

**Slide No. 1**

**Round table "Kyrgyzstan on eve of Parliament Elections 2020 – Elections during pandemic: Pro and Con” in the framework of the Dialog Program “Administrative Reform in Central Asia” of the German Hanns Seidel Foundation.**

**Круглый стол на тему " Кыргызстан накануне выборов в Жогорку Кенеш - Выборы во время пандемии: За и Против " в рамках диалоговой программы по административной реформе Фонда Ханнса Зайделя.**

**Дата проведения/ Date: 22 сентября /September 2020**

**Место проведения/Venue: Бишкек, Парк отель / Bishkek, Park Hotel**

***(On the slide there should be also logos of different Kyrgyz political parties)***

**Slide No. 2**

**Parliament Elections 2020 in Kyrgyzstan**

**Questions for Roundtable**

**1.** **Should decisions made by Central Election and Referenda Commission be final or should Kyrgyz Political Parties in case of objection have the right to apply for administrative courts?**

**2. Why elections for national parliament and local elections are not organized during the same day?**

**3.** **Why candidates for parliament all come from party lists and are not candidates for a certain election district they will be responsible in case they are elected?**

**(On the slide there should be also photos from election campaign of different Kyrgyz political parties)**

**Introductionary speech of Max Georg Meier, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Representative for Central Asia:**

**Alga, Kyrgyzstan!**

“Dear guests of our business lunch today in the eve of parliament elections in Kyrgyzstan.

I welcome you cordially in the name of Hanns Seidel Foundation.

I thank everybody who contributed that we could organize this meeting in presence and not online like during the previous weeks.

First of all I want to underline that I think the decision to hold parliament elections in time was right despite Coronavirus. The members/deputies of the 6. Convention of Kyrgyz parliament seemed to be tired and exhausted.

To hold election also in time of COVID-19 is brave, but I am sure that Kyrgyzstan will hold the elections the best way they can do despite difficult conditions (preparations from official side are underway). Also, now the campaign period shows us that political parties know about their responsibility for the health of the people. And we should remember that the referendum for a new constitution in June 2010 was much riskier and more difficult – especially in the south of the country. But especially in difficult situations Kyrgyz people show high performance, flexibility and creativity.

From the point of **technology used for elections,** Kyrgyzstan with biometric application and automatically reading ballot boxes can be an example for a lot of countries worldwide.

But I want to take this opportunity to give also some comments from my side on the upcoming elections:

1. Why it was not possible to **combine elections for national parliament and local elections**? In times of pandemic for the voter this would have been much more easier and decrease his/her health risk, the total organization for CEC would have been easier, and two combined elections would have been cheaper – also if we are looking to the limited budget resources of the state. In European countries this practice is quite common.

(Please show here as Slide No. 3 my previous official letter to CEC which was not answered.)

2. **Why candidates for parliament all come from party lists and are not candidates for a certain election district they will be responsible in case they are elected?** I prefer an election system where the candidate is elected directly by the voters from one election district. This will force him/her to have close contacts to the region and his voters. And this system will also contribute that the political parties are getting stronger anchored in the regions. If political parties just are made active for elections by their leaders (used as election tools), they will not be of great benefit for the development of the country.

3. In times of pandemic it would have been useful also for Kyrgyzstan **to introduce postal voting**. Voters being absent on the day of voting could have used this tool and also for health reasons crowds of people in front of polling stations could have been prevented. At least let´s think about this alternative for upcoming elections – with Bishkek city as pilot election region.

4. **Should decisions made by Central Election and Referenda Commission be final or should Kyrgyz Political Parties in case of objection have the right to apply for administrative courts?** I think that political parties should not have this right. Regular administrative courts have not the competence to decide during the democratic process of elections and are also to my understanding not authorized by law. I could not find such a practice also in one of the 27 EU-Member States. If there are objections from the side of the political parties, in general there is a commission in parliament to decide about it. But this matter could be discussed by law experts.

These are my comments.

I wish you a fruitful discussion!

And stay healthy – keep attention to the hygienic rules during ongoing pandemic!

Thanks!