

PART I

General Characteristics

1. Introduction

The aim of the Central Election Commission Strategy on voters' education is to outline and define the approach of Central Election Commission in designing and drafting a project for the education, information and awareness of Albanian citizens during the first half of 2013, the time of Albanian parliamentary elections. This material clearly defines the priority actions, methods and instruments needed to materialize the respective programs. Drafting this strategy is a legal obligation provided in Article 21, point 9 of the Election Code of the Republic of Albania.

2. THE AIM OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy aims to establish the guidelines, forms and instruments the Central Election Commission should use for the execution of the legal obligation for voters' education. The specific aim of the strategy is to find contemporary forms of communication with the citizens eligible to vote, coordinate and implement different projects in order to implement as many qualitative programs for voters' education as possible. This would help increase the participation in election, increase the voting quality, avoid mistakes during the process due to lack of information on procedures or the negative phenomena noted during the election process.

In this context the aims are:

- Information of the voters on general elections of 23 June, 2013;
- Make the voters aware of their duties
- Increase the awareness of the Central Election Commission's role in organization of elections
- Increase the participation of voters in election, make them aware of the importance of the voting right, by presenting a broad information on procedures regarding the election process in general.
- To promote the Central Election Commission as an independent, professional, reliable body for the administration of neutral and fair election process.

3. SOCIAL GROUPS AFFECTED BY THE STRATEGY

The strategy of the Central Election Commission for voters' education is generally focused on all voters. The projects dedicated to all voters are also considered as "general projects". In addition to the general projects, this strategy is also focused on special target groups. In this context, specific projects are drafted for these specific groups of the society, such as:

- Minorities
- Young voters
- People with disabilities
- Albanian citizens residing abroad
- Women and households

The election information generally refers to the information on the date, time, place of election and voting procedures. The election education provides the voters with the context within which the general elections are held, as part of the general democratic process, rights and the obligations of voters, the essential principles of the right of vote.

4. THE STRATEGY STRUCTURE

The strategy structure contains four parts.

The first part treats its general features and contains a short description of its aim and structure.

The second part is focused on relations of the Central Election Commission with voters, aiming to highlight all the educational projects and actions taken by the Central Election Commission in order to be closer to the voters during 2013, which is an election year. This part is undoubtedly considered as a crucial part in the structure of the strategy because of the clear definition of the legal obligations in Electoral Code Article 21, point 9, which states: *The Central Election Commission ensures and organizes programs for voters education.* During this time, all the general and specific directions are materialized, the deadlines are defined as well as the concrete relations of the Central Elections Commission with voters, relations that above all aim interactivity. In this context, the strategy is focused in these essential directions:

1. The election education of the electors.
2. The election information and awareness of the citizens.

These two directions constitute the substance of the strategy that the Central Election Commission has to follow. Each direction of the strategy is applied independently through the respective projects.

The education has a broader scope and follows special and detailed projects; the information and awareness are two directions treated and applied together, because of they consist in transmitting the electoral message through the same forms, methods and projects, which conditions this fact. What the Central Election Commission prepares for the election education and awareness of citizens has to be considered as "a product" that shall be issued in the market, and to be bought from the consumer. If this product is perceived and it is acted according to this point of view, only then will we be sure that our strategy is welcomed and adapted correctly by the "voter consumer".

The third part of the strategy highlights the relations of the Central Election Commission with the organizations that work with different groups and other operators that are interested in application of education, informing and sensitizing election projects.

PART 2

5. Voters' relations

The relations with voters, according to the rich experience gained during the past years, are regulated through respective projects, defined clearly in the guidelines of the work of Central Election Commission, aimed at voters' education. This is done by combining the three essential elements: education, information and awareness. All the programs will act at the same time to yield the greatest effects during the pre-election period for 2013 general elections.

The information on voters needs to contains some standard points on which the voters need to be informed to facilitate the participation in elections.

The points are as follows:

- Who has the right to vote?
- Why you must vote?
- The vote is a right, but also a civil obligation
- How to vote
- The time of vote
- The procedures followed in the voting center.
- The necessary documentation presented to vote
- The integrity of the voting process that provides the secrecy of vote.

In addition to the interest groups that are also included in the general educative, informing and sensitizing campaign, other points need to be addressed that are considered as essential message:

- The vote is individual and therefore secret.

Special care shall be indicated in this context in order to be focused on the awareness against family voting and/or group voting. The messages that will be shown to the voters, will be positive emphasis on the importance of vote, as an individual right of each voter.

- Steps to be followed if you don't find your name in the list of voters.
- Where can you be receive information about the electoral process.

For this reason, the Central Election Commission has published its information on its the official webpage (**www.cec.org.al**). The voters information is concentrated in the deadline of 30 days before the date of election. In order to absorb this information as much as possible, the campaign is planned in such a way as to gradually move from a more general information to more specific and detailed data.