

Election Monitoring is a world observatory of electoral ballots. A guide that, time after time, will make public the electoral results and strategies of countries to which the western media don't give a voice. Everything will be accompanied by a summarized report on the socio-economic as well as political conditions of the countries under scrutiny

ELECTION MONITORING

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Contrasto_Reuters

ARMENIA

■ The country on the eve of elections

Deprived of access to the sea and penalised by the closing of its borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia has based its economic recovery after the crash of 1991-93 on some fixed points: a pro-Russian orientation in international relations, financial help from the wealthy Armenian diaspora and a focus on the manufacturing sector. The country has experienced a genuine economic boom since 2000, with growth rates consistently hovering above the 10% mark.

Following independence in 1991, politics in Armenia were heavily influenced by the country's long-drawn-out war with Azerbaijan for control of Nagorno-Karabach, an Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan. When the ceasefire was declared in 1994, Armenia and its allies controlled 14% of Azeri land. In 1998 widespread protests forced the first Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian – charged with having made concessions to Azerbaijan – to resign. Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, formerly President of Nagorno-Karabach, won the presidential elections and was subsequently re-elected in 2003. Kocharian, who closed the country's main independent television

While the democratic quality of the Armenian elections has improved with the latest round of elections, the objective of total respect for international standards remains unachieved

network and was accused of major electoral fraud, managed to survive a strong protest movement in 2004 at the height of a serious political crisis. The governing coalition, composed of the Republican Party (HHK), the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (HHD) and the Rule of Law (OE), emerged victorious from the controversial 2003 elections. OE left the coalition in May 2006; the opposition bloc, for its part, dissolved, while the new Prosperous Armenia (BHK) party founded by the billionaire Gagik Tsarukian has succeeded in rapidly gathering voting intentions. A few months before the May elections, the Republican Party, the main political party, lost its leader, Prime Minister Andranik Margarian, who was felled by a heart attack. Replacing Margarian was a very delicate task, as the new leader of the Republicans would inherit the political legacy of Kocharian, who has come to the end of his second and final term as Head of State. On 26 March, Defence Minister Serge Sargsian was named Prime Minister and leader of the majority party and prepared to face up in a short time

ARMENIA IN FIGURES

Area	29,800 sq. km
Capital	Erevan (1,088,000 inhab.)
Population (2007)	2,971,650
Ethnic groups	Armenian 97.9%, Kurd 1.3%, Russian 0.5%, others 0.3%
Religions	Armenian Apostolic 94.7%, other Christians 4%, Yazidism 1.3%
Languages	Armenian 97.7%, Kurd 1%, Russian 0.9%, others 0.4%
Currency	1 dram = 0.00208237 (25/05/2007)
International dialling code	+374
Web domain	.am

Sources: Cia, Ecb, Wb

FREEDOMS IN ARMENIA

Death penalty	Abolitionist
Index of political rights ¹	5
Index of civil liberties ¹	4
Status	Partially free country
Assessment of the elections by international observers*	Not entirely regular

Points go from 1 (total freedom) to 7 (lack of freedom)

Sources: Amnesty International, Freedom House

*OSCE observation mission

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

GDP (PPP), 2006	11.89 bln
GDP growth, 2006	13.4%
GDP per capita (PPP) – 232 countries, 2006	10,928 (128)
Competitiveness index (125 countries), 2006	82
Human development index (177 countries), 2006	80
Index of women's representation in power, (75 countries), 2006	
Year women received active and passive right to vote	1918
Life expectancy, 2006	71.6 anni
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	74%

Sources: Undp, Wb, Wef

to the decisive stage of the legislative elections, a necessary consecration for his future presidential ambitions.

■ Voting: how and for whom

On 12 May, Armenian citizens aged 18 and over, been resident in the country for at least a year before the elections, renewed the 131 members of the National

ARMENIA: POLITICAL ELECTIONS OF 12 MAY 2007		
party	seats 2007	seats 2003
republican party of Armenia (Hhk)	64	33
Prosperous Armenia (Bhk)	18	/
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Hhd)	16	11
Stato di diritto (Oe)	9	19
Heritage	7	/
other	17	68
total (women)	131 (n.a.)	131 (6)

Source: Cec

Assembly (*Azgayin joghov*). MPs are elected for a four-year term: 41 are elected in as many single-member constituencies through a simple majority system, while the remaining 90 seats are attributed using a proportional system in a single national constituency to lists having crossed a 5% vote threshold.

■ The elections

The Republican Party and its new leader Serge Sargsian managed a genuine electoral triumph, nearly doubling the number of seats in Parliament compared to 2003. This result, combined with an excellent performance by the government's partner HHD, which is part of Socialist International, has given the ruling coalition a comfortable majority in Parliament. The old opposition players for their part suffered a serious defeat, which contrasted with Prosperous Armenia's excellent debut: the party, which came in second, will certainly become the reference point for those who wish to stop Sargsian taking over from Robert Kocharian at the country's helm.

Although the democratic quality of the Armenian elections has improved, the objective of total respect of international standards remains unachieved.

EAST TIMOR

■ The country on the eve of elections

East Timor became independent on 20 May 2002 after over three centuries of Portuguese colonisation and 25 years of brutal Indonesian occupation, which caused 200,000 deaths. The fall of the dictator Suharto in 1999 led the new Indonesia President Habibie to hold a referendum in which the East Timorese voted for independence. Violent clashes instigated by extremist Indonesian military circles broke out soon after. Pro-Indonesian militias destroyed 70% of the island's property, production facilities and infrastructure, forcing 75% of the population to flee. The arrival of an international contingent and a United Nations mission contributed, however, to easing tensions and laying the ground for the birth of the new State.

East Timor has the highest rate of population increase in the world today, an element that further worsens the scourge of poverty and unemployment, which now affects one of two Timorese. The current population will double within the next 18 years and the only hope of avoiding dramatic consequences is the growth of coffee plantations and, above all, the rich gas and oil resources off the Timorese coast. However this area is disputed by Australia, which had signed a very advantageous resource-sharing agreement with the old Indonesian regime. Timor cannot stake its own

EAST TIMOR IN FIGURES

Area	15,007 sq. km
Capital	Dili (150,000 inhab.)
Population (2007)	1,084,971
Ethnic groups	Austronesian, Papuan, Chinese
Religions	Catholic 98%, Protestant 1%, Muslim 1%
Languages	Tetum, Portuguese, others
Currency	1 USD = 1.3441 (25/05/2007)
International dialling code	+670
Web domain	.ti

Sources: Cia, Ecb, Wb

FREEDOMS IN EAST TIMOR

Death penalty	Abolitionist
Index of political rights ¹	3
Index of civil liberties ¹	4
Status	Partially free country
Assessment of the elections by international observers*	Regular

Points go from 1 (total freedom) to 7 (lack of freedom)

Sources: Amnesty International, Freedom House

*European Commission Electoral Observation Mission

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

GDP (PPP), 2004	275 bln
GDP growth, 2005	1.8%
GDP per capita (PPP) – 232 countries, 2004	254 (223)
Competitiveness index (125 countries), 2006	122
Human development index (177 countries), 2006	142
Index of women's representation in power, (75 countries), 2006	n/a
Year women received active and passive right to vote	2002
Life expectancy, 2006	56
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	71.7%

Sources: Undp, Wb, Wef

claim at international courts because the government of Canberra refused to acknowledge its authority on the issue of maritime controversies shortly before the little island became independent. A temporary agreement on a single methane field signed by the two governments in 2005 has given the Timorese economy a respite. However, in 2006, groups of dissati-

sified soldiers clashed with troops loyal to the government, sparking off a serious crisis and a fresh intervention by international troops. This episode had major repercussions on Timorese political life, dominated by FreTILin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). The charismatic President Xanana Gusmão and the then Foreign and Defence Minister José Ramos Horta, Nobel Prize for Peace winner and founder of FreTILin, resigned from the party they had contributed to founding. Following a prolonged deadlock, Horta was named prime minister and started preparing to run against FreTILin at the 2007 presidential elections.

■ Voting: how and for whom

Timorese citizens aged 18 and over voted to elect the President of the Republic on 9 April and 9 May. The job is assigned to the candidate having obtained an absolute majority of votes; in case no candidate manages this feat, a second round is held with the two candidates having won the most votes. The President is a guarantor with the power to dissolve Parliament in case of serious institutional crises, convene extraordinary sessions and fix the date of the elections. The President also names the Director of Public Prosecution and the President of the Supreme Court.

■ The elections

The rival candidates at the elections were the FreTILin candidate, the speaker of parliament Francisco Guterres, the Prime Minister Ramos Horta who had the backing of outgoing President Gusmão, Fernando de Araújo, leader of the Democratic Party and five minor candidates. After the first round, Guterres and Ramos Horta prepared for the decisive round of voting. FreTILin accused the Australian contingent of heavy interference in favour of Ramos Horta, who had meanwhile also obtained the backing of Fernando de Araújo and four of the five other candidates. On 9 May, José Ramos Horta became the second President of Timor, obtaining an easy victory with nearly 70% of the vote.

EAST TIMOR: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 9 APRIL AND 9 MAY 2007

candidates	1 st round	2 nd round
Francisco Guterres, Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor	27.89%	30.82%
José Ramos Horta, independent	21.81%	69.18%
Fernando de Araújo, Democratic Party	19.18%	/
Francisco Xavier do Amaral, Timorese Social Democratic Association	14.39%	/
Lúcia Lobato, Social Democratic Association	8.86%	/
Manuel Tilman, Association of Timorese Heroes	4.09%	/
Avelino Coelho da Silva, Socialist Party of Timor	2.06%	/
João Viegas Carrascalão, Timorese Democratic Union	1.72%	/

Source: cne