FINAL REPORT OF THE "AZAT QVE" OBSERVATION MISSION

ON THE FINDINGS OF THE OBSERVATION OF THE STEPANAVAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
Stepanavan Community, Lori Province
Election day: 25 October 2026

2 November 2026

Unofficial translation. The original version of the report is available in Armenian.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAO	Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Armenia
CC	Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CPC	Corruption Prevention Commission
EC	Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia
LSG	local self-government bodies
PEC	Precinct Electoral Commission
TEC	Territorial Electoral Commission

CHAPTER

01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 25 October 2026, elections to the community council were held in Stepanavan community under the proportional electoral system. Four parties took part in the elections: Businessman (Gortsarar), Republic (Hanrapetutyun), Civil Contract (Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir) and Strong Armenia (Uzhegh Hayastan) (in the order of their ballot numbers). A total of 29 electoral precincts were formed in the community, and 19,353 voters were included in the voter lists (including the supplementary lists).

The "Azat Qve" ("Free Vote") observation mission observed the pre-election period and election day. During the pre-election period, the mission examined the accessibility of electoral precincts, the declarations of property and income of candidates and parties, the leadership composition of Precinct Electoral Commissions and the risks related to the use of administrative resources. On election day, 26 observers of the mission observed the voting and the vote count in all 29 electoral precincts of the community.

Overall assessment. The mission did not record any confirmed cases of voting on behalf of another person, multiple voting, ballot box stuffing or falsification of results (a report concerning another person's signature in the voter list in precinct 25/16 requires further examination; see section 5.5). At the same time, the following were recorded: widespread printing defects in the self-adhesive stamps; numerous cases related to the secrecy of the vote; the presence of an official of a local self-government body and interference in the work of the commission; deviations from the procedure for the safekeeping of electoral documents; attempts by proxies to interfere in the work of the commission; and cases of pressure on observers. On election day and the day preceding it, materials of a campaigning nature were disseminated on candidates' social media pages. Most of the procedural problems recorded indicate that members of Precinct Electoral Commissions need additional practical training. The inaccessibility of precincts and the incomplete filling-in of declarations recorded during the pre-election period are systemic in nature.

Key findings:

- **Interference in the work of the commission.** In precinct 25/24 (Gyulagarak), the head of Gyulagarak community, Khachik Vardanyan, repeatedly entered the polling station and the voting room between 09:30 and 17:20, mostly without a badge, and attempted to interfere in the work of the commission. In a number of precincts, proxies attempted to interfere in the electoral process (in precinct 25/2, a proxy counted the voting coupons during voting hours), more proxies of the same party than permitted were present in the precinct, and cases of the presence of candidates were recorded.
- **Secrecy of the vote.** Numerous cases of open voting were recorded, mainly due to voters' low awareness, the insufficient preparedness of commission members and problems with the stamps. In precinct 25/4, a voter took photographs or video inside the voting booth.
- **Self-adhesive stamps.** The printing defects in the stamps were widespread: they were recorded in 11 precincts; the printed data were misaligned relative to the edges of the stamp. In a number of precincts, the stamps were affixed with glue; in precinct 25/6, two stamps were affixed to one ballot; and in precinct 25/24, a voting envelope to which a stamp had been affixed was canceled twice.
- **Safekeeping of electoral documents.** In precincts 25/24 and 25/2, the fireproof safe intended for storing the stamps and the seal was left open (in 25/24, from 07:32 to 08:02 according to the logbook entry).
- **Order.** In a number of precincts, crowding was recorded in the voting room and in the area adjacent to the polling stations. In some cases, police officers on duty at polling stations did

not respond properly to the situation, including after being urged to do so by the commission chairperson.

- **Observers.** Cases of pressure on observers were recorded, exerted mainly by proxies and commission members.
- **Vote count.** In precinct 25/12, the voting envelopes were removed from the ballot box not by the commission chairperson, as prescribed by the Code, but by the secretary. The problem was rectified after the mission informed the TEC. No cases of falsification of results were recorded.
- **Live streaming.** In 4 precincts, live streaming was temporarily interrupted and was restored after the mission reported it. Precincts 25/17–25/20 were not included in the live streaming list.
- **Campaigning on the campaign silence day and election day.** Numerous cases were recorded in which materials of a campaigning nature were disseminated on candidates' Facebook pages on election day and the day preceding it.
- **Campaign.** The political forces participating in the elections built their communication around the first-ranked candidates on their lists as "candidates for head of community," which does not reflect the proportional nature of the council elections and may cause confusion among voters.
- **Administrative resources.** On information platforms related to the community and its settlements, 11 cases of dissemination of pre-election materials of the Businessman and Civil Contract parties and their candidates were recorded, 7 of them before the official start of campaigning. Among the candidates, 29 of the 50 nominated by the Civil Contract party and 15 of the 35 nominated by the Businessman party work in community or state institutions.
- **Accessibility.** The entrances of 19 of the 29 precincts are inaccessible to voters with mobility impairments; in 11 precincts, the width of the entrance door does not meet the 90 cm requirement set by the CEC; and there is no accessible toilet in any precinct.
- **Declarations.** Of the declarations of 155 candidates, 14 are completely blank; 42 candidates reported zero income; and in 16 declarations, errors, inconsistencies or amounts grossly disproportionate to income were recorded. Only one declaration was completed electronically.
- **Precinct Electoral Commissions.** In the list published by the CEC, "Civil Contract" is indicated next to 18 of the 29 PEC chairpersons and 18 of the 29 secretaries, and in 7 precincts both positions are assigned to the same force.
- **Results.** According to the final data of TEC No. 25, 13,299 voters (68.72%) took part in the voting. The Businessman party received the most votes (5,505 votes). The 21 council mandates were distributed among the Businessman (9), Civil Contract (8) and Strong Armenia (4) parties; the Republic party did not pass the 4 percent threshold. The TEC stated that no violations of the Electoral Code that affected the election results had occurred.

CHAPTER

02

ABOUT THE MISSION AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. About the Mission

The “Azat Qve” observation initiative was established in 2026 by the “We Youth” NGO of Lori Region and the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO. The long-term observation of the Stepanavan community elections, namely the studies of the pre-election period (declarations of candidates and parties, accessibility of electoral precincts, leadership composition of Precinct Electoral Commissions, risks related to the use of administrative resources), was carried out by the “We Youth” NGO of Lori Region and the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO. The short-term observation on election day was carried out with the financial support of Pro International and in cooperation with SD Platform Armenia. The initiative maintains political impartiality and does not support any party or candidate participating in the elections. The “We Youth” NGO of Lori Region and the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO bear responsibility for the content of this report, and it does not necessarily reflect the views of Pro International and SD Platform Armenia.

The mission was conducted within the framework of the rights granted to observer organizations and observers by Articles 30 and 32 of the EC, guided by the international principles of non-

partisan observation by citizen organizations[1]: impartiality, accuracy, transparency of methodology, and the separation of fact from assessment.

During the pre-election period, the mission published three thematic materials: a statement on cases of possible use of administrative resources in Stepanavan community (9 October)[2], a statement on the accessibility of electoral precincts (22 October)[3], and a report on the declarations of property and income of candidates and parties (23 October)[4]. The materials are available in full on the website of the "We Youth" NGO of Lori Region (weyouth.am). On election day, the mission regularly presented the recorded cases on social media, and a hotline (055 30 39 42) was in operation. On 26 October 2026, a press conference on the observation results was held in Vanadzor. This report summarizes the work of the mission.

2.2. Methodology

Pre-election period (long-term observation). The mission examined data published by the CEC, namely the number of voters, the measurements of the accessibility of polling stations, and the appointments of PEC chairpersons and secretaries[5], as well as the declarations of property and income of candidates and parties (487 pages in total). The declarations were cross-checked against the electoral lists, the CPC register of declarations and media publications. From 21 August to 3 October 2026, publications on information platforms related to the community and its settlements were also monitored.

Election day (short-term observation). On election day, 26 accredited observers of the mission observed the opening of the precincts, the voting and the vote count in all 29 electoral precincts of the community (the list of precincts is provided in Annex 2). Throughout the day, the observers recorded their findings in accordance with the mission's methodology and submitted to the coordination center descriptions of incidents, photographs, videos, and photographs of PEC logbook entries and of excerpts from protocols. Most of the recorded incidents were entered in the PEC logbooks. The mission also followed the CEC live stream and materials disseminated on social media.

In the report, individual incidents are presented with the precinct number and, where possible, the time. Findings marked "a number of precincts" are general observations recorded in various precincts. A summary by precinct is provided in Annex 1.

Legal standard. The findings were compared against the current version of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia[6]. For each incident, the relevant provisions are indicated and a legal assessment is given, distinguishing the cases in which establishing the existence of a violation requires the clarification of additional circumstances or an examination by the competent body. The assessments presented in the report cannot be regarded as a conclusion of a competent body regarding a violation.

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[1]Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations, GNDEM, 2012, https://gndem.org/declaration-of-global-principles/.

[2]Statement of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on cases of possible use of administrative resources in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 9 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve-stepanavan/

[3]Statement of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on the accessibility of electoral precincts in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 22 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve_-stepanavan/

[4]Report of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on the declarations of property and income of candidates in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 23 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve-stepanavan-3/

[5]CEC, published data on the number of voters, the accessibility of polling stations and the leadership composition of Precinct Electoral Commissions (police25.10.2026_12-09-2026.pdf, 25.xlsx, 25_1.xlsx, nqt_25-09-2026.xlsx), elections.am (in Armenian).

[6]Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, current version, Armenian Legal Information System (in Armenian), https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/230464 (accessed on 28 October 2026).

2.3. Limitations of the Observation

- The observation results are qualitative in nature and are not the results of a representative sociological survey.
- The final legal qualification of a number of incidents requires the clarification of additional circumstances, which falls outside the mandate of an observation mission and is a function of the competent bodies.
- Some of the findings concerning proxies, the police, the presence of candidates, the steering of voters and pressure on observers are presented in general terms, without a precinct-by-precinct breakdown of all incidents.
- The mission did not observe the work of the TEC after election day, nor did it examine the consideration of applications and complaints. The information on the tabulation of results at the TEC (section 6.3) is presented on the basis of the published decisions of the TEC.

CHAPTER

03

CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ELECTIONS

3.1. Context

On 25 October 2026, elections of local self-government bodies were held in 21 communities, where 520 electoral precincts were formed and 488,334 voters were registered. Of the 29 precincts of the consolidated community of Stepanavan, 10 (25/1–25/10) are located in the settlement of Stepanavan and 19 (25/11–25/29) in the other 19 settlements of the community. On the CEC website, Lori Berd and Gyulagarak communities are listed with the period 2022–2026, and voting in their settlements was held within the framework of the elections to the council of Stepanavan community.

The Businessman (Gortsarar), Republic (Hanrapetutyun), Civil Contract (Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir) and Strong Armenia (Uzhegh Hayastan) parties participated in the elections. The electoral list of the Businessman party was headed by Armen Grigoryan, the incumbent mayor of Stepanavan[7].

3.2. Legal Framework

Elections to the community council are held in accordance with the procedure established by the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia. The main voting rules are as follows:

- voting is held from 08:00 to 20:00, and voters who are in the voting room at 20:00 but have not yet voted have the right to vote (EC 56(1), 68(1));
- on election day, at 07:00, the PEC, at a session, distributes the functions of the commission members by drawing of lots, after which the chairperson opens the fireproof safe and checks that the ballot box is empty (EC 64(1), 64(2));
- the voter chooses one of the parties by placing that party's ballot paper in the voting envelope, while the unused ballot papers are dropped into a separate box placed in the voting booth (EC 67(3));
- the self-adhesive stamp is subject to special accounting, its printing is ensured by the CEC, and it is affixed to the ballot paper through the cut-out of the voting envelope (EC 59(3), 67(7));
- the council mandates are distributed among the parties that received at least 4 percent of the sum of the number of ballots cast in favor and the number of inaccuracies, and the TEC tabulates the election results on the 7th day after election day (EC 141(2), 141(3));
- observers have the right to be present in the voting room and at the counting session, to take photographs and make video recordings without violating the secrecy of the vote, and to demand that their assessment be recorded in the PEC logbook (EC 8(11), 32(1), 67(14)).

The full list of provisions cited in the report is provided in Annex 3.

3.3. Electoral Commissions

In the list of PEC chairpersons and secretaries published by the CEC, "Civil Contract" is indicated next to 18 of the 29 chairpersons in Stepanavan community, "Strong Armenia" next to 8, and "Armenia" (Hayastan) next to 3. The secretary positions are distributed in the same proportion. At the national level (1,040 positions), the distribution is 60.9%, 27.7% and 11.4%, respectively, which coincides with the ratio of these forces' mandates in the National Assembly (64, 29 and 12 of 105 mandates)[8].

[7] "The 'Businessman' party will receive the most mandates in Stepanavan" (in Armenian), Panorama.am, 26.10.2026.

[8] CEC, published data on the number of voters, the accessibility of polling stations and the leadership composition of Precinct Electoral Commissions (police25.10.2026_12-09-2026.pdf, 25.xlsx, 25_1.xlsx, nqt_25-09-2026.xlsx), elections.am (in Armenian).

In 7 precincts of Stepanavan (25/2, 25/4, 25/9, 25/13, 25/16, 25/22, 25/29), “Civil Contract” is indicated next to both positions, PEC chairperson and secretary. At the national level, the number of such precincts is 113 (out of 520). In no precinct are both positions assigned to either of the other two forces.

CHAPTER

04

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

4.1. Accessibility of Electoral Precincts

The mission examined the detailed measurements of the accessibility of polling stations published by the CEC and, on 22 October 2026, published a separate statement[9]. Under Article 17(5) of the EC, local self-government bodies are obliged to take the necessary measures at polling stations to ensure accessibility for the exercise of the electoral right by voters with disabilities, as well as by voters with mobility (musculoskeletal) impairments and visual impairments. CEC Decision No. 17-N of 24 March 2022[10] establishes, in particular, the requirements that the voting room be located on the first floor, that the door be at least 90 cm wide and that the threshold be level.

Key findings:

- the entrances of 9 of the 29 precincts are fully accessible, 1 is partially accessible (25/17), and 19 are inaccessible;
- of the 21 buildings with stepped entrances, 11 have a ramp, of which 2 have a slope that is not accessible (25/23, 25/28); in 6 buildings, installing a ramp is not possible (25/2, 25/6, 25/13, 25/18, 25/27, 25/29); and 2 buildings have a handrail;
- the voting room is on the second floor in 3 precincts (25/2, 25/23, 25/27);
- in 11 precincts, the entrance door is less than 90 cm wide, including 8 where it is less than 80 cm wide (the narrowest being 25/19, Koghes, at 50 cm);
- no precinct has a parking area, there is no Braille signage in any precinct, and none of the toilets available in 26 precincts is accessible.

As a result, equal conditions for voting are not ensured in most of the community's precincts for voters with disabilities, as well as for voters with mobility (musculoskeletal) impairments or visual impairments.

4.2. Declarations of Candidates and Parties

Under Article 8(5) of the EC, candidates and parties participating in the elections submit declarations of property and income, and under Article 8(6) of the EC, the declarations are submitted electronically and posted on the CEC website in open data format. The mission examined the declarations of 155 candidates and 4 parties and, on 23 October 2026, published a separate report[11].

Key findings:

- 13 candidates declared monetary funds of more than AMD 10 million in drams alone, and a further 17 including funds in foreign currency as well; in a number of cases, the monetary funds exceed the declared annual income several times over;
- 14 candidates submitted a completely blank declaration, and in total 42 candidates reported zero income;
- in 16 declarations, obvious errors or omissions, inconsistencies with other official sources, or amounts grossly disproportionate to income were recorded;

[9]Statement of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on the accessibility of electoral precincts in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 22 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve_-stepanavan/

[10]CEC Decision No. 17-N of 24 March 2022 (in Armenian).

[11]Report of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on the declarations of property and income of candidates in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 23 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve-stepanavan-3/

- the Civil Contract (Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir) and Strong Armenia (Uzhegh Hayastan) parties declared donations of approximately AMD 1.53 billion and AMD 1.45 billion, respectively, without the names of the donors, while the Businessman (Gortsarar) party, which nominated 35 candidates, submitted a declaration with zero figures;
- only one of the 155 declarations was completed electronically; the rest are handwritten and scanned documents that cannot be processed by machine.

The Code does not provide for a clear mechanism for the comprehensive verification of the data declared by candidates. As a result, voters receive only a partial picture of the candidates' financial situation.

4.3. Risks of the Use of Administrative Resources

Community information platforms. From 21 August to 3 October 2026, the mission monitored publications on information platforms related to the community and its settlements and, on 9 October, published a separate statement[12]. On the pages "Dimakayun Stepanavan" ("Resilient Stepanavan"), "Vardabluri Gyughapetaran" ("Vardablur Administration") and "Gargari teghekatvakan ankyun" ("Gargar Information Corner"), 11 cases were recorded in which pre-election materials of two political forces participating in the elections, the Businessman and Civil Contract parties, and of their candidates were disseminated, including campaign posters, posts, a video and ballot numbers. Of the recorded cases, 7 occurred before the official start of the election campaign (30 September) and 4 during the campaign. The mission assesses these as cases containing a risk of possible use of administrative resources, which may affect the ensuring of equal conditions of competition for the participants in the elections. The final legal assessment is reserved for the competent electoral and other relevant bodies.

Candidates working in the public sector. According to a cross-check of the declarations and electoral lists, 29 of the 50 candidates of the Civil Contract party and 15 of the 35 candidates of the Businessman party work in community or state institutions, including in the leadership of communities and in managerial positions in public institutions. The list of the Businessman party was headed by the incumbent mayor. The large number of candidates holding public positions is not in itself a violation; however, it creates risks related to the use of administrative resources and of conflicts of interest, which require particular attention both during the pre-election period and on election day (see section 5.2, the case of precinct 25/24).

4.4. Other Information Published in the Media

According to a Hetq.am publication of 21 October 2026, on that day searches and other investigative actions were carried out in Stepanavan community within the framework of criminal proceedings under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Committee, and 14 persons were arrested. The Anti-Corruption Committee did not disclose any further details[13]. The mission did not observe these events and does not provide an assessment of them.

4.5. Campaign Emphases and the Procedure for Electing the Head of Community

During the campaign, the political forces participating in the elections built their communication mainly around the first-ranked candidates on their electoral lists, presenting them as "candidate for head of community." For example, in a video by a local media outlet, the first-ranked

[12]Statement of the "Azat Qve" observation mission on cases of possible use of administrative resources in Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 9 October 2026, https://weyouth.am/azat-qve-stepanavan/

[13]"14 persons arrested in Stepanavan" (in Armenian), Hetq.am, 21.10.2026, https://hetq.am/hy/article/184858.

candidate on the Civil Contract party list is presented as “candidate for head of Stepanavan community.”

However, on 25 October 2026, voters voted in the elections to the community council, for the electoral lists of parties. Under Article 142.1(1) of the EC, in a community with a council formed under the proportional electoral system, the head of community is elected by the council through an indirect electoral system. The first-ranked candidate on a list is deemed to be the head of community by operation of law only if the party receives more than 50 percent of the council seats (EC 142.2(2)). Otherwise, the head of community is elected at the first session of the newly elected council by open voting, and the council factions may nominate for this position the first-ranked candidate on their list or, if that candidate declines, the next candidate on the list (EC 142.2(3), 142.2(4)).

According to the distribution of mandates published in the media, no party in Stepanavan receives more than 50 percent of the council seats (see section 6.2); therefore, the head of community will be elected by the council. Presenting the campaign as a direct election of the head of community does not reflect the proportional nature of the council elections or the procedure for the indirect election of the head of community, which may cause confusion among voters as to the subject of the vote and its consequences.

CHAPTER

05

ELECTION DAY

Below are the problems recorded by the mission on election day, grouped by theme. For each case, the precinct, the relevant provisions of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia and the mission's legal assessment are indicated.

5.1. Opening of Polling Stations

Under Article 64(1) of the EC, on election day, at 07:00, the PEC holds a session at which it allocates the functions of its members by drawing of lots, and under Article 65(1), at 08:00 the chairperson announces the start of voting. According to observers' reports, in most precincts the session and voting began at the set time. During the opening phase, observers' access to the precincts was not obstructed; no presence of unauthorized persons, campaign materials, violations of the requirements for ballot boxes or furnishings compromising the secrecy of the vote were recorded.

- **25/16** and **25/27**: the PEC session began at 07:14 and 07:20 respectively. These delays did not affect the start of voting and rather point to a problem in the organization of the commission's work.

5.2. Interference in the Work of the Commission and Presence of Unauthorized Persons

Article 8(11) of the EC defines the range of persons entitled to be present in the voting room. Under Article 46(8), the PEC chairperson prohibits the presence of persons who do not have that right, as well as of persons not wearing the appropriate badge on their outer clothing, and under Article 67(12), after voting, the voter must immediately leave the voting room.

25/24 (Gyulagarak). Khachik Vardanyan, head of Gyulagarak community, repeatedly entered the polling station and the voting room between 09:30 and 17:20, including, for the most part, without a badge, and attempted to interfere in the work of the commission. He had been given a warning beforehand, but he continued to remain on the premises, and this circumstance was recorded in the logbook. After voting, he left the voting room only at the urging of the chairperson. The incident is recorded in the logbook, and video footage is available.

Legal assessment. Each of the recorded actions has a separate legal basis:

- **presence in the voting room without a badge and without the right to be present**: a head of community is not included among the persons defined in Article 8(11) of the EC, and under Article 46(8), the PEC chairperson prohibits the presence in the voting room of persons who do not have the right to be present there, as well as of persons without the appropriate badge. As a voter, he could be in the voting room only for the purpose of voting;
- **remaining in the voting room after voting**: under Article 67(12) of the EC, after voting, the voter must immediately leave the voting room;
- **repeated entry into the polling station after a warning**: under Article 40.15 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Armenia, if a person, after being presented with an oral demand not to enter the polling station or to leave the polling station, has repeatedly entered and remained in the polling station, a fine in the amount of AMD 50,000 is imposed on that person. Since the warning was given and recorded in the logbook, this ground is applicable;
- **attempts to interfere in the work of the commission**: liability for obstructing the work of an electoral commission is provided for by Article 210 of the Criminal Code. To assess the applicability of this ground, it is necessary to establish whether the attempts at interference resulted in actual obstruction of the commission's work.

25/9. After voting, a citizen remained in the polling station for at least 15–20 minutes, during which time the person made phone calls and went in and out. The person refused to identify himself or herself and left the polling station after the observer addressed the chairperson. The police took no steps to establish the person's identity.

Legal assessment. Merely remaining in the polling station for some time does not in itself constitute a violation. If the person did not have the right to be in the polling station and remained after an oral demand to leave it, Article 40.15 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Armenia may be applicable. It is necessary to establish whether or not the person remained after the oral demand.

25/19 (Koghes). According to observers, unauthorized persons were present at this precinct during the vote count. Under Article 68(2) of the EC, the counting session may be attended by persons entitled to be present at sessions of the electoral commission and by the candidate.

Proxies (a number of precincts). Under Article 34(2) of the EC, proxies have no right to interfere in the work of electoral commissions, to give instructions to commission members or to interfere in the voting process. Under Article 34(3), one proxy of each party participating in the elections may be present in the voting room, and proxies are obliged to register in the PEC logbook. Observers reported that in a number of precincts proxies regularly attempted to interfere in the electoral process. In particular, at precinct **25/2**, a proxy of the Civil Contract (Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir) party counted the voting coupons during voting hours. In some precincts, more proxies of the same party than permitted were present simultaneously, and the commissions exercised no control over this.

In addition to the records made by the mission's observers, in a photograph of the logbook of precinct 25/17 (Yaghdan) published by a media outlet[14], the registration entries of three proxies of the Civil Contract party (07:40, 07:54 and 08:10) contain no time of exit from the precinct. The same applies to one proxy each of the Strong Armenia (Uzhegh Hayastan) party (07:20) and the Businessman (Gortsarar) party (09:03). It follows from the entries that either several proxies of the same party were present in the voting room simultaneously, or their exit times were not recorded in the logbook.

Legal assessment. A proxy's lawful observation, question or reaction should not be equated with a violation. To assess whether Article 34(2) of the EC was violated, it is necessary to establish whether there was actual obstruction of the commission's work. Counting the voting coupons is a function of the PEC (EC 67(8)); therefore, the counting of coupons by a proxy at precinct 25/2 may be regarded as interference in the work of the commission (EC 34(2)). The simultaneous presence in the voting room of more than one proxy of the same party does not comply with the requirement of Article 34(3) of the EC, and preventing it is the duty of the PEC chairperson (EC 46(8), 61(3)).

Presence of candidates (a number of precincts). Under Article 67(13) of the EC, during voting, a candidate included in the electoral list of a party participating in the elections is prohibited from being in the polling station or in the adjacent area within a radius of up to 50 meters, except for the purpose of taking part in the vote. Observers reported cases of candidates being present in polling stations.

Pressure on observers. Article 32 of the EC establishes the rights of observers and the guarantees for their activities. The mission recorded cases of pressure on observers, including at precincts 25/4 and 25/24. According to observers, the pressure was exerted mainly by proxies and commission members, who, in particular, passed judgment on the observers' work. The

[14]Photograph of the "Proxy data" page (in Armenian) of the PEC logbook of precinct 25/17, published on the Telegram channel of the Infocom media outlet (entries dated 24.10.2026 and 25.10.2026).

observer at precinct **25/6** also reported that the commission refused to record the observer's assessment in the logbook, whereas under Article 67(14) of the EC, an observer has the right to demand that his or her assessment of a violation of the procedure established by the Code be recorded in the logbook.

5.3. Secrecy of the Vote

Under Article 6(1) of the EC, the secrecy of the vote is for the voter not only a right but also an obligation, and under Article 67(6), it is prohibited to find out in any way how a voter votes.

25/4. A voter took photographs or video in the voting booth. The incident is recorded in the logbook, and video footage is available.

Legal assessment. Article 215 of the Criminal Code establishes liability for violating the secrecy of the vote for mercenary purposes by publishing information obtained by photographing or video-recording a document revealing the result of the vote. It is necessary to establish what was photographed or filmed and whether the secrecy of the vote was breached. It should also be taken into account that the incident may be related to coercing a voter to disclose the result of his or her vote, or to checking a voter's ballot for the purpose of violating the secrecy of the vote, which can be established only by a competent authority.

25/24, 14:26. A voter made his or her choice outside the voting booth. The incident is recorded in the logbook, and video footage is available.

Legal assessment. If the voter visibly left the voting booth and demonstratively placed the ballot in the envelope, there are grounds for applying to the CEC with a request for a legal assessment and an examination of the actions of the responsible persons, and, should the circumstances be established, also grounds for submitting a crime report to the Investigative Committee.

25/4, 16:25. An elderly voter filled in the ballot outside the voting booth (open voting). Video footage is available. *Legal assessment.* The incident is due to an age-related difficulty in navigating the procedure and is not regarded as intentional.

25/1. Voters voted without entering the voting booth. An elderly voter had difficulty navigating the voting procedure, and another voter was called in to assist. Photographs and video footage are available. *Legal assessment.* No elements of a violation are identified in this case (EC 6, 67(9)).

Open voting (a number of precincts). As a result of low voter awareness and insufficient training of commission members, voters often came out of the voting booth to clarify the procedure. Numerous cases of open voting were recorded, including as a result of printing defects in the stamps (see Section 5.4). A breach of secrecy was also recorded at precinct 25/28. Observers also reported cases of voters being steered; reports of steering were also published in the media[15], and the mission contacted the CEC hotline on this issue. *Assessment.* These problems are systemic in nature and require measures to raise voter awareness and to train commission members.

5.4. Ballots and Self-Adhesive Stamps

Under Article 59(3) of the EC, a self-adhesive stamp is a stamp produced by a printing-house method with protective layers, bearing the abbreviation of the name of the election, the date of voting and the number of the electoral precinct, and subject to special accounting. Under Article 59(4), the printing of the stamps is ensured by the CEC. Under Article 70(1) of the EC, a ballot of

[15] "Widespread crowding and steering of voters; cameras are also being switched off periodically: Meloyan" (in Armenian), Panorama.am, 25.10.2026.

the established form is a ballot to which the self-adhesive stamp of the given electoral precinct has been affixed.

Printing defects (25/2, 25/3, 25/4, 25/5, 25/6, 25/7, 25/16, 25/19, 25/24, 25/27, 25/28). Printing defects in the stamps were recorded at 11 precincts located in different settlements of the community, which indicates the widespread nature of the problem. The data printed on the defective stamps (the abbreviation of the name of the election, the date of voting and the precinct number) were shifted relative to the edges of the stamp and partly extended beyond them. In a number of precincts, commission members affixed the stamps with glue, twice, on both sides of the stamp, or in other unusual ways. According to observers, the problem slowed down the voting process and led to crowding, as well as to cases of open voting.

On election day, a representative of the Strong Armenia party also publicly stated that the stamps were of inadequate quality and demanded that the printing defect not result in ballots being declared invalid[16].

Legal assessment. A printing defect in itself does not necessarily constitute a violation. It is necessary to establish whether it impeded the electoral procedure, the identification of the stamp or the validity of the ballots, and whether there was a violation in the supply or in the work of the commission. The mission considers it advisable to apply to the CEC with a request to clarify the nature and extent of the defects, their possible impact on the results of the vote and the measures taken.

25/24. At 08:46, a voting envelope with a stamp affixed was canceled, after which the voter was given a new envelope. As of 16:00, an envelope with a stamp affixed had been canceled at the same precinct for the second time. Both incidents are recorded in the logbook.

Legal assessment. It is necessary to verify on what grounds the envelope was canceled, whether the procedure established by Article 67(10) of the EC was followed, and whether the new envelope was provided in accordance with the lawful procedure. The two incidents do not in themselves indicate falsification of the results. The mission considers it advisable to apply to the CEC with a request to examine the protocols and voting materials relating to both incidents. Should evidence of deliberate falsification or of influence on the voting results be discovered, a crime report should be submitted to the Investigative Committee.

25/6. The stamps were affixed to the ballots with a glue stick (recorded in the logbook at around 08:30). At 10:27, two stamps were affixed to one ballot (in the logbook: at around 10:00). Photographs and video footage are available. At the same precinct, while the stamp was being affixed, the voting envelope was not in the voter's hands but on the table; commission members signed to receive new stamps, and the voting coupons were collected on top of the ballot box.

Legal assessment. Affixing a self-adhesive stamp with glue is indicative rather of the level of training of the responsible person and of the general printing problem. In the case of a second stamp affixed by mistake, it is necessary to establish whether the commission deemed the ballot spoiled and applied the procedure provided for by Article 67(10) of the EC, or whether the ballot remained in the ballot box. Under Article 67(7) of the EC, the member affixes the stamp through the cut-out in the envelope without taking the envelope from the voter; this deviation is not material, but it is necessary to establish whether the chairperson collected the voting coupons from the responsible member before providing a new batch (EC 67(8)). The Code sets no specific requirement regarding collecting the coupons on top of the ballot box; what matters is that they are handed over to the chairperson at the end of the shift, counted, and the figures recorded in the logbook.

[16] "We demand that this printing defect not lead to the invalidation of ballots: Meloyan" (in Armenian), Panorama.am, 25.10.2026.

25/19, 14:23. Self-adhesive stamps were affixed with glue (video). *Assessment.* The incident is a manifestation of the general printing problem.

Cancellation of ballots and envelopes (a number of precincts). Observers reported cases of ballots and voting envelopes of the established form being canceled in violation of the established procedure (EC 67(10)).

5.5. Safekeeping of Electoral Documents and Voter Registration

Under Article 61(2) of the EC, the self-adhesive stamps and the seal are kept in a fireproof safe located in the voting room, and the procedure for the safekeeping of electoral documents is established by the CEC. Under Article 61(3), the chairperson is obliged to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Code.

- **25/24**: the fireproof safe was open for 30 minutes or more (according to the logbook entry, 07:32–08:02). The incident is recorded in the logbook, and video footage is available;
- **25/2**: the fireproof safe was open (photographs).

Legal assessment. Both incidents constitute a violation of the requirement established by CEC Decision No. 11-N. If the legislator has required that certain items be kept specifically in a fireproof safe, the purpose of that requirement is to ensure their security. Leaving the safe open when the documents kept in it are not being used reduces the effectiveness of that safekeeping. A fireproof safe is not simply storage furniture but a special means provided for by a normative act for the safekeeping of electoral documents, and the purpose of safekeeping is not only the physical presence of the documents but also the prevention of unauthorized interference with them. In response to the mission's telephone inquiry, the CEC stated that keeping the safe closed is desirable but not mandatory; however, this approach cannot call into question the combined meaning of the relevant provisions of the legal acts. There are grounds for submitting an application requesting that the commission chairpersons be held liable.

25/16 (Agarak). An observer reported that there was another person's signature next to the name of one of the voters in the voter list, and photographed the corresponding logbook entry. Under Article 66(8) of the EC, the voter personally signs the voter list next to his or her data. *Assessment.* This finding is important but does not in itself confirm that voting took place in place of another person. For the legal assessment of the incident, it is necessary to establish whether the voter in question took part in the vote, who signed next to his or her name, whether there was a commission error or a technical mix-up of signatures, and whether the incident was checked by the commission. The mission considers it advisable that the incident be examined by the TEC.

5.6. Order in Polling Stations and Adjacent Areas

Under Article 65(5) of the EC, if the number of voters in the voting room is such that the normal course of voting is clearly disrupted, the chairperson has the right to limit the number of voters present at the same time, but to no fewer than 15 voters. Under Article 22(3), gathering in groups within a 50-meter radius of the polling station is prohibited.

- **25/5**, 13:30: crowding in the voting room. After the observer's request, the chairperson brought the situation under control;
- **a number of precincts, including 25/6 and 25/24**: crowding in the voting room and in the areas adjacent to polling stations, one of the causes of which, according to observers, was the problem with the stamps.

Legal assessment. It is necessary to properly assess whether more than 15 voters were present in the voting room at the same time; even in that case, this does not yet mean that the normal course of voting was disrupted.

Police (25/9 and a number of other precincts). Police officers on duty at polling stations in some cases did not respond adequately to situations. In particular, at precinct 25/9 the police took no steps to establish the identity of a person who remained at the precinct after voting and refused to identify himself or herself. Observers also reported cases in which police officers were reluctant to intervene even after being urged to do so by the commission chairperson.

Legal assessment. The police are not obliged to intervene on their own initiative in what is happening in the voting room in every case: under Articles 55(1) and 65(5) of the EC, the police assist the commission at the request of the chairperson, so it is the chairperson who must call in the police officers. At the same time, failure to comply with the chairperson's request is inconsistent with the obligation established by Article 55(1) of the EC. Within a 50-meter radius of the polling station, the police maintain order regardless of any request from the commission (EC 22(3)).

5.7. Live Streaming

Under Article 8(11.1) of the EC, during community council elections held under the proportional electoral system, a specialized organization selected by the CEC carries out online broadcasting of the voting and counting process from the precincts, and the list of precincts to be broadcast is determined by the contract concluded between the CEC and the organization.

- **25/16, 25/24, 25/26, 25/28**: at 11:06–11:11, the live stream was unavailable. It was restored after the mission reported the issue to the CEC by telephone (as of 14:43, it was available);
- **25/17, 25/18, 25/19, 25/20**: these precincts were not included in the CEC live streaming list.

Assessment. A temporary interruption of the broadcast does not in itself indicate a violation of electoral legislation. To assess the incident, it is necessary to establish the causes and duration of the interruption and whether the obligations established by the contract for the organization of the broadcast were fulfilled. The inclusion of all precincts of the community in the broadcast list is a matter for advocacy.

5.8. Close of Voting and Vote Count

Under Articles 56(1) and 68(1) of the EC, voters who are in the voting room at 20:00 but have not yet voted have the right to vote. According to observers' reports, the precincts closed at 20:00.

According to observers' reports, the counting was completed between 20:49 (25/19) and 23:24 (25/28). No cases of deliberate miscounting, falsification of results, violence or pressure were recorded.

25/12 (Urasar). Under Article 68(3) of the EC, the commission chairperson opens the ballot box, takes one voting envelope out of the ballot box, shows it to those present and, if there are no grounds for canceling it, takes the ballot out of the envelope and shows it. At precinct 25/12, the voting envelopes were taken out of the ballot box by the commission secretary, while the chairperson opened and displayed them; this is visible in the CEC live stream footage. The mission informed the TEC by telephone, after which the problem was corrected. *Legal assessment.* The incident points rather to a problem with the training of commission members.

Extracts from protocols. Under Article 72(1) of the EC, the first inaccuracy is calculated by comparing the sum of the number of voting coupons received from voters and the number of unused stamps with the number of stamps allocated. Based on a comparison of the extracts sent by observers:

- **25/4**: of the 1,000 stamps allocated, 337 were not used, while the number of voting coupons and of participants is 665; the difference is 2 (663 voting envelopes were found in the ballot box);
- **25/6**: of the 1,500 stamps allocated, 587 were not used (913 were used), while the number of voting coupons, of participants and of ballots is 912; the difference is 1.

Under Article 72(4) of the EC, the extent of the inaccuracies is calculated and recorded by the electoral commission that summarizes the election results.

5.9. Campaigning on Election Day and the Day Before

Under Article 19(1) of the EC, the pre-election campaign period ends one day before election day, and "On election day and the day preceding it, campaigning through public speeches, public events, mass media, including by audiovisual media service providers via cable network, satellite communication and terrestrial over-the-air broadcasting, as well as through advertising on the Internet, is prohibited." Under Article 19(1.1) of the EC, pre-election campaigning means any action aimed at persuading voters to vote or not to vote for a particular candidate or party.

The mission's observers recorded numerous cases in which campaign materials were disseminated on candidates' Facebook pages on election day and the day before. For example, on election day:

- on the page of candidate No. 10 on the electoral list of the Strong Armenia party, a video address by the top candidate on the list and a local media outlet's video about the party's march in Stepanavan were shared;
- on the page of candidate No. 13 on the electoral list of the Civil Contract party, a local media outlet's video was shared in which the top candidate on the list is presented as a candidate for head of community[17].

The Code prohibits campaigning on election day and the day before through public speeches, public events, mass media and advertising on the Internet, but does not directly regulate non-advertising posts on candidates' personal social media pages. For this reason, the legal qualification of the recorded cases requires an assessment by a competent authority. At the same time, such posts are inconsistent with the purpose of restricting campaigning on election day and the day before, namely to enable voters to make their decision free from campaign influence.

[17] CEC, "LSG proportional, Lori - Stepanavan, 25.10.2026", "Registered candidates" (in Armenian), https://www.elections.am/Elections/LocalProportional (accessed on 28 October 2026).

CHAPTER

06

RESULTS OF THE VOTE

6.1. Turnout

According to the protocol of TEC No. 25, 19,353 voters were included in the voter lists (19,324 in the main lists and 29 in the supplementary lists), and 13,299 voters took part in the vote, which constitutes 68.72% of voters[18].

The dynamics of turnout on election day according to the operational data published by the CEC are presented in Table 1[19]. The percentages in these data are calculated relative to the 19,324 voters included in the main lists.

Table 1. Turnout by hour (CEC operational data)

Time	Participants	Percentage
11:00	2,524	13.06%
14:00	7,333	37.95%
17:00	11,277	58.36%
20:00	13,300	68.83%

6.2. Results

According to the protocol of TEC No. 25, 48 ballots were declared invalid, and the number of inaccuracies was 5. The votes received by the parties are presented in Table 2[20]. The percentages are calculated relative to the total number of ballots cast in favor of parties (13,247).

Table 2. Votes and mandates received by the parties

Party	Votes	Percentage	Mandates
Businessman (Gortsarar) party	5,505	41.56%	9
Civil Contract (Kaghakatsiakan Paymanagir) party	4,681	35.34%	8
Strong Armenia (Uzhegh Hayastan) party	2,609	19.70%	4
Republic (Hanrapetutyun) party	452	3.41%	0

The Republic party did not pass the 4% threshold established by Article 141(3) of the EC. By Decision No. 35-A of TEC No. 25 of 1 November 2026, the 21 mandates of the community council were distributed among the Businessman (9), Civil Contract (8) and Strong Armenia (4) parties[21]. The decision may be appealed to the Administrative Court of the Republic of Armenia.

Compared with the preliminary data released after election day, the votes of the Businessman party decreased by 1 (from 5,506 to 5,505), and the number of invalid ballots increased by 1 (from 47 to 48), which corresponds to the result of the recount conducted at precinct 25/4 (see Section 6.3).

[18]Territorial Electoral Commission No. 25, Protocol on the voting results of the elections to the council of Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 01.11.2026, published on the CEC website: https://www.elections.am/TEC (TEC No. 25, "Decisions" section).

[19]CEC, "Turnout, 25.10.2026, Lori, Stepanavan" (in Armenian), https://dashboards.elections.am/Elections/TEC/Participation/Index/28838.

[20]Territorial Electoral Commission No. 25, Protocol on the voting results of the elections to the council of Stepanavan community (in Armenian), 01.11.2026, published on the CEC website: https://www.elections.am/TEC (TEC No. 25, "Decisions" section).

[21]Decision No. 35-A of TEC No. 25 of 1 November 2026 "On the election of the council of Stepanavan community based on the voting results of the 25 October 2026 elections to the council of Stepanavan community of Lori Province" (in Armenian), https://res.elections.am/images/Tec/Decisions/25/2026.35_A_01-11-2026.pdf

According to precinct-level data collected by observers, in precincts 25/1–25/8 of the settlement of Stepanavan the Businessman party received the most votes, while in most precincts in the community's other settlements the Civil Contract party did.

6.3. Tabulation of Results by TEC No. 25

TEC No. 25 summarized the election results on 1 November 2026, within the time limit established by Article 141(2) of the EC (Decision No. 34-A)[22]. According to the decision:

- no applications for a recount were submitted, and the TEC did not conduct a recount on its own initiative;
- as a result of the recount conducted in the precincts determined by drawing of lots, no changes were recorded at precincts 25/15 and 25/28, while at precinct 25/4 one ballot cast in favor of the Businessman party was declared invalid;
- the TEC received three applications (two of them identical in content) and responded to them in writing. One of them, the application submitted on 30 October by the authorized representatives of the Strong Armenia party, concerned misleading of voters, the use of administrative resources and other alleged systemic violations. The TEC assessed the claims made in the application as insufficiently substantiated;
- no lawsuits were filed with the Administrative Court.

In the concluding part of the decision, the TEC stated that no violations of the Electoral Code that affected the election results took place during the preparation of the elections and the voting. The mission notes that this conclusion concerns the impact of violations on the election results and does not refute the existence of the procedural violations recorded in this report, which require the attention of the relevant bodies (see Section 8).

[22]Decision No. 34-A of TEC No. 25 of 1 November 2026 "On summarizing the voting results of the 25 October 2026 elections to the council of Stepanavan community of Lori Province held under the proportional electoral system" (in Armenian), https://res.elections.am/images/Tec/Decisions/25/2026.34_A_01-11-2026.pdf

CHAPTER

07

CONCLUSIONS

The elections to the Stepanavan community council were held in competitive conditions with the participation of four parties, and voter turnout was 68.72%.

In the community's precincts, voting and the vote count were conducted mostly in a peaceful atmosphere. No cases of voting on behalf of another person or multiple voting, ballot box stuffing or falsification of results were recorded. In a number of cases, commission chairpersons remedied the problem after observers' requests (25/5, 25/9), and most of the recorded incidents were entered in PEC logbooks.

At the same time, individual recorded incidents point to inconsistent application of procedures: late start of PEC sessions (up to 20 minutes), leaving the fireproof safe open (25/2, 25/24), cancellation of envelopes with stamps affixed (25/24), removal of voting envelopes from the ballot box by the secretary instead of the chairperson (25/12), another person's signature in the voter list (25/16), and refusal to record an observer's assessment in the logbook (25/6).

The mission expresses particular concern regarding the repeated presence of a local self-government official at precinct 25/24 and the attempts to interfere in the work of the commission. Such conduct may influence voters and commission members and reduce trust in the process, especially given that a significant proportion of the candidates are public sector employees.

Attempts by proxies to interfere in the work of commissions, the presence of more proxies of the same party than permitted, pressure on observers and the reluctance of the police to intervene point to weak mechanisms for ensuring order at precincts. The dissemination of campaign materials on candidates' social media pages on election day and the day before shows that the existing regulations restricting campaigning do not cover all forms of online communication.

The numerous cases of open voting were mainly due to low voter awareness, insufficient training of commission members and problems with the stamps. In most of these cases, no elements of intent are identified; however, the problem is systemic and requires measures to raise voter awareness and to train commissions.

The printing defects in the self-adhesive stamps were widespread and led to deviations from procedure: cancellation of ballots, use of glue, crowding, cases of open voting and discrepancies in the accounting of stamps. Since the stamp is an important element of the validity and accounting of the ballot, this problem requires examination and public clarification by the CEC.

General observation. Most of the recorded procedural problems (the late start of PEC sessions, leaving the fireproof safe open, removal of voting envelopes by the secretary instead of the chairperson, the lack of control over the presence of proxies and unauthorized persons, and refusal to record an observer's assessment in the logbook) indicate a lack of practical skills in applying the requirements of the Code. PEC members need additional practical training.

Building campaign communication around the top candidates on the lists as "candidates for head of community" does not reflect the proportional nature of community council elections and may cause confusion among voters.

The problems recorded in the pre-election period are systemic in nature: most of the community's precincts are inaccessible to voters with disabilities and mobility impairments, and the content and format of the declarations of candidates and parties do not allow voters to obtain a complete picture of the candidates' financial situation.

CHAPTER

08

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on the findings presented in this report and are grouped by addressee.

To the Central Electoral Commission

1. Examine and publicly clarify the nature, extent and causes of the printing defects in the self-adhesive stamps, their possible impact on the voting results and the measures taken, and, for future elections, establish a procedure for preliminary quality control of the stamps, as well as clear instructions for PECs on how to proceed in the case of defective stamps.
2. In addition to theoretical courses, conduct practical training for PEC members (simulating voting-day procedures), paying particular attention to holding the session at 07:00, the procedure established by Article 68(3) of the EC for removing the voting envelopes from the ballot box and displaying them, the registration of proxies and control over their number, the safekeeping of the fireproof safe, preventing the presence in the voting room of persons not entitled to be present there, the right to vote of voters present in the voting room at 20:00, and the obligation to record observers' assessments in the logbook.
3. Bring polling stations into compliance with the requirements of CEC Decision No. 17-N of 24 March 2022 and, where this is not possible, consider relocating polling stations to accessible buildings.
4. Ensure the publication of the declarations of candidates and parties in the open data format provided for by Article 8(6) of the EC, allowing them to be processed by machine.
5. Conduct a voter awareness campaign on the voting procedure, the use of the voting booth and the preservation of secrecy, as well as on the procedure for community council elections under the proportional electoral system and for the indirect election of the head of community.
6. Include all electoral precincts of the community in the live-streaming list, publish the list of streamed precincts before election day, and publish information on interruptions broken down by precinct and by cause.

To Territorial Electoral Commission No. 25

1. Examine the cases recorded in precincts 25/2, 25/4, 25/12, 25/16, 25/19, 25/24 and 25/28, including the logbook entries and the voting materials, and provide an appropriate legal assessment.
2. Consider the question of the liability of the commission chairpersons in precincts 25/2 and 25/24 for violating the procedure for keeping the fireproof safe.
3. Examine the causes of the discrepancies in stamp accounting in precincts 25/4 and 25/6.

To the National Assembly

1. Consider the possibility of providing for a mechanism to verify the data submitted in candidates' declarations of property and income.
2. Consider regulating the dissemination of campaign materials by candidates and parties on social networks on election day and on the day preceding it.

To the Police

1. Instruct police officers serving at polling stations on the duties established by Articles 22(3) and 55(1) of the EC, and ensure an immediate response to the requests of the commission chairperson.

To Local Self-Government Bodies

1. Do not use information platforms associated with the community and its settlements to disseminate the campaign materials of parties and candidates participating in the elections.
2. Heads of communities and settlements and other officials should refrain, on election day, from being present at polling stations and from interfering in the work of the commissions, except to cast their own vote.
3. Carry out accessibility works (ramps, widening of doorways, handrails) in community-owned buildings (schools, kindergartens) in which polling stations are located.

To Parties Participating in the Elections

1. Ensure that the declarations of candidates and of the party are filled in completely and accurately.
2. Inform proxies of the restrictions established by Article 34 of the EC, including the prohibition on interfering in the work of the commission and the rule allowing one proxy per party in the voting room.
3. Refrain from disseminating campaign materials on the pages of candidates and of the party on election day and on the day preceding it, and, during the campaign, present the procedure for community council elections and for the election of the head of community accurately to voters.
4. Inform their candidates, especially those holding public office, of the impermissibility of using administrative resources and of the rules of conduct at polling stations on election day.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BY PRECINCT

The table includes the precincts in which the problems presented in Section 5 were recorded. General findings noted as occurring in "a number of precincts" are not included in the table.

Precinct	Problems recorded
25/1	Voting without entering the voting booth; assistance to an elderly voter by another voter
25/2	Interference by a proxy (counting of voting coupons); open fireproof safe; stamp defects
25/3	Stamp defects
25/4	Filming in the voting booth; open voting (16:25); pressure on an observer; stamp defects; discrepancy in stamp accounting (2)
25/5	Crowding (13:30); stamp defects
25/6	Stamps affixed with a glue stick; two stamps on one ballot; stamp affixed without the envelope being in the voter's hands; coupons placed on the ballot box; crowding; refusal to record the observer's assessment in the logbook; discrepancy in stamp accounting (1)
25/7	Stamp defects
25/9	A citizen remained at the polling station after voting and refused to identify themselves; the police did not respond
25/12	Voting envelopes removed from the ballot box by the commission secretary
25/16	Late start of the PEC session (07:14); signature of another person in the voter list; stamp defects; interruption of live streaming
25/17	Several proxies of the same party registered in the logbook without the time of departure (according to a media report); not included in the live-streaming list
25/18, 25/20	Not included in the live-streaming list
25/19	Unauthorized persons present during the count; stamp defects; stamps affixed with glue; not included in the live-streaming list
25/24	Interference by the head of community; open fireproof safe; marking of the ballot outside the voting booth; cancellation of an envelope bearing an affixed stamp (2 cases); crowding; pressure on an observer; stamp defects; interruption of live streaming
25/26	Interruption of live streaming
25/27	Late start of the PEC session (07:20); stamp defects
25/28	Violation of secrecy; stamp defects; interruption of live streaming

ANNEX 2. ELECTORAL PRECINCTS

The electoral precincts of Stepanavan community in which the mission's observers worked on election day. Polling station data as provided by the CEC.

Precinct	Settlement	Polling station
25/1	Stepanavan	Basic School No. 3 (Ashotaberd district)
25/2	Stepanavan	Administrative building of the BHES electrical products manufacturing plant (Baghramyan 124)
25/3	Stepanavan	Kindergarten No. 3 (V. Teryan 18)
25/4	Stepanavan	Basic School No. 1 (Baghramyan 67)
25/5	Stepanavan	High school (H. Meghapart 15a)
25/6	Stepanavan	Sports school (Bondarev 1)
25/7	Stepanavan	Administrative building of the veterinary clinic (Andranik 15)
25/8	Stepanavan	Basic School No. 2 (Surb Nshan 33)
25/9	Stepanavan	Secondary School No. 6 (Surb Vardan 8)
25/10	Stepanavan	Kindergarten No. 4 (M. Mashtots 17)
25/11	Armanis	Basic school building (Street 2, building 13)
25/12	Urasar	Basic school building (Street 2, building 36)
25/13	Katnaghbyur	Secondary school building (Street 8, Lane 1, building 1)
25/14	Lori Berd	Community center building (Ashot Yerkat St., Lane 1, building 2)
25/15	Lejan	Secondary school building (Street 1, building 1)
25/16	Agarak	Secondary school building (Street 1, building 42)
25/17	Yaghdan	Basic school building (Street 1, Lane 1, building 2)
25/18	Hovnanadzor	Administrative building (Street 1, building 4)
25/19	Koghes	Club building (Kentron, building 2)
25/20	Bovadzor	Basic school building (Street 3, building 4)
25/21	Urut	Secondary school building (Street 1, Lane 3, Dead End 1, building 1)
25/22	Sverdlov	Secondary school building (Street 1, Dead End 7, building 1)
25/23	Amrakits	Secondary school building (Street 2, building 18)
25/24	Gyulagarak	Secondary school building (Street 1, building 5)
25/25	Hobardzi	Secondary school building (Street 1, building 5)
25/26	Vardablur	Administrative building (Kentronakan St., building 56)
25/27	Kurtan	Cultural center building (Street 5, building 20/3)
25/28	Gargar	Secondary school building (Street 13, building 3)
25/29	Pushkino	Basic school building (Street 1, building 4b)

ANNEX 3. LEGAL PROVISIONS CITED

Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, current edition[23].

Provision	Content
6(1)	Voting is secret; for the voter, secrecy is not only a right but also an obligation; control over the free expression of will is prohibited
8(5), 8(6)	Declarations of property and income of candidates and parties; submission in electronic form and publication in open data format
8(11)	Persons entitled to be present in the voting room; the right to take photographs and make video recordings
8(11.1)	Video recording and online broadcasting of the voting and counting process
19(1), 19(1.1)	Period of pre-election campaigning; prohibition of campaigning on election day and on the day preceding it; definition of campaigning
22(3)	Prohibition of gathering in groups within a 50-meter radius of the polling station; obligation of the police
30, 32	Right to conduct an observation mission; rights of observers and guarantees of their activities
34(2), 34(3)	Prohibition of interference by proxies; one proxy per party in the voting room; obligation to register
46(8)	Mandatory wearing of the badge; prohibition of the presence of persons not entitled to be present
55(1)	Duties of the police; assistance to commissions at the request of the chairperson
56(1)	Voting from 08:00 to 20:00; the right to vote of voters present in the voting room at 20:00
59(3), 59(4)	Self-adhesive stamp; the data indicated on it; special accounting; printing by the CEC
61(2), 61(3)	Storage of the stamps and the seal in a fireproof safe; the chairperson's duty to ensure order
64(1)	PEC session at 07:00; drawing of lots
65(1), 65(5)	Start of voting at 08:00; limit on the number of voters in the voting room (not less than 15)
66(8)	The voter signs the voter list next to his or her data
67(6), 67(7), 67(8)	Protection of secrecy; affixing the stamp through the cut-out in the envelope; issuance of a new batch of stamps and accounting of coupons
67(9)	Assistance to a voter unable to fill in the ballot independently
67(10)	Cancellation of an incorrectly filled-in or damaged ballot and issuance of a new ballot
67(12), 67(13), 67(14)	Leaving the room immediately after voting; prohibition of the presence of candidates; recording of assessments in the logbook
68(1), 68(3), 68(6), 68(7)	Close of voting; removal of envelopes from the ballot box and their display by the chairperson; cancellation of the envelope; cancelled ballots treated as invalid
70(1)	Ballot of the established form
72(1), 72(4)	Calculation of the first inaccuracy; recording of inaccuracies
141(2), 141(3)	Time limit for summarizing the results of community council elections; 4 and 6 percent thresholds

[23]Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, current version, Armenian Legal Information System (in Armenian), https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/230464 (accessed on 28 October 2026).

Provision	Content
142.1(1), 142.2(2)–(4)	Indirect election of the head of community by the community council; election of the first-ranked candidate on the list where more than 50 percent of the seats are obtained

Other legal acts.

Provision	Content
CAO 40.15	Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Armenia: liability for failure to comply with a verbal demand not to enter the polling station or to leave the polling station (fine of AMD 50,000)
CC 210	Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia: liability for obstructing the work of an electoral commission or influencing the free will of the voter
CC 215	Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia: liability for violating the secrecy of the vote for mercenary purposes
CEC Decision No. 11-N	Procedure for the storage of electoral documents
CEC Decision No. 17-N of 24.03.2022	Accessibility requirements for polling stations

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The long-term observation of the Stepanavan community elections was carried out by the “We Youth” NGO of Lori Region and the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO. The short-term observation on election day was carried out with the financial support of Pro International and in cooperation with SD Platform Armenia.

The “We Youth” NGO of Lori Region and the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO bear responsibility for the content of this report, and it does not necessarily reflect the views of Pro International and SD Platform Armenia.