

## OCV ACTIVITIES

### EXTERNAL AND MEDIA RELATIONS:

Development, implementation and coordination of external relations to adequately inform as many external audiences as possible about the elections process and to establish a positive image of the Programme. Negotiations with host governments, accreditation of Political Entity Agents and Observer Groups, and relations with both national and international media fall within the External and Media Relations, as well as the development and maintenance of a dedicated website. A media monitoring structure can be set up to monitor the global and national news coverage.

### VOTER EDUCATION:

Voter education/ public information campaigns include print, audio and visual material informing the target population about the electoral process and the relevant rules and regulations. The voter education campaign is usually launched well in advance of the registration start date. Radio programs, commercials and television spots, posters, leaflets and newspaper articles may also be produced. A Voter Information Centre provides an opportunity for potential voters worldwide to have their questions answered personally. Whenever possible, individual contacts with the target population are organized through group meetings and other direct outreach activities.

### VOTER REGISTRATION:

This includes the organizational set up and conduct of the electoral registration of all eligible individuals, based on applicable rules, regulations and international standards. The voter registration can be conducted either as an in person operation or eligible individuals can be registered by mail.

### DATA ENTRY:

Information collected during the registration period is entered into a database and forms the Provisional Voters List that is then used for all necessary data corrections, validations and updates. Throughout the election period, the strictest data protection measures are put in place to ensure the data confidentiality and security, as well as the usage of the collected data for election purposes only.

### DISPLAY AND CHALLENGE:

Registration data collected during the registration period is publicly displayed so that registered individuals and other authorized entities can view it and, if needed, challenge somebody's registration. The display of the Provisional Voters List enables all necessary updates needed for the production of an accurate Final Voters List. The Final Voters List is then used for polling.

### POLLING:

Organizational set up and conduct of in person and/or by mail polling based on applicable rules, regulations and international standards.

### COUNTING:

Organizational set up and conduct of centralized or decentralized counting activities. Counting can be organized either on a host country level, or in a central counting location for all countries involved in elections. By mail ballots are verified and usually counted separately from those collected in person. Once counting is finalized, the ballots are transported to a designated location, where they are stored.

All OCV activities are undertaken in coordination with the Election Supporting Unit (ESU) at IOM HQ in Geneva.

## OCV STRUCTURE

Since 1996, IOM has gained considerable institutional experience in organizing and managing external registration and voting on behalf of concerned governments and in support for the inclusion of refugee and displaced populations in their countries' electoral processes.

- An **election Headquarters**, with the overall responsibility for project implementation & for liaison with various interested parties.
- Utilize **relevant IOM offices worldwide** in coordinating activities and facilitating negotiations with host countries, and/or disseminating election related information.
- **Regional and/or country offices** to coordinate and oversee activities in a certain geographic area. The regional and/or country office coordinates all voter education and information activities and establishes logistic networks to facilitate the operations and organize the material transfer.
- **Outreach Centers** may also be set up to coordinate voter education, media and external relations activities in certain areas or countries.
- A **Data Processing Center**, where all electoral data collected during the registration and display period, either in person or by mail, is entered into a database, thus creating the Voters List.
- For **by mail registration** forms, the following activities have to be undertaken prior to the entry into the database: evaluation of incoming registration forms & supporting documents, review of incomplete applications. Once the data is entered into the database, original registration forms are archived for future reference.
- **In person registration** and polling centers placed in carefully selected locations.



**CHINA:** Voters began showing up at the polling station at 7:30 a.m. although the balloting centre was not due to open until 9:00 a.m. By the time the polls closed 94 percent of the registered voters had voted. Macau Special Administrative Region. © IOM 1999. MMO0003

## IOM - OUT OF COUNTRY VOTING

# IOM SUPPORT TO OUT OF COUNTRY VOTING

**IOM** supports the inclusion of migrant communities, including refugee and displaced populations into democratic electoral processes in their countries or territories of origin.

In cases where certain concentrations of a population (including minorities) are residing beyond the territorial confines of the area embarking in electoral exercises, the establishment of structures for external voting is essential to ensure their participation in the democratic process taking place in their countries of origin.

**Out-of-country voting** allows those residing abroad to become active participants in the electoral process and thus to be represented in the civil and political life at home, even if they are unable or unwilling to return.

This mechanism encourages external population groups to maintain links with their home communities and enables them to participate in the creation of an environment to which they may return safely and resume productive socio-economic lives.

When implemented correctly, **out-of-country voting** can empower those otherwise disenfranchised to elect preferred local and national representatives.



**PAKISTAN:** A young girl at a shop in Hazara town. The store displays one of IOM's election posters on the door. The task of conducting the largest ever out-of-country registration and voting programme was entrusted to the IOM, who implemented it on behalf of the Afghan Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). © IOM 1999 - MPK0010 Afghans are fingerprinted during the registration process in Pakistan's North West Frontier Provinces. © IOM 2004 - MPK0003

**Out-of-Kosovo Voter Registration**  
30 July - 8 September

For more information, please contact:

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**www.okvoting.org**

**KOSOVO:** In October 1999, IOM was tasked to organize the identification and registration of the Kosovars Diaspora in 35 countries, 32 countries by mail-in applications and 3 with in-person registrations. © 1999 IOM-Kosovo

Increasingly, elections are viewed as a crucial peace-building tool in post-conflict states. In cases where conflicts have provoked mass emigration and the disruption of an area's political and administrative system, the eligible voting electorate residing outside set boundaries needs to be incorporated into special external structures within the electoral system.

Since 1996, IOM has assisted hundreds of thousands of eligible nationals in 74 different countries to exercise their right to vote, in a combination of mail and in-person operations in the largest external voting programs to date.

The IOM-OCV structures and activities also serve those governments who require additional support to their consular offices in order to allow their Diaspora to participate in the election process.

With offices in over 100 countries worldwide familiar with migration issues, IOM is uniquely qualified to reach migrant populations in large scale operations, implementing transparent methods to extend both mail and in-person electoral options.

# IOM SUPPORT TO OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (1996-1999)	EAST TIMOR (1999)	Kosovo (2000-2001)	AFGHANISTAN (2004)	IRAQ (2005)	ECUADOR (2006-2007)
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In the framework of the **Dayton Peace Agreement** for Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), elections were viewed as a basic element in establishing peace, stability, and democratic institutions in the country. In 1996, the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** was mandated to organize and carry out these elections. In turn, a **Provisional Elections Commission (PEC)** was established and the elections date was fixed for September 14th. PEC members, however, had different interpretations of the Dayton Agreement that resulted in much delay on important decisions.

OSCE made an exceptional move to support the formation of an emergency **Refugee Elections Steering Group (RESG)**. The RESG helped to accelerate the process and complete the preparations for the registration and balloting of eligible BiH citizens living outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. IOM was the operational arm of the RESG. In June 1996, OSCE confirmed RESG's mandate and sanctioned the start up of the Program. To support the RESG, the **OSCE Secretary General and IOM signed a memorandum of understanding** defining the modalities of implementing external voting.

IOM established presence (RESG offices) in 17 host countries to facilitate the implementation of the RESG mandate. Five additional countries were coordinated but with no presence. The coordinating RESG office in Vienna ensured consistency of the policy and procedural compatibility with PEC and OSCE directives. In addition to the registration and balloting for Bosnians abroad, RESG also facilitated the deployment of election supervisors, OSCE monitors and observers, as well as BiH political party observers during the Program implementation. The operation was completed and closed on 30 September 1996, as foreseen in the original OSCE plan. Of the 630,257 registered voters outside BiH, 394,174 or 62.5% cast their ballot. The elections in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 have contributed significantly to the transition process in the country towards democracy within the European mainstream.

On May 5th 1999, a Tripartite Agreement was signed between Indonesia, Portugal, and the United Nations on the future of East Timor. It was agreed that the United Nations would administer a popular consultation over the question of East Timor through which the people of East Timor could choose whether to accept autonomy within Indonesia or reject autonomy in favor of independence.

Under the terms of the Agreement, eligible East Timorese residing outside of East Timor were also provided with the opportunity to participate in the consultation by registering and voting in person in Australia, Indonesia, Portugal, Mozambique, Macau, or the US.

Due to IOM-OCV's past experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina, UN requested IOM to organize the external voting process in all the above areas except Australia, where balloting was conducted through the **Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)**.

The UN supervised the overall consultation carried out in East Timor itself, and was responsible for facilitating the External Voting process carried out by its implementing partners. IOM's main objective was to conduct the OCV exercise in a free, transparent and neutral manner. The project contributed directly providing East Timorese living outside East Timor with the opportunity to take part in these elections.

The IOM-OCV exercise benefited from actively participating in coordinated efforts with **EAD (United Nations Electoral Assistance Division)**, **UNAMET Electoral (United Nations Mission in East Timor)** and the AEC.

Registration took place for 20 continuous days. All voters were required to cast their ballots in person, in the same location where they had registered.

Indonesia and Portugal were entitled to send an equal number of representatives to observe all operational phases of the consultation process for the External Vote. Through this process eligible voters outside of East Timor had the opportunity to help determine the future of their territory.

The **Kosovo out of Area Registration and Voting Program** created the structures to involve eligible Kosovars temporarily residing outside of Kosovo to register and vote in the Municipal Elections in 2000. The Program contributed to international efforts of normalizing the socio-political situation in Kosovo. Under the auspices of the **UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)** and **OSCE**, IOM implemented the operational and technical aspects of the project on behalf of the Joint Task Force, registering some 300,000 eligible Kosovars.

The Program was coordinated from Vienna and implemented with a combination of in-person and mail-in components. **In person operations** took place in Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia, whereas Kosovars residing in other countries registered and voted **by mail**. Likewise, in 2001, IOM organized the **in-person registration and voting** for the Kosovo Assembly Elections in Serbia proper and in Montenegro and all other countries were included into the **by mail program**.

Based at the IOM Elections Co-ordination Office in Vienna, the **IOM-OKV (Out of Kosovo Voting Programme)** comprised: **in-Person registration & voting**, implemented in Serbia (proper) and Montenegro, in conjunction with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and the Montenegrin Commissariat for Displaced Persons; **facilitated registration & voting**, conducted in Albania and Macedonia; and **mail-in registration & voting**, run for potential voters in all other countries.

A **multimedia information campaign** supported all components of the OKV, with emphasis on reaching all ethnicities, particularly minorities. **Voter Information Offices (VIO's)** were established alongside IOM Missions in Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, Rome and Washington, DC, acting as multipliers for information campaign media outreach and liaison with governmental and organizational counterparts, refugee groups and associations. Telephone help-lines offered its services in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish languages. Newspapers, TV, print media, radio and IOM staff outreach covered 37 countries.

On 21 July 2004, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) entered into agreement on the conduct of the **Out of Country 2004 Afghan Presidential elections in Pakistan and Iran**. The task of conducting this exercise was entrusted to IOM who implemented the Program on behalf of the **Afghan Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) and UNAMA**.

Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of Afghanistan, UNAMA and the Governments of Iran and Pakistan respectively. These Memoranda assured that the two host governments would provide widespread support for the **Out of Country Registration and Voting Programme (OCRV)** including providing and securing registration and polling locations as well as escorts for the material transport.

In Pakistan, IOM conducted voter registration in advance to the election from 1 to 3 October 2004. No voter registration was undertaken in Iran as the government registration of Afghan refugees had already been organized in 2003.

IOM established its headquarters in Islamabad and seven field offices in Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Abbottabad, Quetta Urban, Quetta Camp and Dalbandin. In Iran, field offices were set up in Tehran, Qom, Esfahan, Shiraz, Kerman, Zahedan and Mashhad. IOM employed 11,706 election staff in Pakistan and 8,252 in Iran.

This IOM operation was the largest Out of Country Registration and Voting program ever held.

IOM-OCVR successfully registered 737,976 Afghan voters in Pakistan alone. A total of 846,776 Afghans voted in both Iran and Pakistan in Afghanistan's first democratic elections.

In only 79 days, a massive and complex operation, including contracting and training of almost 20,000 staff and operating thousands of registration and polling stations, was successfully conducted in spite of security constraints.

On 11 November 2004, the **Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI)** and IOM signed an agreement to conduct of an OCV Programme enabling the Iraqi Diaspora to participate in the **2005 Transitional National Assembly Election**, Iraq's first democratic vote in recent history.

The Iraq OCV Programme secured agreements with the governments of 14 countries selected by the IECI to host the voting due to the size of Iraqi populations. Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Jordan, Netherlands, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and USA participated in the recruiting, training and deploying over 7,000 Registration and Polling Staff, of which over 90% were Iraqi.

On 17 January, 74 Registration Centres opened in 36 different cities, (15 more than originally proposed to the IECI) across the 14 target countries. On 25 January, IOM conducted the Voter Registration process, registering 279,785 Iraqis. Polling was conducted between 28 and 30 January and when the polls closed on 30 January, a total of 265,148 Iraqis, representing 94.8% of the total registered voters, had cast their ballots. Registration and polling processes were conducted worldwide without serious security incidents or procedural issues.

Following the close of polls the count process commenced without any delays and was conducted in all designated Count Locations. A **Results Compilation Room** was set up in Amman to compile the provisional results from all Polling Stations and submit them to the **IECI National Tally Center** in Baghdad for audit and certification.

In total, representatives of 59 international observer groups and embassies, 120 domestic observer groups, 99 Political Entities and 1,313 media outlets were accredited to observe the Registration, Polling and Count processes across the 14 countries. In addition, IECI Monitoring Teams were deployed to all 14 countries where OCV operations were implemented.

On 10 May 2006, the **Ecuadorian Permanent Mission at the UN** requested IOM support to the Ecuadorian Consulates with the highest number of migrants, for the supervision of the **Presidential Elections** that would take place on October 15 and, if necessary, for the second round on November 26, that same year.

The development of the process was rather particular as it was the first time that Ecuadorians living abroad could actually participate in elections. According to the **Electoral Supreme Tribunal (TSE in Spanish)**, 143,352 Ecuadorians registered at the Consulates in 42 countries (47.29% male and 52.71% female).

The **IOM Observation Mission** in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the TSE focused all efforts on those cities with the highest number of Ecuadorians registered abroad, like Madrid, Barcelona and Murcia in Spain; New York and New Jersey in the USA; or Milan, Genova and Rome in Italy.

During the first round, participation reached 141,407 in 42 countries, equivalent more or less to the 73.93% of the total registered, while 66.33% participated in the 2nd round.

Throughout 2007, on the basis of IOM previous experience in 2006 the United Nations Permanent Mission and other international organizations headquartered in Geneva requested again the cooperation of IOM to perform an observation mission in the occasion of the **Ecuador Constituent Assembly elections**, scheduled on the 30th September 2007.

Elections took place normally at all venues where observers were posted, with no violent acts or irregularities.

According to data provided by TSE, 152,180 citizens living in Europe, the United States/Canada and other countries in Latin America were registered—equivalent to 1.62% of the total chart of electors. Of those registered, 47% corresponds to males 64% to females, distributed into 667 different vote-receptor boards.



1. In-country voting in Ecuador is compulsory for all citizens