

# UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR ALBANIA'S 2013 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

*"Now, as Albanians look forward to the June 23 Parliamentary Elections, we stand at the beginning of a new chapter in Albania's history -- one that should be defined by flourishing democracy indisputably built upon the will of the people."*  
— U.S. Ambassador to Albania Alexander A. Arvizu

## Monitoring Pre-Election Period

To assess how Albania is preparing for the June elections, the Embassy's Political and Economic Section is sending officers to cities throughout Albania. During these trips, the officers meet with local government officials, political party representatives, and other groups to view election preparations first hand. They also meet with national leaders from all the main political parties and many smaller ones to share opinions on the upcoming elections.

## Pre-Election Debates



The U.S. Embassy is hosting a series of pre-election debates that will be televised

on Albanian networks prior to the elections in June 2013. The goal is to introduce issue-based policy debate into the electoral process, to encourage political parties to focus on issues in their campaigns, and to engage citizens in policy discussions on issues relevant to Albania's future. The debate participants are Party Youth League members from five Albanian political parties. Debate participants have received policy and rhetoric training, and the debates will be moderated by skilled practitioners. This will be the first international-style debate televised in Albania.

## Central Elections Commission

The U.S. is providing technical assistance to the Albanian Central Elections Commission in two major areas: 1) Election planning and preparation, including an electoral integrity assessment, assistance with operational and departmental plans, work on a civic engagement strategy, and IT preparation and training; and 2) Post-election planning and evaluation, including work to evaluate the effectiveness of pilot technologies and an assessment of the execution of electoral duties at all relevant levels. The two major goals of this program are to provide world-class technical assistance to the CEC to have a positive impact on June 2013 elections, and to use lessons-learned to work towards stronger electoral institutions in the future.

## Domestic Elections Monitoring

USAID is sponsoring a NGO-based monitoring effort, the Coalition of Domestic Observers, which will monitor all the electoral process, including the pre-election, voting, and counting periods. The Coalition will recruit, train, and deploy highly visible, independent domestic observers in all regions of Albania. The Coalition will also provide regular updates to the public and the media on elections preparations, and near real-time updates during elections day and during the ballot voting process.



**Koalicioni i Vëzhguesve Vendorë 2013**

## U.S. 2013 Elections Support

Central Election Commission

Domestic Elections Monitoring

Pre-Election Debates

Support for Civil Society

Elections Working Group

Monitoring Pre-Election Period

## International Observation and Strengthening of Domestic Monitoring

The U.S. will provide through USAID support to the National Democratic Institute to perform international observation work and to better integrate the work of international observers with domestic monitors. In addition, international technical experts will advise local civil society organization on monitoring best practices.



## Support for Civil Society

Albania's civil society has a vital role in ensuring the integrity of the June 23, 2013 parliamentary elections. For this reason, US Embassy-Tirana Democracy Commission Small Grants Program is supporting civil society efforts that address the most important aspects of the electoral process in Albania, including get-out-the-vote initiatives, electoral rights and access for disabled, Roma, LGBT and other disadvantaged or minority groups, women's participation as voters and candidates, first-time and youth voters, citizens forums, and social media campaigns.

## Democracy Commission Grants

- Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
- Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
- YWCA of Albania
- Alliance against discrimination of LGBT and Pro LGBT
- EDEN Center
- Women in Development
- Institute of Romani Culture in Albania
- Institute for Welfare and Environment
- SFIDA - Students For Integrated Developmental Action
- Balkan Youth Link – Albania (BYL-A)
- Association for Integration of Informal Areas (AIIA) and MJAFT! Movement
- Vlora Youth Center

## Donor Coordination

The United States, a signatory to the Paris Declaration and the follow-on Busan Agreement is committed to working alongside of Albanian and international partners to ensure a free, fair, and transparent election. From CEC support and debate sponsorship to international and domestic monitoring, the United States has designed and launched these programs after thorough consultation with Albanian and international stakeholders. Through the participation in regular donor harmonization meetings targeting elections assistance, the United States will continue to seek guidance from these stakeholders as activities move from design to implementation.