

## Annex 4. Glossary of electoral terms

**absentee voting** | a process by which registered electors who are unable to go in person to the polling site on polling day can still cast their ballot at another location.

**amendment of electoral law** | a change made to the electoral legislation by formal procedure.

**campaign (electoral)** | the political activity, including meetings, rallies, speeches, demonstrations, parades, other events, and the use of the media, intended to inform the electorate of the platform of a particular candidate or political party and to gather support.

**candidate** | person who seeks, or who is nominated, to be elected either as an official representative of a political party or as an independent.

**code of conduct** | a set of rules of conduct for certain activities in the electoral process. Applicable to political parties and candidates to regulate the conduct of meetings, demonstrations and political propaganda; to election observers to prescribe the conditions and limitations for the conduct of election observation; to the media; and to election administration.

**consolidation of votes** | a process of bringing together the election results from a number of polling stations.

**constituency** | the electoral unit of conversion of votes into seats, normally on a territorial basis.

**constituency** | a geographic unit of conversion of votes into seats.

**constituency** | geographical areas into which the national territory is divided for electoral purposes within which the voters are called on to elect their representatives. There can be a single national constituency model (in the national territory there is only one constituency) or a plurality constituency model (the national territory is divided into a number of constituencies). Regarding the seats in every constituency there can be single-member constituencies (every constituency has one seat) and multi-member constituencies (every constituency has several seats).

**constituency** | a body of voters in a specified area which elects a representative member to a legislative body.

**constitution** | set of basic rules by which the government of a state is organized, regulating the relationships between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

**counting centre** | a central or regional place where the votes from more than one polling station are counted.

**decree** | a legal text coming from the executive branch of government. In democratic legal systems, a decree is of inferior rank to a law passed by parliament. Sometimes, under exceptional circumstances, a decree may declare itself to be superior to other laws, including even the constitution.

**disclosure** | exposure of certain financial details in accordance with law by candidates, political parties and other persons and groups engaged in an election to the public, the EMB or other electoral authority.

**district** | see constituency above.

**domestic election observers** | groups of individuals, residents or citizens, who monitor and observe the electoral process in their own country (as opposed to international election observers).

**election law** | the legislative provisions governing all aspects of the electoral process.

**election observation** | purposeful gathering of information regarding an electoral process, and making informed judgements on the conduct of such a process on the basis of the information collected, by persons who are not authorized to intervene in the process.

**electoral dispute (recourse)** | any complaints, challenges, disputes, claims, recalls and contestations relating to the electoral process.

**electoral precinct** | the territorial unit served by a single polling station.

**EMB (electoral management body)** | an authority responsible for the management of elections, whose functions may include maintaining and updating the electoral roll; registering voters, parties and candidates; administering the electoral process; issuing the declaration of polls and settling electoral disputes.

**eligible voter** | an individual who satisfies all the legal requirements by voting in the election.

**franchise** | the right to vote.

**group voting** | process by which several persons enter a polling booth and vote together.

**international election observers** | groups who monitor and observe the electoral process in a foreign country (as opposed to domestic election observers).

**invalid votes** | ballots which, due to accidental or deliberate errors of marking on the part of voters, cannot be included in the count.

**legal framework** | the structure of electoral processes consisting of the constitution, electoral laws, complementary regulations, instructions, directives and codes of conduct.

**mobile voting** | a polling station operating at various designated locations on polling day.

**polling centre** | an official premise where voters from a particular electoral precinct cast their votes. A polling centre might contain a number of polling stations.

**proxy voting** | a procedure whereby voters unable to attend a polling station may appoint another person to vote for them.

**quota** | threshold for winning a seat in a proportional representation system.

**quota** | system whereby a number, proportion of seats or a number, proportion and/or placement of candidates are reserved in advance for specific groups such as women, minorities etc.

**registered political party** | political party which meets the requirements stipulated in the electoral law in order to participate in the election.

**riding** | see constituency.

**suffrage** | the right to vote.

**tabulation of votes** | the process of compiling the result of a count at an election.

**threshold** | minimum percentage or number of votes necessary for a candidate or a political party to win a seat and/or for other defined purposes;

**threshold** | minimum level of support which a party needs to gain representation or a refund of deposit; usually expressed as a percentage of the total vote.