



**REPORT**

**on**

**the Observation of the Presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan  
from 8 to 11 July 2005**

**Report by Albert Jan Maat, chairman of the ad hoc delegation  
for the observation of the elections in Kyrgyzstan,**

**Introduction**

The presidential elections of 10 July 2005 were early elections following the ‘popular uprising’ of 24 March 2005 (also known as the ‘Tulip Revolution’) which led to the resignation of Askar Akayev as President of the Kyrgyz Republic. It should be stressed that observers are very divided over whether these riots can be qualified as a ‘revolution’ given the small proportion of the population involved.

After starting out as a reformer and upholder of democratic values and civil liberties, President Akayev had become very authoritarian and established a nepotistic power structure. The weakness of his administration meant that he was unable to react to the events of March 2005 and his authority rapidly crumbled, forcing him to seek refuge in Russia.

After Mr Akayev’s departure from the country, the parliament appointed Kurmanbek Bakiev, who had played a prominent role in the opposition to Mr Akayev, as prime minister and acting president.

It should be borne in mind that a few weeks prior to this, on 27 February 2005, legislative elections (in whose observation the European Parliament had participated) had been held in the Kyrgyz Republic. Those results of those elections had been strongly criticised owing to the number of cases of fraud detected, which had heightened the distress felt by the people of Kyrgyzstan and their lack of confidence in the judicial and electoral authorities.

The new parliament took office on 26 March 2005 and ratified the appointment of Mr Bakiev as prime minister and acting president. Mr Akayev’s resignation was accepted on 11 April 2005 and the new parliament voted to hold early presidential elections on 10 July 2005.

It was in this particularly confused political context that the preparations were made for the presidential elections, which explains the interest shown in them by the international community and, among other things, justified the sending of a European Parliament ad hoc electoral observation delegation, on the basis of a fact-finding mission to Kyrgyzstan conducted by the Delegation for Central Asia on 18 and 19 May 2005.

It should be noted that, unlike other observation missions such as those to Lebanon or Palestine, this observation mission was not conducted within the framework of a general European Union election observation mission, but was an initiative by our Institution, which participated in the observation on an equal footing with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

At its meeting of 9 June 2005, the Conference of Presidents decided to authorise the sending of a seven-member ad hoc observation delegation to Kyrgyzstan for the presidential elections of 10 July 2005.

The political groups appointed their members in accordance with the D'Hondt rules, with these being:

Mr John Attard-Montalto, for the PES  
Mrs Dorette Corbey, for the PES  
Mrs Elisabeth Jeggle, for the EPP  
Mr Albert Jan Maat, for the EPP  
Mrs Véronique Mathieu, for the EPP  
Mr Henri Weber, for the PES  
(the ALDE Group did not appoint a member).

The constituent meeting of the ad hoc observation mission took place on 29 June 2005 and appointed Mr Albert Jan Maat chairman.

The delegation's draft work programme was considered and approved, and it was decided to form three teams of observers of two members each. One of those teams would have specific responsibility for observing the elections in the Osh region, while the other two would remain in the capital, Bishkek.

## **Programme of the observation mission<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Preparatory meetings of 8 and 9 July in Bishkek**

- **Meeting with Mr Eichinger, German Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, in the presence of Mr Eric Millet, French chargé d'affaires in Bishkek** (German Embassy in Bishkek, 4.30 p.m. on 8 July)

After remarking on the great poverty of the country and the division between the north

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<sup>1</sup> Annex I

(with its significant Russian population) and the south (with its large Uzbek minority), Mr Eichinger gave an exhaustive description of recent events in Kyrgyzstan and emphasised the fragility of the political situation. He particularly stressed the fact that Mr Akayev had fled because of a relatively small-scale demonstration which had been able to take place owing to a clear absence of any instructions to the police or the administration. The situation continued to be unclear following the appointment of Mr Bakiev as prime minister and his legitimisation by the parliament, with the occupation of the supreme court by two consecutive groups of demonstrators who to that day had still not been clearly identified.

The Ambassador also emphasised the lack of reliable information in the country and the preponderant role played by rumour. This pernicious climate had continued with the demonstration of 17 June 2005 following the elimination from the elections to the presidency of a candidate not of Kyrgyz nationality. On this note too, it also seemed that the parliament was very weak.

In response to questions from the members of the delegation, the Ambassador spoke about the role played by organised crime, and in particular drugs trafficking, and its influence on political activities. Additional information was also provided by Mr Eric Millet, the French chargé d'affaires. In assessing the forthcoming elections, Ambassador Eichinger gave a brief description of the six different candidates and focused in particular on the best placed candidate, Mr Bakiev, who had made an agreement with Mr Felix Kulov on governing the country, under which he would appoint him prime minister in the event of victory (with Mr Bakiev being from the south of the country and Mr Kulov the north).

Mr Eichinger hoped that the elections would run satisfactorily in the face of popular weariness. He spoke particularly of the fear that turn-out for the elections would not be high enough, as an abstention rate of over 50% could have resulted in the cancellation of the elections and above all in the candidates not being able to stand again in fresh presidential elections. Mr Eichinger also raised two other problems: the fact that elections were being held in the summer and that many Kyrgyz worked outside the country, and particularly in Kazakhstan.

- **Meeting with Mr Stephen M. Young, United States Ambassador** (United States Embassy in Bishkek, 5.30 p.m. on 8 July)

The meeting with Mr Young afforded the members of the delegation quite a distanced assessment of the country. The Ambassador was above all keen to stress the need to buttress the democratisation process and achieve free, fair and transparent elections. Mr Young highlighted the north-south division in the country, which was perfectly reflected in the Bakiev-Kulov tandem. He also gave prominence to the identity problems being experienced by the country, which was originally of nomadic tradition. The issue of the independence of the judiciary was mentioned, as was that of the extreme cumbersomeness of administrative procedures, which was acting as a brake on foreign

investment. According to Mr Young, one could only conceive of real economic once the President of the Republic had received public endorsement. Ambassador Young ended by pointing to the role of NGOs and their active cooperation with local partners, which had among other things enabled freedom of expression in the media to be achieved.

- **Working dinner with the German Ambassador, Mr Millet (French chargé d'affaires), Ambassador Markus Muller (Head of OSCE Centre in Bishkek), Ambassador Christian Strohal (Director of the ODIHR), Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj (Head of OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission), Mr Kimmo Kiljunen (Head of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation) and Mrs Karina Skareby (Head of European Commission delegation in Bishkek)**  
(Santa-Maria Restaurant, 7.30 p.m. on 8 July)

This informal meeting, organised at the initiative of the EP delegation, allowed discussions to be continued with the representatives of the European embassies and enabled the delegation to meet the representatives of the OSCE/ODIHR for the first time. The main theme to emerge from the discussions was once again the distress of the people of Kyrgyzstan, who had been deeply disappointed at the Akayev presidency and at the events occurring since the start of the year in increasingly unstable economic circumstances.

- **Meeting of the delegation heads with Mr Tuygunaaly Abdraimov, Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission** (11 a.m. at the Central Electoral Commission)

This meeting, which was attended by Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, head of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, head of the delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Mr Albert Maat, Chairman of the European Parliament delegation, enabled an in-depth exchange of views with Mr Abdraimov, chairman of the Central Electoral Commission for Kyrgyzstan. The different aspects of the preparations for the presidential elections were addressed, including that of the registration of candidates and the conditions under which one candidate had been excluded. Mr Abdraimov emphasised the improvement in the quality of the voting lists, particularly in comparison to the previous elections, and the distribution of the candidate presentation papers, which had taken place in the previous weeks. The delegation heads asked for elucidations on the electoral procedure and in particular on the elimination of candidates in the event of the abstention threshold of 50% being reached. The issue of the 'buying' of some votes was also discussed, as was the pressure brought to bear by university lecturers on the way their students voted. Mr Maat expressed concern, among other things, at the resources committed to ensuring that the offering of inducements noted during the legislative elections did not reoccur. Mr Abdraimov clearly stated his desire to satisfy the requirements of the international observers, which he felt had now been fulfilled.

- **Meeting of the delegation heads with Mrs Rosa Otunbaeva, Minister for Foreign Affairs** (12 noon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

The exchange of views with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Otunbaeva, centred on certain aspects of the electoral campaign that had not appeared completely clear to the delegation heads, including the equality of treatment between Mr Bakiev and the other candidates, with the former not having taken part in the general presentation meetings that had taken place in the various districts. The discussions went on to focus on the populace's negative perception of the situation, with the desire being expressed that these new elections should enable the people's confidence in the future to be restored. The issue of the 'buying' of votes, and even of 'buying' abstentions – i.e. preventing the turnout from exceeding 50% – was again discussed, as was the pressure exerted on students.

- **General presentation on the observation of the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan by the OSCE/ODIHR to the European Parliament delegation and the members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly** (2 p.m. in the lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)

This session, at which introductory statements were made by the various delegation heads, enabled all the arrangements for the monitoring of the elections, put in place by the OSCE/ODIHR several months previously, to be reviewed and a clear assessment to be made of the political situation in all its complexity. OSCE/ODIHR political analysts then gave a detailed presentation of each of the candidates and the conditions under which their campaigns had been run, and answered the questions put by the members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the members of the European Parliament delegation. The latter part of this presentation was devoted to the various documents which the observers would have to complete when the polling stations opened, during voting and at the vote-counting stage. Particular importance was attached to the quality of the election observation, with various practical observations being made for the benefit of the members.

- **Meeting with the election candidates** (4 p.m. in the lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)

This meeting enabled the members of the delegations from the European Parliament and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to meet in turn with each of the six candidates standing in the presidential election, with the notable exception of Mr Bakiev, who was represented by his election campaign manager. Following an introductory presentation, the candidates replied to many questions relating to the funding of their campaigns and the conditions under which they had been run. Mr Bakiev's representative was questioned particularly closely on the reasons for Mr Bakiev not attending the joint election campaign meetings with the other candidates.

Discussions were also held with the candidates on the possibility that pressure was being exerted on students and on the possible 'buying' of votes. The level of resources available to Mr Bakiev was clearly very disproportionate to those available to the other candidates. Only Mr Bakir Ulu appeared to have satisfactory campaign resources, but

these were still not comparable to those available to Mr Bakiev. However, it was impossible to establish any objective causes of discrimination between the different candidates.

- **Presentation of the deployment of the observation teams by the long-term OSCE observers** (7 p.m., lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)

The two teams based in Bishkek had each conducted an assessment of the zones in which they would conduct their observation missions – namely the city of Bishkek and the northern Bishkek region in the case of Mr Maat and Mrs Corbey, and the eastern region to Tokmok and Balykchy in the direction of Lake Issyk-Kul in the case of Mr Weber and Mrs Mathieu.

- **Meetings with the interpreters and chauffeurs assigned to the teams** (8 p.m., lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)

The two teams met the chauffeurs and interpreters available to them for their day-long observation mission on 10 July.

## **2. Observation of the elections on 10 July 2005: poll-opening, vote-casting and vote-counting procedures**

### **General observations**

- **Bishkek: urban area and northern Bishkek region**

The two teams were ready at 5.30 in the morning to take part, until 8.00 a.m., in the preparations for the vote and the opening of the polling booths in the city of Bishkek. The two teams were both of the opinion that the different stages of the electoral process leading up to the start of polling, which began at 7.30 a.m., had been perfectly respected. The election staff gave completely satisfactory answers to the questions put to them by the EP observers. Monitoring was then conducted of the various polling stations in Bishkek and its northern region by the team consisting of Mr Maat, head of the delegation, and Mrs Corbey.

Prior to each of the visits to polling stations, the forms provided by the OSCE were completed. Discussions were then held, with the help of an interpreter, with the polling station manager, the observers and voters. By following this procedure throughout the day the team was able to establish a clear and sufficiently broad view of the vote-casting process.

The following observations were made:

- the general atmosphere was very relaxed, both among the election staff and among voters, despite a very high temperature of over 40°C;
  - no apparent pressure was exerted, either inside or outside the polling stations;
  - the only instances in which voting was denied, which occurred in very few cases, was due to the absence of valid identity documents;
  - the system for identifying people who had already voted seemed to work very well (marking with a transparent spray, with someone at the entrance to the polling station checking for previous markings by means of an ultraviolet lamp);
  - all the other aspects connected with the electoral process (presence of candidate posters, information on the running of the elections) was as it should be;
  - the observation team did not detect any cases of fraud. The only incidents worthy of mention were reported by observers they met in the street, one of whom said that a polling station manager had been uncooperative and the other that a bus had been put at voters' disposal so they could get to a polling station. However, it was not possible to verify these claims;
  - the closing of the ballot and the counting of the vote were covered by the two Bishkek-based teams in the same polling stations as for the opening of the ballot. The whole of this phase of the proceedings also took place under good conditions, even if electoral procedure was a little confused as regarded the counting of the ballot papers. This in no way affected the accuracy of the results published at the polling station.
- **Tokmok region, Balykchy**

The team consisting of Mr Henri Weber and Mrs Véronique Mathieu visited numerous polling stations, located solely in very extensive rural areas. Their perception was exactly the same as for the Bishkek area – namely that the electoral process was very calm and orderly, with no incidents to report. Comments are similar to those for the Bishkek region.

○ **Osh region**

The observation team for Osh consisted of Mrs Elisabeth Jeggle and Mr John Attard-Montalto.

The first item on the local programme was a meeting with the Governor of Osh. The meeting was held in a frank, constructive and friendly atmosphere. The Governor said that they had prepared for elections as best they could and had taken account of past mistakes. The Governor hoped for a good turn-out in the remote regions as well, as people were proud of their voting rights and wanted to exercise them so they could live in

peace and full security and, in the long term, achieve economic growth. The Governor assured the observation team that they would have full freedom of movement and inspection on the following day. During a visit in the afternoon of 10 July, the day of the election, it was noted that, contrary to reports of ‘combatants’, the situation in the region was calm and relaxed. Thus, people from Uzbekistan were able to pass through the border area without hindrance and shop in a bazaar close to the frontier bridge before returning home over the bridge. There were also no restrictions of any kind on the observation team. Later in the afternoon, a meeting with a representative of Kyrgyzstan’s German-speaking minority further confirmed that the election preparations had been objective, correct, transparent and fair.

On election day, observation was carried out in the polling stations of Osh – the home territory of Tursunbay Bakir uulu, a former Islamic extremist – and Arawan, an area with a large Uzbek majority.

On their visits to the polling stations, including barracks, the observation team became convinced that everything was being done in complete legality. The ballot boxes were sealed Plexiglass containers and portraits of all the candidates were displayed in the polling stations. The staff were discreet, friendly and neutral. Nowhere was there any indication of voters being influenced, political intimidation or voluntary manipulation.

The same conclusions were reached as a result of conversations with voters and other election observers.

Counting, which took place in an election office, was observed and no irregularities were detected. At the request of an observer acting for Mr Bakiev, one of the candidates, some papers were counted again, with no objections and no changes to the result. In the Osh central office, 18 votes were counted for Mr Tursunbay Bakir uulu and 874 for Mr Bakiev.

Conversations in the places visited, generally gave the impression – also reflected in the results – that a large majority of voters supported the Bakiev-Kulov duo, one of whom originates from the south, the other from the north of Kyrgyzstan.

Judging by observation in Osh and Arawan, the elections – despite the intense heat – may be considered to have been conducted democratically.

### **3. Analysis of the results and remarks**

- Exchanges of views between the members of the European Parliament delegation and the members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (8.30 a.m. lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)



The members of the two delegations exchanged similar views on the running of the elections – namely that there had been strict observance of electoral procedures and no outright fraud.

- Preparatory meeting on publication of the final communiqué and press release with the delegation heads (9.30 a.m., OSCE offices)

On the basis of the information gathered by the observers, the heads of the three delegations (OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and European Parliament) adopted, after making certain changes, a draft joint declaration attesting to the fact that the elections had been run in a generally sound manner and that tangible progress had been made since the last, legislative, elections.

A draft press release was also considered and was approved by the European Parliament delegation.

- Press conference by the delegation heads (3.00 p.m., lounge of the Hyatt Hotel)

The three delegation heads made statements to the press conference and then replied to the questions asked by the press.

The statement by Mr Maat, head of the EP delegation, focused on four main points:

- the reasons for a European Parliament delegation being present at this presidential election in Kyrgyzstan;
- its positive appraisal of the electoral process;
- the excellent cooperation between the European Parliament delegation and the OSCE/ODIHR on the one hand, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the other;
- the lessons drawn by European Parliament concerning the changes in Kyrgyzstan and in Central Asia and the role of the European Union in that region.

## **Conclusions**

The ad hoc delegation that monitored the running of the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan on 10 July 2005:

- points out firstly that this observation mission was conducted at the sole initiative of the European Parliament and did not therefore form part of a general European Union election observation mission;
- welcomes nevertheless the excellent conditions in which it was able to carry out its work thanks to the cooperation of the OSCE/ODIHR, which gave the European Parliament a

similar status and role to that of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and would like to express its sincere thanks to the OSCE/ODIHR on this account;

- emphasises the excellent preparations for the observation procedure made during the several months previous by the OSCE on the one hand, and the other third country and NGO observation missions on the other;
- concerning the electoral process:
  - would point to the particularly difficult political circumstances in which these presidential elections were prepared and held and the importance of the electoral process running smoothly in order to restore the confidence of the people of Kyrgyzstan and give real democratic legitimacy to the election;
  - considers, on the basis of the information gathered from the candidates, that the electoral campaign was run in a transparent manner, despite it being noted that a very disproportionate level of resources was available to the best placed candidate and that democratic life in Kyrgyzstan has clearly not yet made for the emergence of sufficiently diverse and balanced political forces;
  - considers that the Central Electoral Commission was able, thanks to assistance from the OSCE and other foreign observers, to implement an electoral procedure that enabled the election to run under satisfactory conditions;
  - stresses the competence and professionalism shown by the election staff at all the polling stations visited, noting in particular the very high proportion of women among the election staff;
  - could testify to the effectiveness of the practical procedures for combating fraud, be it the marking of electors who had voted or the checking of elector identities, as well as the effective provision of information for electors;
  - considers that the vote-counting at the polling stations was conducted in a transparent manner, in the presence of numerous local and foreign observers, but nevertheless regrets that it was not possible for it to be more involved in the process of the collation of votes from the local to the national level;
  - considers the fact that no inducements or fraud were noted to be a positive signal that Kyrgyzstan is now aware of the need to move towards a completely democratic form of political life;

### **Final observations**

- firmly believes that the high voter turn-out in this election and the sizeable involvement of foreign observers in the organisation and running of the election constitutes a major step towards the establishing of genuine democracy in Kyrgyzstan;
- hopes that the newly-elected President will embrace the democratic practices and the rehabilitation of political life longed for by the whole of the population;
- emphasises the crucial role the European Union must play in this country and in the countries of Central Asia as a whole, both to consolidate their democratisation and in support of their economic and social development;
- hopes in particular that the EU Member States reflect the interest it is their duty to take in Kyrgyzstan through an increase in their diplomatic presence;
- urges the Commission to deploy more resources and increase its visibility in that country;
- recommends that the European Parliament fully recognise the strategic position of the countries of Central Asia and take special care to ensure optimal use of EU budgetary resources in that region;
- recommends that the EP delegation responsible for the countries of Central Asia establish relations as swiftly as possible with the newly-elected President in order to follow political, economic and social developments in Kyrgyzstan with the utmost attention and to consider the most effective means of supporting them.

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## AD HOC DELEGATION FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION

Kyrgyzstan  
Presidential elections  
Sunday, 10 July 2005

### PROGRAMME

#### Friday 8 July

01h10 and 05h00 Individual arrivals in Bishkek and transfer to

#### *Hyatt Regency Bishkek*

*Sovietskaya 191  
720011 Bishkek  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Tel: +996 312 66 12 34  
Fax: +996 312 66 57 44  
E-mail: [bishkek@hyattintl.com](mailto:bishkek@hyattintl.com)*

15h00 OSCE briefing meeting with Ambassador Kopaj for EP representatives travelling to OSH,

*OSCE Election Observation Mission Office  
30/1 Sultan Ibraimova St  
Bishkek, 720021  
Kyrgyzstan  
Tel.: +996 312 90 12 83/84  
Fax: +996 312 90 12 87  
E-mail: [office@eom.kg](mailto:office@eom.kg)*

16.00 meeting with German ambassador and French chargé d'affaires

17h30 meeting with US ambassador

19h30 dinner with German ambassador, French Chargé, OSCE ambassador and head of OSCE PA delegation, ODIHR ambassador, Santa Maria restaurant

#### Saturday 9 July

*OSH team*

*06h50 depart Silk Road hotel for Manas airport*

*08h40 flight departs for Osh (EJ, JAM, MMD)*

*09h50 arrive Osh*

*11h00 meeting with Long Term observers in Osh*

*14h00 meeting with Governor of Osh*

*15h30 meeting with German minority representative in Osh*

Bishkek team

11h00	Election Commission	Meeting with Mr. Tuygunaaly Abdraimov, Chairman of the Central Commission
12h00		Head of Delegations meeting with Mrs Rosa Otunbaeva, Minister of Foreign Affairs
14.00		OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Briefing
14.00 - 14.20		Briefing session at Hyatt Hotel with Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, Head of OSCE long-term mission
14.20 - 14.50		Question and Answer session (All mission experts present)
14.50 - 15.00		Observation forms and deployment details
16h00-19h00		Meeting with candidates
19h00-20h30		Meetings with Long Term Observers, drivers and interpreters

### **Sunday 10 July**

05h30-23h30 Election day - observation

### **Monday 11 July**

*Osh team*

*07h15 departure to Osh airport*

*09h00 departure of flight*

*10h10 arrive Bishkek*

Bishkek team

09h30 Debriefing of delegations - Hyatt Hotel

15h00 OSCE/EP joint press conference - Hyatt hotel  
18h30 Debriefing with STO observers  
20h00 Reception for all observers, Dasmia restaurant

**Tuesday 12 July**

06h05 and 06h45 Individual departures for Europe

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## AD HOC DELEGATION FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION

Kyrgyzstan  
 Presidential elections  
 Sunday, 10 July 2005

### LIST OF MEMBERS AND ACCOMPANYING STAFF

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Committee</b>
Mr Albert Jan MAAT Chair of Delegation	EPP-ED	Netherlands	Agriculture
Mr John ATTARD- MONTALTO	PES	Malta	Industry, Research and Energy
Mrs Dorette CORBEY	PES	Netherlands	Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Ms Elisabeth JEGGLE	EPP-ED	Germany	Agriculture
Ms Veronique MATHIEU	EPP-ED	France	Budgetary Control
Mr Henri WEBER	PES	France	Culture and Education

EPP-ED  
 PES

Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats  
 Group of the Party of European Socialists

### **Secretariat of the Delegation**

Mr Jean-Louis BERTON  
 Ms Morag DONALDSON

### **Political Group Advisors**

Mr Ambroise PERRIN    PES group