepared by the Central Election Commission covers the issues of the secrecy and voluntary nature of mobile voting.
2004/23	The use of special polling stations for voters who do not have permanent residency registration should be carefully regulated to exclude the potential for double voting. The CEC should also issue revised instructions on the correct use of absentee voting certificates.	Partially implemented. Presently, the voting procedure for people without permanent residency registration in the Russian Federation leaves much to be desired, as there are opportunities for multiple voting by such voters. The guidelines on the use of absentee voting certificates regulate their use quite strictly and clearly. The absentee voting certificates are currently being replaced with a new procedure for voting at the current place of residence.
2011/9	The use of special polling stations for voters who do not have permanent residency registration should be carefully regulated to exclude the potential for	Failed to implement. The recommendation is of a technical nature, and most likely was a reaction to the long-standing illogical sequence of protocol lines, which

	double voting. The CEC should also issue revised instructions on the correct use of absentee voting certificates.	created difficulties both in the process of filling out the protocol, and in its analysis.
2011/10	Consideration could be given to introducing voting by mail for voters residing in very remote areas to limit the resources required for their enfranchisement.	Partially implemented. The Russian legislation has been augmented with a statutory provision that allows voting by mail in regional and local elections, but at the present time this is a “sleeping” provision. We believe that voting by mail is insufficiently protected from ballot rigging, and is more likely to harm than aid the process of fair elections.
2011/14	Either technical or procedural measures could be put into place to prevent poll workers from seeing the contents of ballots (for instance, through the use of privacy ballot covers) or votes being cast on touch-screen machines (for instance, by using better privacy protection shields or proper voting booths) when helping voters.	Failed to implement. As it cannot be implemented anyway, because the “poll workers” are not allowed to assist the voters in filling out the ballots. The electronic ballot scanners have marked shortcomings, and although they haven’t been decommissioned yet, and are still used at a relatively small number of polling stations, there are no plans to expand their use.
2012/9	Procedures for the issuance of AVCs could be further tightened and circumstances in which AVCs can be issued and used for voting could be further restricted.	Failed to implement. This problem is currently relevant for the preliminary voting procedures.
2012/10	The practice of establishing special polling stations shortly before election day should cease as it lacks	Partially implemented. Over the last five years, the use of this practice has been reduced significantly.

	transparency and diminishes confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.	
2012/11	Provisions regarding voting outside of polling stations could be tightened to better ensure the integrity of the election process. Instances of implausibly high numbers of voters having voted with mobile ballots in some districts should be thoroughly examined by the relevant authorities.	Failed to implement. However, the Central Election Commission of Russia is currently studying the problems of mobile voting, and working on statutory provisions that can remedy the situation.
2016/22	To further promote universal suffrage, authorities should take necessary measures to facilitate unrestricted access of voters with reduced mobility to polling stations.	Partially implemented. Polling stations are gradually being equipped with fixtures that make it possible for disabled people to vote, including entrance ramps, special voting booths, and stencils for blind voters. The electoral legislation currently contains a norm requiring provision of access to voters with disabilities, but in reality implementation of this norm is made difficult by the shortage of resources in the local administrations.
6. Vote Counting		
2003/6	The CEC should take steps to ensure that the proper procedures for the counting of ballots are followed. Training on this issue should be enhanced and educational materials produced. In particular, the existing obligation of PEC officials to provide certified results protocols to all eligible persons	Partially implemented. The scale of training has been expanded. From 2016, the Central Election Commission has been taking steps to make sure that the adequate procedures of vote counting and tallying of votes are observed. The Commission organizes training sessions on

	should be enforced. Procedural violations should be investigated and those who have violated the law should be held accountable.	filling out election result protocols.
2004/15	The CEC should take steps to ensure that the proper procedures for the counting of ballots and the tabulation of results are followed. Training sessions on how to correctly fill out election result protocol forms should be enhanced. Procedural violations should be investigated, and those who have violated the law should be held accountable.	Nonetheless, so far the results of such training are unsatisfactory. A review of copies of protocols issued to the election observers at the elections of September 10, 2017, in the Sverdlovsk Region, demonstrated that only 20% of protocol copies have been authenticated in accordance with requirements of the law.
2016/23	The legal safeguards against possible fraud need to be strictly adhered to by the PECs. The counting procedures and the completion of results protocols should be conducted transparently, as stipulated by the law and in a manner conducive to a meaningful observation of the process. Training efforts for PEC members should be intensified, with particular focus on voting and counting procedures.	The violations of procedure are rarely investigated and cases of accountability are sporadic.
2004/16	Consideration should be given to the simplification of the procedures for filling out election result protocols. Attention should be given to enhancing the transparency of the tabulation process at the TEC level.	Partially implemented. A step forward has been taken in simplifying the procedures for filling out the protocols. Many precinct commissions have been equipped with computers to simplify the procedure of compiling and filling out the protocols and verifying control correlations.

		Although the transparency of the vote tallying process in the territorial election commissions is gradually improving, it still leaves a lot to be desired. For the Russian presidential elections of 2018, there are plans to equip the territorial election commissions with video cameras that will broadcast the vote tallying in real time.
2004/17	The CEC should issue clarification of how TECs are to determine whether, during tabulation, something constitutes “an error in data summation” warranting a correction, or whether the instance in question is an error or inconsistency raising doubts as to the accuracy of the protocol and therefore requiring a recount.	Partially implemented. De jure such instances have been differentiated, but the idea of “doubts in the correctness of protocol compilation” has not been explained in greater detail, and in practice the territorial election commissions often accept protocols that raise serious doubts. There are also instances when the voting results were unlawfully declared dubious, and such instances were used to unlawfully change the voting results.
2004/21	The CEC should revise the format of results protocols to include separate data on the number of voters added to the voter lists of every polling station on election day, on the basis of AVCs and on the basis of presenting proof of residency.	Failed to implement.
2011/12	Mandatory recounts should be carried out for a random significant sample of polling stations where new voting technologies are used, as allowed for by current legislation. Such a measure can contribute to further enhancing trust in such systems.	Failed to implement. A manual recount is rarely used when the commissions operate touch-screen voting machines, and the obligatory nature of such recounts is not specified. This provokes participants of the elections to doubt the honesty of the machines’ operation. For

		<p>example, during the municipal deputies elections in the city of Yaroslavl, which took place on the single election day of September 10, 2017, two of the opposition parties — Communists and Yabloko — along with some independent candidates expressed their doubts in the correct operation of the voting machines and demanded a manual recount, but this demand was refused.</p> <p>That being said, the law does not envision at all the manual recount of votes when ballot scanners are used.</p>
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7. Non-Party Observation

<p>2003/9</p>	<p>The CEC should continue to stress to lower level commissions the importance of domestic non-partisan observers and issue clear guidelines regarding their access to polling stations, including what documents are required for them to be present on election day.</p>	<p>Implemented. From 2016, the new leadership of the Central Election Commission has demonstrated a different attitude towards the activities of civic observers during elections. Unlike previously, when the Central Election Commission was headed by Vladimir Churov and the Commission issued instructions that directly sought to limit public supervision of the elections, the new leadership under Ella Pamfilova has created favourable conditions of access to polling stations for election observers and media representatives, and the removal of public observers from polling stations now rarely happens. The Central Election Commission is inclined to steer the election commissions towards constructive cooperation with the election observers. The Central</p>
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		Election Commission has made efforts to guarantee the rational procedure for the implementation of additional restrictions that were added to the electoral legislation, concerning the access of journalists and public election observers to polling stations.
2003/15	Obstacles that restrict the involvement of domestic non-partisan observer groups in the electoral process should be removed from the electoral legislation. Domestic nonpartisan observers should be afforded the right to attend all sessions of the election commissions and to receive all relevant information.	Failed to implement. In 2005, the federal electoral legislation lost the statutory provision that allowed all-Russian civic organizations to send public observers to the elections. Indeed, the very opposite of this recommendation was implemented. Following that, in almost all regions, similar provisions were removed from the legislation regarding regional and local elections. In this way, beginning in 2006, non-party observers have been forced to either come to polling stations as representatives of the media, or arrange with the candidates and parties for assignments that would allow them to be present at polling stations.
2004/9	Obstacles that restrict the involvement of domestic non-partisan observer groups in the electoral process, including the requirement that they be “All-Russia” public associations, should be removed from the electoral legislation. Domestic non-partisan observers should be afforded the right to attend all sessions of the election commissions and have access to all relevant information in a timely manner.	That being said, it should be noted that since 2011, public watchdogs, and in particular the Golos Movement and its active members, have been the victims of outside surveillance, phone eavesdropping, and provocations. When the activists go abroad, they are artificially delayed
2012/5	Election legislation should be reviewed to allow domestic observation by non-party organizations and groups.	

<p>2016/6</p>	<p>In line with international standards and commitments, the legislation should guarantee nonpartisan citizen observers the opportunity to independently scrutinize the electoral process.</p>	<p>at passport control, and regularly forced to undergo pat-downs and luggage searches. Golos believes that this is done with active participation from the intelligence services. During elections, a number of federal TV channels run purposeful smear campaigns against Golos and other watchdog organizations.</p> <p>December of 2017 saw the introduction of amendments to the law on presidential elections, ushering in observers from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the civic chambers of the Russian Federation constituents. Having said that, it should be noted that the civic chambers are primarily shaped by the authorities and cannot be considered public institutions independent of the state.</p> <p>Instead of providing the civic organizations with the right to directly send their observers to polling stations, the authorities came up with an administrative filter in the form of civic chambers.</p> <p>We would like to point to a statement from an interview with Alexander Tochenov, Deputy Secretary of Russia’s Civic Chamber, tasked with implementing this innovation: “It should be said separately, that the ranks of election observers should not be joined by the representatives of</p>
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		<p>political parties — they can participate in accordance with their own quotas, while the civic chambers should remain above party politics. That’s the first thing. Second: the observers from the civic chambers should not include members of civic organizations, recognized as foreign agents, as they should not be engaged in election observation.” We believe that these statements run counter to the legislation and are discriminatory. A Russian citizen’s membership in a political party or civic organization, even those included in the register of organizations as performing functions of foreign agents, cannot justify depriving such a citizen of his or her rights, including the right to public control over elections.</p>
2004/10	Explicit provision for international observers to observe the work of electoral commissions in the pre-election period should be included in the legislation.	Failed to implement.
2016/19	The legislation should be amended to provide for the observation of the entire electoral process by all observers. Observers should enjoy unimpeded access to all levels of election administration at all times.	Failed to implement.
8. Election Commissions		
2003/8	To further promote full transparency in the tabulation	Partially implemented. Information that is inputted into

	<p>process, data should be posted on the Internet within one hour after being entered into GAS Vybori, and all preliminary and final results should be made available on a single, hierarchically structured Internet site. The PEC protocol database should be available in a standard format on the website for downloading. Similarly, all CEC, SEC, and DEC decisions should be published on their respective Internet sites and remain posted for a minimum period.</p>	<p>the State Automated System “Vybory” is published on the fly, but some territorial election commissions delay the input of this data into the System.</p> <p>The format of such publications is inconvenient, and the data from precinct election commission protocols is spread out over multiple web pages.</p> <p>The decisions of the Central Election Commission of Russia are published in full. However, the decisions of the election commissions of the Russian Federation constituents, district and territorial election commissions, as well as election commissions of municipal units, are published only partially.</p> <p>The online search function for such decisions is poorly automated.</p>
2003/12	<p>The election legislation should be revised: (i) to prevent an imbalance in the representation of parliamentary factions that favour any electoral participant on the voting membership of election commissions; (ii) to ensure independence of the election administration from the executive authorities; (iii) to clarify the steps by which the members of previous election commissions are able to appoint new commission members; and (iv) to identify, if any, the</p>	<p>Failed to implement. The provisions on the creation of election commissions have remained practically unchanged over the last 14 years, and the only changes that have been made can be said to contradict the recommendations. For example, the procedure of creating election commissions of municipal units was changed in 2009, increasing their dependence on executive authorities. The previous quotas for state and municipal employees within the election commissions who were</p>

	<p>political affiliation of all voting members of election commissions. The ‘one-third’ limit on the representation of the local administration as voting members of election commissions should also be enforced.</p>	<p>given the right of decisive vote were capped at one third of the commission, but later were raised to one half.</p>
2004/2	<p>The election legislation should be revised to ensure independence of the election administration from the executive authorities. By legislative amendment or CEC instruction, clear regulations need to be established to regulate the presence of local or state administration officials in polling stations and define their role during the election campaign period and their role in relation to the election administration bodies.</p>	<p>Partially implemented. The Russian legislation envisions an exhaustive list of persons who can be present at polling stations on election day and in the process of vote tallying. Representatives of government authorities and local self-governance are not included in this list. In addition to this, legislation envisions certain cooperation between the election administration and government authorities/local self-governance bodies when it comes to organizing the elections.</p> <p>But interference by representatives of the authorities in the work of election commissions and the electoral process as a whole remains the principal problem. In 2017, for example, media reported that the Presidential Administration was engaged in selecting political consultants for gubernatorial candidates, and on the eve of the 2018 presidential campaign, the Presidential Administration decided to hold a meeting with the heads of regional election commissions, although these issues lie outside this body’s purview.</p>

2004/8	<p>Transparency of the work of election commissions should be enhanced by extending guaranteed access of candidates, their financial representatives and proxies, as well as journalists, to non-formal sessions, and by requiring a public announcement of all sessions of the election commissions.</p>	<p>Partially implemented.</p> <p>The candidates, their financial representatives and proxies are admitted to the meetings of the election commissions.</p> <p>However, the public receives almost no information about the meetings of election commissions (except for the Central Election Commission and the election commissions of constituent regions).</p> <p>In 2016, the authorities tightened the criteria for the presence of journalists at polling stations, significantly complicating their work in covering the elections.</p>
2004/22	<p>The handling of AVCs by the SECs and TECs should be opened for public scrutiny. This could be achieved through posting the serial numbers of the AVCs attributed to a TEC on the web page of the TEC or by introducing a new line in the SEC and TEC protocols in which the numbers of received, delivered, and cancelled AVCs would be recorded.</p>	<p>Implemented. Protocols of the territorial election commissions now include information about the movement of absentee voting certificates.</p>
2011/3	<p>Additional and effective safeguards are needed to ensure the impartiality and full independence of election commissions from the authorities, as required by law. In particular, the election administration should work to avoid any perceptions of affiliation or bias. Consideration should be given to revising the</p>	<p>Partially implemented beginning in 2016. Following the changes in the ideological section of the Presidential Administration and the structure of the Central Election Commission, the election administration to a much greater degree follows the letter of the law and the principles of transparency and impartiality. Nonetheless, the strong</p>

	rules for the appointment of election commission members to limit the role of state and local authorities.	dependence of election commissions on local administrations, along with the use of administrative resources, remains a problem. (See the commentary on the 2003/17 recommendation in the “Administrative Resource” section).
2012/2	Additional and effective safeguards are needed to ensure the impartiality and full independence of election commissions from the authorities, as required by law. In particular, the election administration should work to avoid any perception of affiliation or bias. Consideration should also be given to revising the rules for the appointment of election commissions to limit the role of state and local authorities.	
2016/10	In order to increase the integrity of and public confidence in the electoral process, the election administration should be guided by the law and principles of transparency, impartiality, and independence foreseen in the law. Additional and effective safeguards should be considered to ensure full impartiality and independence of election commissions from state and local government authorities, and to prevent the misuse of administrative resources for partisan ends, as required by law.	
2011/11	CEC could consider producing a shorter, more concise, and a more user-friendly manual for PECs.	Implemented. In recent years, there have been significant efforts to create all kinds of convenient and concise manuals for PECs.

2012/12	Training efforts for PEC members could be intensified, with a particular focus on counting procedures and the rights of election observers.	Partially implemented. In recent years, more attention is being paid to the training of PEC members. Attitudes towards election observers at polling stations have generally improved. The number of removals of election observers from voting premises is negligible. This is associated with the introduction of a new statutory provision that states that a decision of the court is required for removal from a polling station, and with the new attitudes demonstrated by the Central Election Commission members. At the same time, opportunities for civic election observation remain limited.
9. Guarantees of Women’s and Ethnic Minorities’ Rights		
2003/25	All political parties and candidates should condemn and refrain from the use of any chauvinistic and xenophobic statements in their campaigns. Authorities should take prompt and appropriate action to reprimand parties and candidates who use hate speech in their campaign activities.	Failed to implement. Hate speech in political rhetoric has been preserved. Some candidates and parties, such as Vitaly Milonov and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and his LDPR, make the fight against minorities a cornerstone of their campaigns.
2003/26	Political party leadership should promote women’s participation among their ranks, including by placing them in electable positions on party lists. Political parties should also address issues of special concern to women in their campaigns.	Failed to implement. There is no consistent work geared towards guaranteeing gender equality in Russian politics. Sociological research, conducted in September of 2017 by the Levada Centre, showed that only 13% of Russians could name a woman who could become the country’s

2004/31	Political parties and candidates for political office could develop more focus on gender policies and address issues of special concern to women.	president. 24% of citizens don't want women to partake in politics, and 31% don't want them to occupy the highest government positions along with men. 16% of those
2016/8	Political parties could be encouraged to promote gender equality and take resolute actions to put forward gender-balanced candidate lists, increase visibility of female candidates during election campaigns, and integrate gender issues into their platforms.	polled spoke against women's participation in presidential elections. At the 2017 gubernatorial elections, the share of women among all the candidates was 15% (16 out of 107). Only 9 female candidates were registered, none of whom won a seat. Russia ranks 128th on the list of countries by proportion of women in the national parliament (15.8%).
2004/29	Russian Federation authorities should undertake measures to address citizenship and registration issues to protect the basic human rights of resident migrant minorities and ensure that regional policies and actions of regional administrations are in compliance with federal legislation and the Russian Federation's human rights commitments.	Failed to implement. The scale of the problem was naturally reduced because the greater part of Meskhetin Turks were forced to emigrate to the US. At the same time, there has been no consistent solution to this problem, and the migrants who represent various ethnic minorities encounter serious problems in pursuing Russian citizenship and full voting rights.
2004/30	The authorities should undertake measures to simplify voting procedures for internally displaced persons (IDPs).	Implemented. The number of internally displaced persons has been greatly reduced between 2004 and 2017 (according to the Federal Statistics Service, this number went down from 702,500 to 19,300).

		<p>People with no registration can cast their votes at special polling stations. This, however, has created the separate problem of maintaining control over the prevention of multiple voting.</p>
2011/18	<p>In order to improve the representation of national minorities in elected bodies, authorities are encouraged to engage in consultations with national minorities with the aim of developing corresponding legal and/or other measures.</p>	<p>Partially implemented. In its Second opinion on the Russian Federation, dated May 11, 2006, the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe for Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities expressed concern about several aspects of electoral legislation that may exclude representatives of national minorities from the decision-making process. According to that Opinion, the aspects of the legislation that may hamper minorities in the decision-making process are: the seven-per cent threshold at the parliamentary elections; the ban on the creation of electoral blocs; and the exclusion of single-mandate constituencies during elections to the legislative assemblies.</p> <p>A number of amendments were made to the electoral legislation between 2011 and 2016: the threshold at parliamentary elections was lowered to 5%, and single-mandate constituencies were brought back. It is envisaged that every constituent of the Federation, including the regions with areas densely inhabited by national minority communities, has to have at least one single-mandate</p>

		<p>constituency on its territory, even if the number of voters in the district is far below necessary.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the ban on the creation of electoral blocs persists, even though the 5% threshold remains quite high for national minorities, as in 2016 it amounted to over 2.600,000 votes.</p>
10. Agitation and Mass Media		
2003/2	<p>The CEC and other supervisory authorities should ensure that all state media provide coverage of election campaigns in a neutral and equal manner. The CEC should consider conducting its own monitoring of media broadcasts during election campaigns in order to identify unequal and biased coverage of the campaign and to take prompt and effective action against those violating the law.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. The Central Election Commission conducts its regular monitoring of the way the parties' activities are covered in the media during periods between elections. However, no such monitoring is done during an election campaign. Plus, the monitoring only specifies the time dedicated to each party on air without evaluating the nature of the coverage (positive, negative, or neutral).</p> <p>In addition to this, there is a problem with regard to separating media election campaigning from media coverage that aims to inform the public about the activities of officials running as candidates.</p> <p>Overall, the coverage of election campaigns by state-controlled media remains biased (see comments to recommendations 2003/24 and 2004/28 in the "Administrative Resource" section).</p>
2004/25	<p>The CEC and other supervisory bodies should ensure that all state-controlled media provide coverage of election campaigns in a neutral and equal manner. The CEC should consider conducting its own media monitoring during election campaigns in order to identify unequal and biased coverage of the campaign and to take prompt and effective action against those violating the law.</p>	

2012/3	The CEC and other supervisory bodies should ensure that all state-controlled media provide coverage of election campaigns in a neutral and equal manner. The CEC should consider conducting its own media monitoring during election campaigns in order to identify unequal and biased coverage of the campaign and to take prompt and effective action against those violating the law. Such media monitoring should not only be limited to state-owned media, but could also cover state-affiliated and private media.	
2003/20	The Basic Guarantees Law should be revised to reflect and clarify the decision of the Constitutional Court in relation to election campaign media coverage.	Implemented. Just insofar as the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Russia establish certainty in legal issues.
2003/21	The Duma Election Law should be revised to remove the provisions that require political parties that fail to garner 2 per cent of the votes cast in the federal proportional contests to reimburse the state media for the cost of free advertising.	Implemented. This provision was abolished in 2009.
2003/22	The federal authorities should move ahead with plans to transform state broadcasters into independent public service media that will provide citizens with impartial and politically balanced information on election contestants.	Failed to implement.

2004/26	The federal authorities should move ahead promptly with plans to transform state-controlled broadcasters into independent public service media that will provide citizens with impartial and politically balanced information on election contestants.	
2012/17	The federal authorities should move ahead promptly to transform state-controlled broadcasters into independent public service media that would provide citizens with impartial and politically balanced information on election contestants.	
2003/23	An independent media council with a clear mandate to oversee and control free, equal, and fair access to state broadcasters should be created. Its membership should be diverse and professional, including representatives of the media, civil society, judicial bodies, and government and political parties. The members should not all be appointed by the President or by the Ministry of Press and Broadcasting.	<p>Failed to implement. The state made no steps in this direction.</p> <p>That being said, in 2005, the Public Board for Complaints Against the Press was created — an independent structure of the civil society that exercises self-regulation and co-regulation in the field of mass information. The Board was established through an unofficial agreement between more than 80 mass media publications and non-media</p>
2004/27	Consideration should be given to the creation of a media council, independent from the executive, with a clear mandate to oversee and control free, equal, and fair access to state-controlled broadcasters. Its membership should be diverse, with a professional composition including media professionals, civil	<p>NGOs to exercise arbitrage functions. The Board reviews complaints from mass media audiences regarding violations of professional ethics by journalists and media. The primary and principal practical task of the Board is the out-of-court settlement of specific information</p>

	<p>society, judicial bodies, and political parties. The members should not all be appointed by the President or the Ministry of Press and Broadcasting. The appointment procedures for its members should guarantee its balanced pluralistic composition.</p>	<p>controversies. Since the Board is a civic venture, it has no authority for oversight and control of pro bono, equal, and fair access to state radio and TV stations.</p>
2011/15	<p>Consideration could be given to establishing an independent media oversight body. The composition of such a body should be inclusive and diverse, and include media professionals, representatives of the civil society, judicial bodies, and political parties. This body should have the responsibility to consider media-related complaints.</p>	
2012/16	<p>Consideration should be given to the creation of a media council, independent from the executive power, with a clear mandate to oversee free, equal, and fair access to state-controlled broadcasters. Its membership should be diverse, with a professional composition including media professionals, civil society, judicial bodies, and political parties. The appointment procedures for its members should guarantee its balanced pluralistic composition.</p>	
2016/15	<p>Consideration could be given to the establishment of an independent oversight body, mandated to oversee free, equal, and fair access to state-controlled</p>	

	broadcasters.	
2004/6	Although a democratic election process invites participation from citizens, the election legislation should be reviewed to make clear that campaigning in favour of nonparticipation in the election process is not a violation, and that this is consistent with the right to freedom of expression.	Failed to implement.
2011/16	The legal requirement for the allocation of free airtime to election contestants during periods of ‘highest audience’ could be strengthened by providing clearer legal guidelines to the media on how to determine such periods.	Failed to implement.
2012/14	The legal requirement for the allocation of free airtime to election contestants during periods of ‘highest audience’ could be strengthened by providing clearer legal guidelines to the media on how to determine such periods.	
2011/17	Consideration could be given to reassessing the relevance of the principles established in the Law on the Procedure of the Coverage of Activities of State Authorities by the State Mass Media that oblige state media to cover the activities of state officials. Media outlets should be free in establishing their own	Failed to implement.

	editorial policies, while adhering to the principles of objectivity and impartiality.	
2012/15	Consideration could be given to reassessing the relevance of the principles established in the Law on the Procedure of the Coverage of Activities of State Authorities by the State Mass Media that oblige state media to cover the activities of state officials. Media outlets should be free in establishing their own editorial policies, while adhering to the principles of objectivity and impartiality.	
2012/4	Media freedom should be strictly upheld. Interference with the activities of journalists and media personnel should not be tolerated, and any allegations of such kind should be promptly and efficiently investigated.	Failed to implement. See comments to recommendations 2003/24 and 2004/28 in the “Administrative Resource” section.
2016/4	Media outlets should be free in establishing their own editorial policies. Concrete steps should be taken to strengthen editorial and financial independence of the state and public media to facilitate citizens’ access to pluralistic information.	
2012/13	The allocation of free time should provide all candidates with equal amounts of free time and space. The allocation of additional time to parties should not disadvantage self-nominated candidates.	Implemented.

2016/16	Consideration could be given to liberalizing the contestants' campaigns in the media, requiring equitable rather than equal media coverage, and reassessing the relevance of the legal obligations for state media to cover the activities of state officials.	Failed to implement. Existing legislation introduces de facto a ban on criticizing opponents during an election campaign period and significantly complicates the use of images of third persons. This substantially restricts the candidates in the means of expression for campaigning purposes and may have a negative impact on the interest of voters in elections. In addition to this, there is a persistent problem of disproportionate coverage of officials running in elections.
2016/17	Consideration could be given to obliging the media to identify party-sponsored airtime/space in a clear manner so that voters be made aware of the paid nature of the programme.	Partially implemented. Agitprop materials paid for from the electoral fund should always contain information about the source of their funding. In practice, however, agitprop materials published under the guise of information materials are not marked as such. In addition, election commissions do not exercise sufficient control over abusive practices of publishing party/candidate-sponsored materials in the media under the guise of politically neutral information.
2011/4	The CEC and other supervisory bodies should duly exercise the oversight authority vested in them by the law in ensuring that state media treat election contestants equally and provide balanced coverage of campaigns. One way of accomplishing this would be for the CEC to conduct its own media monitoring	Partially implemented. The Central Election Commission of Russia and the regional election commissions monitor the media coverage of election participants during the campaigning period. However, they fail to pay any attention to the way the activities of acting governors are covered by the media under the guise

	during election campaigns in order to identify unequal and biased coverage of the campaign and to take prompt and effective action against those violating the law.	of informing the public. The media continue to actively cover the official duties of such gubernatorial candidates, promoting the creation of their positive image and de facto providing them with pro bono PR, while the election commissions fail to pay any attention this.
2016/18	The CEC could consider conducting its own media monitoring during election campaigns in order to identify inequitable and biased coverage of the campaign and to take effective action against those violating the law.	
11. Technological Equipment of Election Commissions		
2004/13	Legal provisions regulating the application of out-of-country votes to specific single-mandate electoral districts should be reviewed to ensure transparency in the process. There should be consistency in the procedures for allocating votes for single-mandate constituencies between out-of-country voters and those using absentee voting certificates outside their home constituency.	Implemented. Transparent ballot boxes have been introduced, and touch-screen voting machines are being installed at more places.
2011/13	To enhance the transparency and trust in the new voting technologies used, evaluation and formal certification of the soft- and hardware by an independent public body against publicly available functional requirements could be considered, with the	Partially implemented. On the one hand, the law allows for a government-accredited organization to be certified to protect from unsanctioned access and confirmation of the lack of undeclared capabilities. On the other hand, in order to undergo certification in an independent public

	<p>detailed evaluation report made public.</p>	<p>organization, there should be such an organization. Unfortunately, Russia at the moment lacks authoritative independent public organizations capable of conducting such certification.</p> <p>Suggestion: Government-accredited organisations (such as i.e. the Federal Service for Technical and Export Control) have been assigned to evaluate and certify the soft-and hardware in the field of the new voting technologies. However, there are no independent bodies allowed to exert public control over the process of granting accreditations to the above mentioned organisations and to monitor the evaluation and certification process.</p>
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12. Complaints, Investigations, and Punishments

<p>2004/24</p>	<p>The CEC should investigate cases in those Federal Subjects and TECs where implausibly high turnout figures were reported, in order to prevent recurring malpractice.</p>	<p>Partially implemented. The regions that for years failed to take any measures to investigate the instances of unreasonably high voter turnout have been given the name of “regions with distinct electoral culture.” (One example is the Republic of Tatarstan, where “distinct electoral culture” was often the result of multiple voting — often conducted by using other people’s passports for identification purposes — and other ballot rigging practices).</p>
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		<p>However, when the Central Election Commission of Russia demonstrates the will to investigate, such investigations bring results.</p> <p>Following the elections of September 10, 2017, in the Saratov Region (which had the second highest voter turnout on that day), all the chairmen of territorial election commissions were fired, while the chairman of the Saratov Region Election Commission resigned.</p>
2011/5	<p>Complaints and appeals provisions of the legislation should be clarified to stipulate which submissions amount to ‘applications’ and which ones constitute complaints. It is recommended that all submissions referring to possible violations of laws and procedures be considered as formal complaints rather than ‘applications.’ The legal requirement for all election complaints to be considered by an election commission as a body and responded to should be abided by in order to guarantee timely and effective remedy. The role of working groups involved in the review of complaints should be clearly defined.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. In cases of large-scale elections, such as federal ones, it is technically impossible for the Commission to comprehensively review all the received complaints due to their great numbers.</p>

2011/20	The rules of procedure for working groups established to assist with the review of complaints could be reviewed to stipulate that complaints should be discussed in a timely manner and that recommendations adopted by these working groups should be discussed in substance by the respective election commissions.	
2012/20	The rules of procedure for working groups established to assist with the review of complaints could be reviewed to stipulate that complaints should be discussed in a timely manner and that recommendations adopted by these working groups should be discussed in substance by the respective election commissions.	
2011/19	Detailed procedural rules governing the adjudication of complaints at all levels could be developed. To enhance transparency, it is also recommended that all complaints and decisions be published on the CEC website within a specified timeframe.	<p>Partially implemented. The Central Election Commission of Russia publishes all of its decisions regarding complaints reviewed at its meetings. However, a substantial number of complaints are reviewed by working groups and never makes it to the meeting. This happens because the number of complaints is so great.</p> <p>It should also be noted separately that the majority of</p>
2012/19	To enhance transparency, it is also recommended that all complaints and decisions be published on the CEC website within a specified timeframe.	

2016/20	The CEC should consider posting on its website information on applications and complaints, as well as the relevant decisions and responses, in a timely manner.	websites of the election commissions of the Russian Federation constituents violate the law by failing to provide citizens with an option to submit electronic appeals.
2011/21	The CEC should avoid responding to complaints and appeals of any nature by letter, as such documents do not give complainants an opportunity to seek further legal redress.	Failed to implement.
2012/7	Amendments to the legal framework could be considered to include provisions for personal administrative and/or criminal responsibility for individuals who engage in multiple voting or ballot box stuffing.	<p>Implemented. Article 5.22 of the Administrative Offences Code of the Russian Federation envisions administrative liability for the unlawful issue and receipt of ballots both for election commission members and voters. The upgrading of penalties under this article took place in 2017.</p> <p>Article 142.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation envisions criminal liability for the unlawful issue and receipt of ballots both for election commission members and voters. Article 142.2 of the Criminal Code was introduced in 2017.</p>
2012/18	The legal framework for adding voters to voter lists shortly before election day could be further detailed and should be strictly enforced. There needs to be an efficient and functioning mechanism in place to ensure	Partially implemented. A lot of attention is now being paid to the training of PEC members, but problems persist. This is both the result of the commission members' misunderstanding of the statutory provisions of

	<p>that names of such voters are marked accordingly in voter lists in their precincts of origin to avoid the possibility of double voting.</p>	<p>electoral legislation, and the high degree of election commissions' dependence on executive bodies.</p>
<p>2016/7</p>	<p>To enhance trust in the electoral dispute resolution process, the authorities should thoroughly investigate all cases of election violations, and perpetrators, including election commission members who participate in or tolerate such malpractices, should be prosecuted in accordance with the law.</p>	<p>Partially implemented. Court statistics on convictions of election commission members, available from the reply of the Supreme Court Justice Department regarding the results of court considerations of criminal cases under part 1 of article 142 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation for the period 2006-2015 and the first half of 2016, show that: criminal cases under part 1 of article 142 of the Criminal Code (electoral document fraud and referendum document fraud) were heard against 83 members of election commissions; not a single person was given an actual prison sentence; 4 people were cleared of charges; and criminal cases against 18 people were dropped.</p> <p>In such manner, the courts underestimate and play down the high level of public danger presented by electoral fraud cases (part 1 of article 142 of the Criminal Code), refrain from giving commission members real prison sentences, and drop criminal charges for one out of five accused persons due to amnesty or active repentance.</p> <p>Behind many offences committed by PEC members are</p>

		<p>certain so-called “unidentified persons,” who implicated the commission members in the crime, or who organized criminal groups together with commission members. This ambiguous wording often hides the true masterminds of the fraud, and where the commission members are merely the executors.</p> <p>In the majority of cases, law enforcement agencies are indisposed to search for these “unidentified persons,” who are the real instigators and organizers of such violations of electoral legislation. Practice shows that commission members fail to disclose the names and positions of “unidentified persons” either in the process of the investigation or at the court hearing.</p>
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13. Campaign Finance

<p>2016/14</p>	<p>Consideration could be given to increasing the transparency of campaign finance and accountability, including requiring the reports to comprise of the detailed breakdown of incomes and expenses and preferably using standardized templates.</p>	<p>Failed to implement. In 2016-2017, there was a large-scale increase in the maximum size of electoral funds on the federal level and partially in regional and local elections — which was supposed to somehow increase the transparency of campaign financing. Nonetheless, the imbalance persists: in 2017, the maximum size of electoral fund in per voter capita equivalent amounted to 7.9 rubles in the Republic of Mordovia and 77.9 rubles in the Region of Tomsk, which is almost ten times as much. In local elections this imbalance is even more noticeable.</p>
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14. Police Actions

2003/16	The election legislation should be amended, or the CEC should issue instructions, to establish regulations for police presence in polling stations and their role around election day and, in particular, to define clearly the circumstances in which law enforcement agents are permitted to be present inside polling stations and other election commissions and their respective powers and duties.	<p>Partially implemented. Today, the principal problem lies with the police’s lack of understanding of electoral legislation: the rights and obligations of the election commission members, observers, candidates, and their authorized representatives. In addition to this, the police are often reluctant to respond to the observers’ and voters’ demands to receive statements pertaining to violations, and to draw up relevant protocols.</p>
2004/7	The election legislation should be amended, or the CEC should issue instructions after consultation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to establish greater clarity in the regulations for the presence of police officers in polling stations and their role during election day.	