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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Congratulations on your appointment as a member of a Municipal Election Commission (MEC). You are an integral part of the election management team for the upcoming municipal elections in Kosovo. The members of the MEC are appointed by the Central Election Commission (CEC) and are supervised by them and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). No other person, group or organization can give instructions to the MECs about how to perform their duties.

On 28 October 2000 the voters will choose municipal assemblies in 30 municipalities for a two-year term. The municipal assemblies will be responsible for a variety of local services, including education, health, social services, housing, planning, etc. These responsibilities and the composition of the assemblies are outlined in the Regulation On Self-Government of Municipalities in Kosovo (UNMIK Regulation 2000/45).

This manual for Municipal Election Commission (MEC) members will introduce you to your new role and your responsibilities as election administrators. The manual, along with the first training session, will outline how the MEC members fit into the overall election administration for the municipal elections. A second training session will provide details on the polling and counting procedures.

An election commission is a professional body that works in a neutral, non-partisan manner. The members working in the Commission help to instill confidence in the electoral process by making their decisions and actions transparent to the voters. Information regarding the electoral process and your decisions must be easily accessible to the voters.

The members of the MECs work together with the OSCE and the CEC to serve the voters of Kosovo to ensure a free and fair election with equity for all participants. Your actions in this regard will assist in making the results acceptable to all voters.

## **II. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION: ROLES AND MANDATE**

### United Nations (UN)

The Security Council has given the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) the authority over the territory and people of Kosovo, including all legislative and executive powers and the administration of the judiciary. Among its key tasks, UNMIK is:

- performing basic civilian administration functions;
- facilitating a political process to determine Kosovo's future status;
- supporting the reconstruction of key infrastructure and humanitarian and disaster relief;
- maintaining civil law and order;
- promoting human rights; and
- assuring the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo.

UNMIK is unique in its complexity and comprehensiveness. Four international organizations and agencies are working together in one operation under the leadership of the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General, Dr. Bernard Kouchner. There are four sectors involved with implementing the civilian aspects of rehabilitating and reforming Kosovo. These sectors, also known as the “four pillars” are:

- Pillar 1 Humanitarian Assistance, under the UNHCR
- Pillar 2 Civil Administration, under the UN
- Pillar 3 Democratization and Institution Building, led by OSCE
- Pillar 4 Economic Reconstruction, managed by the EU

### Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is taking the lead role in matters relating to institution and democracy building, rule of law and human rights. OMIK is responsible for:

- election organization and supervision
- democratization and governance
- human resources capacity-building
- media affairs
- human rights monitoring

OMIK has a presence at five Regional Centers and at Field Offices, which will serve the municipalities of Kosovo. It has more than 700 international and 1500 local staff. Ambassador Daan Everts is head of the Mission and he has also been appointed Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Institution Building.

### Central Election Commission (CEC)

The Central Election Commission was established by an UNMIK Regulation (2000/21). The CEC is made up of nine Kosovars and three international members, appointed for a two-year term. It is the chief regulatory body overseeing the conduct and supervision of the election. The CEC’s functions are:

- to be responsible for the conduct of the elections in Kosovo; and
- to prepare and issue electoral rules in accordance with the approved electoral system and the administration of the electoral process.

The CEC appoints members of the Municipal Election Commissions, including the President and Secretary, for a term of two years.

### Municipal Election Commissions (MECs)

In each municipality an OSCE Election Officer is responsible for OMIK election activities in his or her area. The Election Officer provided logistical support in the selection of members of the MECs who were then appointed by the CEC for a two-year term. Each MEC consists of three to seven members depending on the population and geographical size of the municipality. The CEC also tried to ensure that minority groups are fairly represented on a Kosovo-wide basis.

### Polling Station Committees (PSCs)

The OSCE, in consultation with the MEC and the Election Officer in each municipality, appoints the Polling Station Committees. The PSC consists of a Chairperson and four members who will operate the polling station. Their duties are to conduct the polling at regular and absentee polling stations, and to conduct the counting of votes at regular polling stations. Further details of their duties will be included in the PSC training manual.

### **III. THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMISSIONS**

On 18 May 2000, the Central Election Commission (CEC) adopted Electoral Rule 2000/4, which created the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs). The Electoral Rule established criteria for the appointment of members, including requirements that:

- members must be registered voters for the municipal election in the municipality where he or she serves;
- members should have high professional standing with administrative or electoral experience and knowledge;
- minority groups are fairly represented; and
- following prohibitions apply:
  - a) seeking or holding public elected office
  - b) holding appointed public office
  - c) standing as a candidate for the elections
  - d) being in a leadership position of a citizens' initiative
  - e) being a member of a board of a political party or coalition
  - f) being found to have seriously violated an Electoral Rule, Regulation, Administrative Direction of Procedure concerning the electoral process.

The appointment process and removal procedures are included in the Electoral Rule (see information package).

Each Commission includes a President and Secretary as determined by the CEC. The term of office for the Commissioners is two years.

### The Principles

The members of the MEC assist in the administration of the elections, under the supervision and direction of the OSCE and the CEC. The MECs help to ensure the efficiency and legitimacy of the conduct of the elections in their jurisdiction.

Efficiency of the conduct of elections includes:

- meeting election time lines
- completing tasks and reporting as required
- ensuring that all information reported is accurate
- making decisions as needed
- working closely with the Election Officers

- dividing responsibility for tasks among Commission members (i.e. one responsible for the information role, one for the logistics role, etc.)
- the timely recommendation of names for appointments to the PSCs.

Legitimacy of the conduct of elections includes:

- implementing the Electoral Rules and Administrative Procedures
- transparency in the Commission's work
- making decisions by a majority of the total number of members
- refraining from decision-making where there is a conflict of interest
- ensuring equitable treatment of all voters.

### Functions and Tasks

The Commission's function to assist in election administration will vary according to the stage of election organization and planning. In a general way, these tasks will include:

- communicating with the Election Officer on a regular basis
- attending briefings and/or trainings held by the OSCE
- holding meetings on a regular schedule
- knowing the Electoral Rules and Administrative Procedures
- providing information to political entities in the municipality
- making contact with observer groups
- keeping files and records of your meetings and work
- recommending staff for Polling Station Committees
- assisting in the training and motivation of Polling Station Committees
- assisting with voter education initiatives
- handling and forwarding of materials as needed.

At each stage the Commission's assistance is coordinated with the OSCE Election Officer and, through him or her, the CEC. There may be other assistance requested through these channels during the election preparations.

### Responsibilities

Electoral Rule 2000/4 sets out specific responsibilities for the MECs in Section 4.30 as follows:

- a) The members of the MECs shall attend all meetings and training sessions presented and sponsored by the OSCE.  
 Commission members must make themselves available for these meetings and trainings so that they are informed about and involved in all election preparations. This may include meetings with security personnel, political participants, supervisors and observers.
- b) The MECs shall keep applicable records.  
 An important aspect of democratic elections is transparency at all stages of the election and its preparation. The records must be clear, up-to-date and

accessible to those specified in the Rule, i.e. the CEC and its authorized agents, international supervisors, observers and UNMIK staff. Records will include meeting agendas, minutes with decisions, reports, etc. The MEC will also have access to any records at the Field Office that are needed for carrying out their duties. It will be important for all Commission members to share information with each other.

- c) Under the supervision and direction of the OSCE and the CEC, the MECs shall assist in the administration of the elections including but not limited to:
1. notifying voters of information necessary for the administration of elections;  
The Commission will assist the OSCE in the dissemination of voter information including the polling hours, polling place locations and any information specific to the municipality concerned. Commission members must be available to assist in answering questions from voters, NGOs and other groups.
  2. neutrally and impartially providing political parties, citizens' initiatives, coalitions and independent candidates information about their rights and obligations;  
The Commission will assist the OSCE in providing the Electoral Rules and other pertinent information to the political organizations and to the candidates. The Commission members will also be available to answer any questions from these groups. It is important that the Commission be well informed and up-to-date by reading information from the CEC and the OSCE (i.e. news releases, administrative guidelines, etc.)
  3. assisting in the training and appointment of the Polling Station Committees;  
The Commission will respect the criteria for polling staff when recommending names for the Polling Station Committees. They will assist the OSCE trainers in organizing the training.
  4. assisting in the technical arrangements at the Polling Stations and any other technical preparations for the elections; and  
The Commission will assist as needed in making the local arrangements for polling stations, storage and transport of materials and movement of ballots.
  5. ensuring the proper conduct of polling, counting and compiling the results of the elections.  
The Commission will receive details of these processes at the second training session.

### Relations with the OSCE Field Office

A close working relationship between the Commission and Field Office is necessary for the successful organization of the election. The Election Officer at the Field Office is the OSCE

representative who will work with the Commission for the preparations and conduct of the election. However, security arrangements and logistics will involve other officers in the Field Office and close liaison will be helpful for all those involved in the election.

Information and directives from the CEC are sent to the Senior Election Officer at the Regional Centre, who in turn informs the Election Officers in the Field Offices. This is the MEC's link to essential information. A plan must be in place to ensure that you receive this information in a timely way. With the Election Officer, set up a communication link to be sure that the information is available to the Commission.

Commission members may be asked for comments and information from the media. The response and approach should also be coordinated with the Field Office. It is important that there is no contradiction of data from various sources. The President of the Commission will take the lead role in dealing with media inquiries. Maintaining good relations with the media is needed as the public depends on it for information.

The Mission Spokesperson speaks on behalf of the Head of Mission. However, the MEC may speak about its own area of responsibility in concrete, factual terms. Do not offer opinions on Mission policy, do not speculate (i.e. "what if" questions), and do not comment on rumors. In general, the principles advocated by the OSCE are to be friendly, to be open and to be factual. Always remember that the MEC is an impartial body and its integrity must be maintained.

### Basis of Electoral Management

Planning and managing the election involves co-ordination of all those involved throughout the various organizations and municipalities. To do this, an election calendar of critical dates is prepared so that the Director of Elections can keep events on schedule. This means that all events are time sensitive and require action by the date specified.

The Commission members must keep this in mind when they are asked to perform a particular task or to report specific information. Through the co-operation of the Commissions, the Field Offices, the Regional Centres and Headquarters staff, the election tasks will culminate in a successful Election Day.

### Recruitment of Polling Station Committees (PSCs)

The workers at the Polling Station Committee are the public faces of the Commission, the OSCE and the UN on Election Day. The PSC is responsible for the integrity, efficiency and security of the voting and counting processes at the polling stations. They must instill confidence in the voters that the process is free and fair. For this reason, the selection of the staff is very important.

The OSCE will appoint the members of the PSCs after consulting with the appropriate MEC. Each PSC will consist of four members and a chairperson. The Committee should also reflect to the extent possible the different communities represented in the particular municipality.

When recommending persons to be members of the Committees, the MEC must consider the following points:

- Polling staff must be impartial and neutral to carry out their duties.
- Members must have the competence to complete the training session and to follow the instructions given to them.
- Each member must be registered to vote in the elections.
- Designation as polling staff is prohibited if the person:
  - a) has been sanctioned for a serious violation of the Electoral Rules or applicable Regulations, Administrative Procedures or Directions;
  - b) holds a public appointed office or is seeking elective office
  - c) is in a leadership position of a political party, citizens' initiative or coalition
  - d) is not eligible to stand for office
  - e) is shown to lack the impartiality necessary to be a member of the Polling Station Committee.

The MEC will need to consider applications for PSC positions in an even-handed way. The resulting recommendations will be a significant part of assuring an election that will be accepted by everyone involved.

#### **IV. OVERVIEW OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

##### **THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

The municipal assemblies to be elected on 28 October 2000 shall be conducted by a proportional open list electoral system with multi-candidate choice. The choice of this electoral system aims to increase accountability through giving the voter a choice of candidates.

Voter shall have the option to vote either directly for a party, coalition, citizens' initiative or an independent candidate and, if wanted, for an individual candidate from a party, coalition or citizen's initiative list.

Allocation of seats among the candidates from the same list shall be carried out first among the candidates on the list who individually received valid votes, these seats being awarded in the order of the highest to the lowest number of votes. If there are still seats to be allocated to a list and the candidates remaining are those who did not receive any valid votes, then allocation of the seats among the remaining candidates shall be carried out according to their order on the list.

##### **THE BALLOT**

The ballot will be open list with appropriate instructions in up to three languages. It lists the names of all political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives and independent candidates



certified to stand for the elections in the municipality. The names are printed in the exact order in which they were drawn in the ballot lottery.

The ballot also contains a space where the voter may write in the number of one preferred candidate from the political entity that he/she has chosen. The ballot is accompanied by a list of the names of the candidates for each political entity contesting in the municipality. This list presents the candidates in the order submitted by their political entity. It will be posted inside the polling booth.

In order to determine the placement of the political entities and independent candidates on the ballot, the CEC and the OSCE have conducted two lotteries. The first one assigned a number starting from 11 to each political party, coalition, and citizens' initiative. The second lottery assigned a number higher than those used for the political parties, coalitions and citizens' initiatives to each independent candidate. The number for each certified political entity is unique and Kosovo-wide.

The Public Information Service will launch some informational material for the campaign and prior to the polling period. You will thus be in position to better answer the electorate's questions on the way of marking the ballot.

## **CERTIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, COALITIONS, CITIZENS' INITIATIVES AND INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES**

The purpose of the CEC Electoral Rule 2000/3 called "Certification of Political Parties, Coalitions, Independent Candidates, and Citizen's Initiative" is to certify the eligibility of political entities for ballot access in the municipal elections.

Political entities have applied for certification in each municipality in which they chose to contest the election. Each political party, coalition, citizen's initiative and independent candidate certified submitted a list of at least 100 signatures of eligible voters per municipality in which the political party or coalition is certified. All signatures on the list must be persons who are eligible to vote for that municipality.

Before applying for certification, a political party, coalition, citizens' initiative or independent candidate must first apply to be registered by submitting the required documents to the Civil Registration Unit of the United Nations Civil Administration.

The application for certification required:

- 1) At least 100 signatures of support from persons who are eligible to cast a ballot in that municipality. These signatures of support can be the same signatures that are collected for a political entity registration.
- 2) The statement of conduct signed by the President or authorised representative of a political entity that it and its candidates will abide by the Electoral Rules and Regulations, Administrative Directives and Procedures concerning the electoral process.

- 3) A certification fee in the amount of 100 DM for each municipality in which the political entity applies for certification. The fee shall be refunded if a least one mandate is won in the municipality or if the application is rejected.
- 4) The municipality in which the political entity intends to stand for office.
- 5) The name of the political party, coalition or citizens' initiative as it will appear on the ballot.

By the end of the certification period, the CEC has certified 19 political parties, 2 coalitions, 3 citizens' initiatives and 15 independent candidates.

The CEC has decided on these rules to ensure that elections in Kosovo are free, fair and democratic. It calls on all participants to abide with them to allow for the smooth functioning of election preparations.

## **REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES**

The Electoral Rule 2000/9 establishes that a certified political party, citizens' initiative or coalition must submit a candidates' list to the CEC for each municipality in which the political party, coalition or citizens' initiative intends to participate. The parties, coalitions and citizens' initiatives were allowed to submit as many candidates as there are municipal assembly seats plus ten percent (10%) more. A candidate has to be a registered voter in the municipality for which the candidate is standing for office and may only appear on one candidates' list. A candidate is prohibited from being a member of a Municipal Election Commission, the Kosovo Protection Corps, the Kosovo Police Force, or holding a public appointed office.

The Information Technology Division (IT) has checked all of the 5,500 candidates for municipal office against the Provisional Voters' List to verify their eligibility to run for office.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Central Election Commission passed Electoral Rule 2000/1, the "Code of Conduct for Candidates, Coalitions, Citizens' Initiatives, Political Parties, Independent Candidates and Their Supporters" for the purpose of promoting conditions to the conduct of a free, fair and informed election and a climate of democratic tolerance in which political activity can take place during the election period. It requires candidates and political entities (as well as their supporters) to abide by the Electoral Rules to guarantee a democratic electoral process. The Code describes the rights of political entities as well as the actions prohibited while campaigning and prior to polling.

Political parties, coalitions, candidates, citizens' initiatives and their supporters must notify the International Civilian Police (CIVPOL) at least four days prior to holding large public meetings/events such as campaign rallies so that they are not held at the same time and place and that public safety may be ensured. They have the right to publish and distribute posters and other material related to the election campaign.

Violation of the Code, as with violations of all other electoral rules, may be filed with the ECAC. The CEC adopted an amendment which makes it clear that intimidation and the use of violence by political parties, coalitions, candidates, citizens' initiatives and their supporters is strictly prohibited during the electoral process. Additionally, the ECAC may take decisions on violations of the Code at their own initiative, i.e. without a complaint having been filed.

### *MEC MEMBERS*

In your municipality, you will be able to follow the campaigning activities of the candidates and to be aware if they abide by the Code. You are requested to file a complaint to the ECAC whenever the political entities and candidates break an electoral rule including, but not limited to the following:

- Bribing or threatening voters as a means of gaining their support and to prevent them from voting for a political adversary
- Urging people to vote twice
- Carrying or displaying weapons at political meetings
- Using language which incites hatred
- Using the pictures or symbols of anyone indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague.

As an electoral administrative body, you must inform the political parties and candidates on their rights and interdictions as specified in the CEC Code of Conduct, encourage them to comply with the campaign rules and to create and maintain a climate of tolerance in the municipality.

### **CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURE AND SPENDING LIMITS**

The CEC Rule 2000/12 responds to disparities in the financing of certified political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives and independent candidates. The Rule requires that all certified political entities disclose their cash on hand and all income. In addition, any person who makes a payment in excess of 1 000 DM to a certified political entity must be identified. The first financial disclosure report will be due on 15 September and will cover the period since 1 April 2000. Another disclosure report will be due thirty days after the elections. These disclosure forms will be held by the OSCE and made available for public scrutiny.

The Rule also puts a campaign spending limit equal to 1 DM per registered voter in each municipality for which the certified political entity will participate in the election. This limit may be raised in exceptional circumstances. In order to make this limit enforceable, a detailed accounting of all campaign expenditures will be due thirty days after the final election results publication. As with the contribution disclosure report, this information will be held by the OSCE and made available for public scrutiny.

### *MEC MEMBERS*

You will not have access to the financial expenses situation of the political parties, but you will know how many voters registered in your municipality. If there are some excessive expenses worthy to notify to the ECAC you may fill out the complaint form. Be sure of your information before filing a complaint on electoral expenses.

## **PUBLIC SCRUTINY OF THE VOTERS' LIST, CONFIRMATION, ADDITIONS AND CHALLENGES PERIOD**

Electoral Rule 2000/10 allows a person who has registered to vote to verify his or her voter information and personal identification information on the Provisional Voters' List and request that any mistakes be corrected or request that he or she be added if his or her name has been accidentally left off the voters' list. In addition, this period allows a registered voter and OSCE/UNMIK officials to challenge a person who is on the voters' list on the ground that that person does not meet the civil and voter eligibility requirements.

The CEC also decided that a person who registered to vote absentee for the municipality where she or he resided on 1 January 1998 and permanently returns to that municipality may apply to change his or her polling station during the Confirmation, Additions and Challenges period. Similarly a person who registered to vote outside of Kosovo but who has returned to Kosovo may apply during the Confirmation, Additions and Challenges period to vote at a polling station inside of Kosovo. In both cases the deadline to apply to change where a person shall cast his or her ballot shall be the last day of the Confirmation, Additions and Challenge period.

## **MEDIA**

The overall aim of the Rule 2000/11 is to level the playing field between political entities by ensuring that smaller, less well-financed entities have equitable and balanced access to the media. Those measures will allow smaller less well-funded certified political entities to compete with larger organisations and to express their messages effectively.

In addition, the CEC agreed that all media shall strive to ensure that all certified political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives and independent candidates shall receive fair and equitable news coverage related to the electoral campaign during the electoral process.

The print media will be allowed to publish paid political advertisements but must provide equitable access and pricing policies. Any amount of free print space given to one certified political entity must be given to all certified political entities within the circulation area of the publication. Also organisations that distribute print media such as news stands are responsible for providing for sale a diverse selection of publications.

The Rule 2000/11 prohibits all media coverage of any political campaign activity from 24 hours prior to the opening of the polling stations until the official close of the polling stations. The rule further calls upon the media to strive to ensure that all certified political entities receive fair and equitable coverage and to provide the public with accurate and balanced information. The media may not publish public opinion research about the election from five days before the polls open until the polls close.

The rule also instructs all broadcast media to provide equitable broadcast time and equal prices to all certified political entities in the 45 days prior to Election Day.

The Temporary Media Commissioner (or his successor, the Interim Media Commission) has determined in an Administrative Direction how much broadcast time is to be allotted to the certified political entities.

### *MEC MEMBERS*

With media, the best way to stay above rumours and to be sure to comply with the OSCE guidelines for media relations in the field is to always be open, friendly and factual. You should closely co-ordinate with the Election Officer and not comment on situations or facts outside of your municipality. A good relationship with media insures a rapid and fluent flow of information to the voter. As a general rule, you should:

- Give information about the polling stations and the electoral process in the municipality
- Not speculate on whether this reflects well or poorly on the process across Kosovo
- Talk about the specifics of your municipality. Avoid comment on news from elsewhere on which you would not have direct and recent information.

### **VOTER INFORMATION**

Electoral Rule 2000/6 requires all public and private radio and television stations in Kosovo to air public service announcements, free of charge, on civil registration and the electoral process. These public service announcements should be broadcast during prime time many times a day. They are part of a campaign to educate people about their rights and obligations in the electoral process. This includes information on both registration and polling processes: what documents are required and where and when they should be presented.

Voter information will also include voter motivation to explain to the electorate why they should be voting for the municipal councils in October.

Democratic elections have to be free, fair and informed. If insufficient information is channelled to the voters or only to some voters, it could negatively impact their motivation to vote.

### *MEC MEMBERS*

The OSCE Public Information Division has established a network of local disseminators to ensure that the information on the electoral process reaches as many voters as possible. It has also been working with specific groups such as women, youth and minorities through outreach operations. PI activities are all aiming to provide voter information.

As MEC members, you should promptly take contact with people from PI Division in the field and evaluate with them in what way you could assist and participate in those efforts to have the electorate well-informed.

You shall always keep in mind that you have to treat all voters and candidates equal in regards with the access of information. They have the right to be informed and you have the

obligation to fill their needs, whether in handing them written information or in referring them to another source.

## **OBSERVERS**

Electoral observers play an important role in ensuring the impartiality and credibility of the electoral process and instilling confidence in the process. The Department of Election Operations will provide training to domestic observers.

As established in Electoral Rule 2000/8, two categories of election observers will be accredited: domestic observers and political party observers. All domestic non-governmental organisations that are registered under UNMIK Regulations may apply for accreditation to observe the registration and the electoral process. In addition, certified political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives and independent candidates may nominate representatives to observe the registration and the electoral process. The representatives and the observers must be accredited by the CEC. All nominated representatives shall be persons who are registered to vote, who shall not be seeking public elected office, and who shall not obstruct the registration or electoral process.

No observer may be a member of the Kosovo Police Force or a member of the Kosovo Protection Corps. Observers shall be impartial and politically neutral while observing electoral activities.

The Election Rule 2000/8 gives the observers access to all CEC written decisions. They shall be free to contact any person at any time during the entire period of the electoral process and shall have access to the polling stations, counting centres, registration centres, confirmation, addition and challenge centres and Municipal Election Commission meetings.

Besides those two categories of observers, International observers will also be accredited. They usually are parliamentarians or election officers in their country. It is already known that the Council of Europe will be sending more than a hundred of observers and it is expected that some other countries will also mandate high level delegations to observe the Municipal elections in Kosovo.

## ***MEC MEMBERS***

The credibility of an election is in large part based on the transparency of the process. Electoral observation is intended to challenge this aspect of the process. As member of the local electoral body, you should always welcome the observers, listen to their concerns and answer their questions in the most effective way possible. If you do not have answers to all the elements of the questions, you should refer them to the right office or person.

However, as with journalists, you should always be very cautious not to make a personal statement on the political situation or on candidates or parties. You are now part of an administrative body to conduct the municipal election in your municipality and as such you are expected to give accurate and neutral information on the process.

## **ELECTION COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS SUB-COMMISSION**

The ECAC was established by Electoral Rule 2000/2. The purpose of the ECAC is to adjudicate all complaints of violations of the electoral rules, as laid out in the UNMIK Regulations, Administrative Procedures, CEC Electoral Rules and Administrative Rules. The ECAC shall also consider appeals concerning the voters' lists.

The ECAC is responsible for investigating and adjudicating complaints concerning the electoral process such as allegations of violence against or intimidation of voters and/or political parties, coalitions, citizens' initiatives and independent candidates, use of language by political parties or candidates which could incite violence and voter fraud and the display or use of weapons or other violence at any political meetings or gatherings.

The ECAC shall be composed of one International Chief Commissioner and three Kosovar Deputy Commissioners. The ECAC's procedures and decision making processes are further described in the Electoral Rule and the approved Rules of Procedure.

Some penalties/sanctions can be imposed by the ECAC. The ECAC has the authority to order remedial corrective action; order fines not to exceed 10 000 DM, or, with the approval of the Head of Mission as Chair of the CEC to remove a candidate from a candidate's list or to exclude a political party, coalition, citizens' initiative or candidate from running in the elections.

The ECAC is empowered to sanction certified political entities for any violations of the Electoral Rule on the Media during the Electoral Campaign and to require media outlets to rectify inaccuracies promptly and prominently. The ECAC will also receive and instigate reports of any violations of the Electoral Rule 2000/12 on Campaign Finance Disclosure and Spending Limits.

### *HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT*

If a registered voter, political party, or candidate has a complaint concerning the electoral process, he or she may file a complaint with the ECAC. Official complaint forms are available at any OSCE Field Office or Regional Centre.

For a complaint to be considered adjudicated, it must:

- Allege a violation of CEC Electoral Rules or relevant UNMIK Regulations or Administrative Directions
- Describe the alleged violation/incident in as much detail as possible
- Be filed in writing within three days of the alleged violation or the complainant becoming aware of the violation, whichever is the latest
- Be signed by the complainant who will indicate that it is true to the best of his/her knowledge.
- Be submitted to the central office of the ECAC or to any International Mission Member at any OCSE Regional Centre or Field Office.

The final decisions of the ECAC are public. However the files remain fully confidential and all investigations are confidential.

## *MEC MEMBERS*

In his or her capacity of a registered voter, any MEC member has the right to file a complaint to the ECAC every time he/she becomes aware of a breach of the Electoral Rules and Regulations. In particular MEC members should be aware of Electoral Rule 2000/1, which lays out the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Coalitions, Candidates and their supporters.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

IT is not only modern technology. IT helps to ensure transparency of the process by building databases accessible to the voters and to the political entities. It promotes equity in reducing human errors on the electoral list and making it really comprehensive. And it serves as a backup to all election operations including procurements of ballots and material, delivery and transportation plans and schedules, staffing, etc.

You will be sent many computerised lists and information of all kinds. They will always be accompanied by the appropriate instructions, if needed, and will be a useful tool in the execution of your tasks.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

In the high tension climate of an electoral campaign, some conflicts may take unusual proportions and raise security concerns. Such conflicts can relate to the political actors or to your own working team or environment. In each Regional Centre, there is a Human Rights and Rule of Law Office which can send a monitor to assess the situation and try to find proper solutions to the problem before it degenerates into a bigger conflict. Do not hesitate to contact your nearest Field Office or go directly to the Regional Office.



## V. ACRONYMS

CEC	Central Election Commission
CIVPOL	UN Civilian Police
ECAC	Election Complaints and Appeals Sub-Commission
EO	Election Officer (at Field Offices)
EU	European Union
FO	Field Office
IT	Information Technology
MEC	Municipal Election Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OMIK	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PI	Public Information
PSC	Polling Station Committees
RC	Regional Centre
SEO	Senior Election Officer (at Regional Centres)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo