



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER

ACEEEO 2021

**Education, Information and raising Awareness of voters for the Parliamentary Elections
in Albania on April 25, 2021 in COVID 19 situation.**

CEC Albania has developed a detailed program for the information, education and raising awareness among voters, which is a very ambitious program for the COVID-19 situation.

The education program includes all voter categories, young people, first-time voters, vulnerable groups, women etc., all translated into languages for minorities living in Albania, also and sign language for people with disability.

The program included and aimed at each target group, informing them on amendments to the Electoral Code. These include electronic identification, electronic voting, raising awareness of the public administration for non-involvement in electoral campaigns during office working hours.

In cooperation with the Council of Europe and within the framework of implementing the fourth part of the Education Program, the aim is to increase the participation of young people, mainly first-time voters, women, and vulnerable groups.

Together with the NGO “Civic Resistance”, a number of meetings were organized with young people, with the purpose of educating and raising awareness.

The youth participation in the electoral process is an ongoing challenge of the Central Election Commission.

Finding out the ways and instruments for dissemination of electoral information to young people has always been a priority of the CEC. Our international and local partners who have supported us in our projects focused on youth, have played a key role in our way forward to educating, informing and raising awareness of young people.

- On the occasion of Global Election Day, on 04 February 2021, the Central Election Commission announced a competition with involvement of young people for the best video, slogan and graphics for the parliamentary elections, to be organized in Albania on April 25, 2021.

There was an increased interest of the young people in the competition organized by CEC, where the best works were selected. An award ceremony was held on Global Election Day. The slogan used for the April 25 elections in Albania was selected by the young people "CHOOSE, VOTE, DECIDE"

They were invited to the premises of the Central Election Commission where the awards were handed over by the OSCE Ambassador and the CEC Commissioner. On the occasion of Global Election Day, it was also held a conversation with the youth about the elections and the electoral process. The young people asked a lot of questions and showed a lot of interest in the elections.

On this special day the doors were also opened for groups of students who wanted to get acquainted with the work and working premises of the CEC, where information and awareness meetings were held.

- For the first time with the legal amendments of the Electoral Code in Albania, was implemented the technology in the elections i.e. the electronic identification of the voters and the pilot project for the electronic voting in only one election administration zone in the capital city, Tirana.

Young people were invited to apply on CEC official website as operators at polling stations on the use of electronic identification equipment as they are more familiar to technology. Also in the polling stations where electronic voting took place, young people were hired to be operators in these polling stations.

There was an increased number of participation of young people countrywide who showed a lot of interest.

The young students joined the polling stations as operators on the E-day.



- In some secondary education schools, a mocking voting process, such as education information, and awareness campaign, were organized with young people, mainly first-time voters ...

The discussion of topics related to the importance of voting participation, free, secret and uninfluenced voting, criminal offenses that violate free voting and the democratic system of elections and the respective punishment were well received by the graduates.

The mocking voting process, where young people were engaged as commissioners, observers, and voters clarified the actions performed by voters at the polling station, the duties and responsibilities of commissioners, and the rights and duties of observers.

The young people appreciated the importance of addressing the topics related to the elections, so that as future professionals to be well informed and aware of exercising of their civic role.

In the youth education session, the CEC expressed its support and commitment to sensitize young people in decision-making, one of which is this election process. The CEC responded to the questions raised by participants on the youth participation

- Due to the pandemic situation and the inability to organize frequent face-to-face meetings with young people, special attention has been paid to the dissemination of information on digital platforms being most widely used tool. (very useful). In cooperation with student organizations some videos, spots on raising awareness have been prepared and distributed on social networks, on TV dedicated to them. The messages addressed to the young people went towards their participation in the elections as an institutional obligation that serves the present and the future.
- Meetings with young people were also organized online, who gave their suggestions.
Free-flowing discussion with the young people were organized to increase their participation in election. They were informed on the way of marking the ballot paper.



The participation of young people had an increasing trend this year

Other:

1. In cooperation with the Council of Europe on March 8, 2021 a spot was produced in order to raise awareness of women participating in elections, with messages from women ambassadors of several countries with diplomatic missions in Albania.
2. Together with the NGO “Civic Resistance”, a number of meetings were organized with young people, with the purpose of educating and raising awareness.
3. The Central Election Commission has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Ombudsman’s commissioner and civil society, against hate speech.
4. Through a statement in the media, the State Election Commissioner has demanded that political parties must show calmness and cautiousness in the electoral process and give clear messages to voters and especially, messages against violence and hatred.
5. The State Election Commissioner organizes permanent online meetings with civil society representative on possible issues and solutions.
6. In the context of public information and transparency, the Commissioner communicates with the press and responds to them.
7. Due to the Covid-19 situation, all the produced materials, the spots and posters which will be put on voting centers, will be in compliance with safety protocols according to normative acts which have been approved by the Ministry of Health. For this purpose, together with the OSCE Presence in Albania, we will produce posters for Voting Centers (VCs) and Ballot Counting Centers (BCCs), and there will be precautionary measures in each voting center.

Thank you!

=====Erton Sinani=====

