



Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

Indicator 7.1: Electoral integrity

About this indicator

Parliament plays a key role in setting the legal framework for free and fair elections. Elections constitute the cornerstone of any democratic society and should provide voters, candidates and political parties with equal opportunities for participation, a level playing field and a safe environment.

For the credibility of the electoral process, it is necessary for electoral law to be stable and in line with international standards. Public authorities should remain neutral in the electoral process. Elections should be administered by an independent electoral management body (EMB) in a transparent, impartial, open and accountable manner.

This indicator comprises the following dimensions:

- Dimension 7.1.1: Voting and election rights
- Dimension 7.1.2: Candidacy, party and campaign rights and responsibilities
- Dimension 7.1.3: Role of public authorities in elections

The Indicators for Democratic Parliaments are a multi-partner initiative coordinated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in partnership with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Directorio Legislativo Foundation, Inter Pares / International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

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Dimension 7.1.1: Voting and election rights

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.1: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework that establish the basis for democratic elections.

The constitution establishes fundamental electoral principles such as the electoral system, universal suffrage, the frequency of elections and the use of secret ballots.

Electoral law addresses issues related to election management, such as the composition of the administration, boundary delimitation and other procedural matters, as well as fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and access to information during the electoral process. The stability of electoral law is important for the credibility of the electoral process.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “voting and election rights” is as follows:

The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish fundamental electoral principles. The legal framework concerning elections is clear, consistent and unambiguous and in line with international electoral standards.

Changes to electoral law are made in a timely manner and at least one year in advance of any elections.

Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establishing the electoral system, the frequency of elections and the use of secret ballots
- Provisions of the constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework guaranteeing universal and equal suffrage for all citizens above a certain age
- Details of adaptations for specific groups in society, such as accessible polling stations and electoral materials translated into minority languages
- Relevant provisions of electoral law
- Provisions of the legal framework establishing effective mechanisms and remedies for violations of voting rights

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

Assessment criterion 1: Constitution and/or legal framework

The constitution and/or other aspects of the legal framework establish fundamental electoral principles. These provisions are clear, consistent and unambiguous and are in line with international electoral standards.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Stability of electoral law

Changes to electoral law are made in a timely manner and at least one year in advance of any elections.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Practice

In practice, elections take place regularly. A significant proportion of citizens participate in these elections. Elections are competitive and citizens' fundamental rights are respected before, during and after election day.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Recommendations for change

Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.

Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report](#) (2002).
- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition](#) (2006).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections](#) (2002).
- International IDEA, [Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook](#) (2007).
- International IDEA, [Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook](#) (2010).
- International IDEA, [Electoral Management Design: Revised Edition](#) (2014).
- International IDEA, [International Obligations for Elections: Guidelines for Legal Frameworks](#) (2014).
- International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Stockholm University, [Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas](#) (2013).
- IPU, “[Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections](#)”, adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (1994).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [International Standards and Commitments on the Right to Democratic Elections: A Practical Guide to Democratic Elections: Best Practice](#) (2002).
- United Nations Centre for Human Rights, [Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections](#) (1994).

Dimension 7.1.2: Candidacy, party and campaign rights and responsibilities

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.1: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the right of citizens to stand for election and to campaign on an equal basis with other candidates. This includes the freedom to reach out to voters and express political views, freedom of movement within a country to campaign, and access to the media.

Countries should ensure that individuals and groups have the right to join or form political parties. Any exceptions should be non-discriminatory, consistent with international obligations, and clearly defined by law. Once a political party is officially registered, it should have an equal chance to participate in the electoral process and to gain access to the ballot.

The legal framework should provide for the right to appeal regarding alleged violations of political and electoral rights – taking place before, during and after elections – to a competent and independent EMB and/or court. Time limits for lodging appeals should be short, but long enough to make an appeal possible. The time limit deciding on appeals should be equally short in order to allow for the effective restoration of electoral rights.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “candidacy, party and campaign rights and responsibilities” is as follows:

Every eligible citizen has the right to stand for election on an equal basis with other candidates.

Individuals and groups have the right to join or form political parties in order to contest elections. Any exceptions to this right are non-discriminatory, consistent with international obligations, and clearly defined by law.

The legal framework ensures that candidates have the right and the opportunity to freely express their opinions to the electorate, and to campaign on an equitable basis with other candidates and political parties.

Every voter, candidate and political party has a right to appeal regarding alleged violations of political and electoral rights to a competent and independent body.

Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the legal framework establishing that every citizen has the right to stand for election as an individual candidate and/or as a member of a political party
- Provisions of electoral law setting out all criteria for participation in elections
- Legal provisions regulating political funding

- Legal provisions regulating the electoral dispute resolution system
- Reports and media coverage showing actual practice

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

Assessment criterion 1: Right to stand for election

The legal framework establishes that every eligible citizen has the right to stand for election, including as an individual candidate and/or as a member of a political party.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Right to join or form political parties

Individuals and groups have the right to join or form political parties in order to contest elections. Any exceptions to this right are non-discriminatory, consistent with international obligations, and clearly defined by law.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Right to appeal

The legal framework guarantees the right to appeal regarding alleged violations of political and electoral rights to a competent and independent body. The appeal procedure, as well as the powers and responsibilities of the bodies involved, are clearly regulated. The time limits for lodging and deciding on appeals are reasonably short.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Recommendations for change

Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.

Sources and further reading

- European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), [*Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report*](#) (2002).
- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [*Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition*](#) (2006).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [*International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for reviewing the legal framework of elections*](#) (2002).
- International IDEA, [*Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook*](#) (2010).
- International IDEA, [*International Obligations for Elections: Guidelines for Legal Frameworks*](#) (2014).
- International IDEA, [*Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*](#) (2014).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "[*Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections*](#)", adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (1994).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), [*International Standards and Commitments on the Right to Democratic Elections: A Practical Guide to Democratic Elections: Best Practice*](#) (2002).
- United Nations Centre for Human Rights, [*Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections*](#) (1994).

Dimension 7.1.3: Role of public authorities in elections

This dimension is part of:

- Indicator 7.1: Electoral integrity
- Target 7: Representative parliament

About this dimension

This dimension concerns the administration of elections by public authorities, which should be impartial, transparent and independent. Public authorities should observe their duty to remain neutral in the electoral process and guarantee the right of voters to freely form an opinion.

Elections should be administered by an independent electoral management body (EMB) in a transparent, impartial, open and accountable manner. The composition of the EMB, the procedures for the appointment and removal of EMB officials, their duties and responsibilities, and the guarantee that the election process is to be conducted in an independent and impartial manner, should be established in and protected by law.

Public authorities should ensure that citizens understand the electoral process and that information about elections and candidates is widely available.

See also *Dimension 7.2.1: Representation of political diversity*.

Aspiring goal

Based on a global comparative analysis, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the area of “role of public authorities in elections” is as follows:

Public authorities observe their duty to remain neutral in the electoral process and guarantee the right of voters to freely form an opinion.

An EMB is tasked with ensuring the proper conduct of the electoral process. The EMB operates according to clearly defined and publicly available rules, enjoys independence of decision-making and action. The EMB carries out its tasks impartially and transparently, and enjoys the trust and respect of the community.

Information about the electoral process is widely available, including as part of civic education programmes. Public authorities ensure that voters are aware of electoral procedures and have access to candidate lists and information. Information is available in the languages that are widely used in the country.

Assessment

This dimension is assessed against several criteria, each of which should be evaluated separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Rudimentary, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that best reflects the situation in your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which this assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension could include the following:

- Provisions of the legal framework on the maintenance of the electoral register
- Provisions of the legal framework mandating public authorities to provide civic education and information programmes about the electoral process
- Details of the EMB's legal authority and rules

- Documents produced by election observers
- Reports and media coverage showing actual practice

Where relevant, provide additional comments or examples that support the assessment.

Assessment criterion 1: Neutrality of public authorities

The legal framework guarantees the integrity and transparency of the entire electoral process, including sanctions for electoral fraud. The neutrality of public authorities in the electoral process is ensured by law and in practice.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 2: Electoral management body (EMB)

An EMB is tasked with ensuring the proper conduct of the electoral process. The EMB operates according to clearly defined and publicly available rules, and enjoys independence of decision-making and action. The EMB carries out its tasks impartially and transparently, and enjoys the trust and respect of the community.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Assessment criterion 3: Access to information about the electoral process

Information about the electoral process is widely available, including as part of civic education programmes. Public authorities ensure that voters are aware of electoral procedures and have access to candidate lists and information. Information is available in the languages that are widely used in the country.

Non-existent <input type="checkbox"/>	Rudimentary <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence for this assessment criterion:					

Recommendations for change

Use this space to note down recommendations and ideas for strengthening rules and practice in this area.

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- Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, [*Free and Fair Elections: New expanded edition*](#) (2006).
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), [*Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook*](#) (2010).
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