



19TH INTERNATIONAL ELECTORAL AFFAIRS SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS CEREMONY



Recognising excellence in
electoral management



19TH INTERNATIONAL ELECTORAL AFFAIRS SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS

13-16 NOVEMBER 2023
LISBON – PORTUGAL

PANELS

INTERACTIVE
DELIBERATIONS ON
GLOBAL TRENDS

DISCUSSION

CONNECT WITH
EXPERTS AND
LIKEMINDED PEERS

AWARDS

CELEBRATING
EXCELLENCE IN THE
ELECTORAL SPHERE



ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The 19th International Electoral Symposium and International Awards Ceremony is hosted by the Portuguese National Electoral Commission (CNE) in partnership with the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS).

The Symposium will gather representatives from the electoral democracy community and election management bodies from around the globe to share best practice initiatives, evaluate new technologies and tools, and cultivate innovative strategies for adaptation in their individual countries and regions.

During the symposium, attendees will hear from leading international experts, delivering diverse perspectives on effective election management.

Over the course of two days, the symposium will feature a mix of interactive presentations, round-table dialogues, and industry demonstrations. These sessions will be enriched by the vast expertise of senior electoral officials, renowned academic professionals, and global solution providers, all of whom have extensive experience in planning and supervising successful elections on an international scale.

The Symposium will cover a range of pressing topics, including:

- Navigating Pandemic Challenges: Overcoming COVID-19's impact on elections.
- Monitoring the Electoral Cycle: Insights into the balance of observers and the observed.
- Advancements in Voting Tech: A look at biometrics and the rise of electronic voting.
- Kenya's 2022 Success: The pivotal role of technology in their recent elections.
- Electoral Norms & Integrity: Deciphering regulations and strategies to counter disinformation.

Finally, the symposium will proudly host the International Electoral Awards Ceremony, dedicated to acknowledging the tireless efforts of the international electoral community by celebrating their monumental contribution to the democratic process on a global stage.



DEAR COLLEAGUES



It is a great honour to be hosting the International Symposium on Electoral Affairs for the second time in Portugal.

On behalf of the Portuguese National Electoral Commission, I welcome you all, and especially those of you who are visiting us for the first time.

Bringing together experts from so many countries is an excellent opportunity to reflect on electoral matters, share experiences and best practices so that today's challenges, such as fake news or combating low turnout, can be overcome more easily. These meetings are opportunities for us to see beyond.

The programme covers the most pressing and topical issues in electoral affairs.

We will discuss technological and social issues, the influence of new technologies on our mission, ways of ensuring and promoting the enlightenment of all citizens, how to view social networks, whether as a threat or an advantage.

We will also discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has tested us and how we have overcome this challenge, guaranteeing public health and the accessibility of elections.

Issues such as gender equality and the participation of women in political life, the participation of young voters and guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities or special needs are important challenges for all of us.

The National Electoral Commission will be celebrating its 50th anniversary next year, but it has maintained the same essence since its creation: to ensure that the rights of citizens and candidates laid down in the Constitution are respected in all electoral acts.

Regardless of the shapes it takes and the number of years in each cycle, democracy must always be worked on and, if I may make the comparison, like any good relationship, it must be worked on often so that it doesn't fade away.

José Vítor Soreto de Barros
President of the National Electoral Commission of Portugal

ABOUT CNE

The National Electoral Commission of Portugal was created in 1974, to regulate the election for the Constituent Assembly, the new Constitution was approved in 1976 and is still in force.

The Commission is the high body of electoral administration, it is independent and works before the Portuguese Parliament.

Throughout the last 49 years, CNE has regulated and monitored over 640 elections and 15 referenda.

CNE is now composed of 10 members, who are independent when exercising their functions and who cannot be removed from office.

The President is a judge from Supreme Court of Justice, to be appointed by Superior Council of Judges. The other members are citizens of renowned merit (nowadays 6), to be elected by the Parliament, in a single list, being each one proposed by a parliamentary group, and three experts, appointed one by each governmental departments with competencies for the areas of Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Media. CNE can appoint delegates and usually there are CNE's delegates for the autonomous regions of Azores and Madeira.



COMISSÃO NACIONAL DE ELEIÇÕES

This plural composition has brought an equilibrium to CNE, which is reflected by the fact that most decisions are adopted by consensus or unanimity.

The National Electoral Commission aims to promote the objective awareness of citizens regarding elections and referenda, to ensure the equality of treatment of all citizens in all operations of voter registration, as well as regarding elections and referenda, and to ensure equal opportunities of political action and campaign of all candidacies in a given election, as well as regarding those campaigning in referenda.

CNE is currently enhancing international cooperation with organizations such as A-WEB and the Network of Electoral Jurisdictional and Administration Bodies of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries Community (ROJAE-CPLP).

DEAR COLLEAGUES



On behalf of the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies, I extend a warm welcome to the 2023 International Electoral Affairs Symposium in Lisbon, Portugal.

I express my deep appreciation to the Portuguese National Electoral Commission for their invaluable support in co-hosting this year's Symposium.

Throughout its history, ICPS has consistently offered a pivotal platform where Electoral Management Bodies, technology and service providers, NGOs, and other global stakeholders converge. This symposium allows these parties to discuss challenges and prospects in electoral management, seeking tangible solutions that free and transparent elections.

The COVID-19 pandemic added unparalleled challenges to the electoral landscape. As the world grappled with health concerns, our industry displayed remarkable resilience and adaptability. The dedication of electoral bodies worldwide amid the crisis highlights the unwavering spirit of democratic processes and paves the way for future resilience in our field.

Beyond the pandemic, the electoral realm continues to grapple with myriad challenges, spanning from enhancing the social media presence of EMBs, addressing the spread of misinformation, galvanizing the youth electorate, mediating conflicts, elevating voter participation, to harnessing modern tools that foster democracy in our ever-evolving digital age.

Our Symposium is designed to confront these vital concerns. I earnestly encourage each of you to immerse yourself in the discussions, pooling best practices with colleagues to ensure we're collectively prepared for future challenges.

In closing, my heartfelt gratitude goes to all attendees for carving out time from their busy schedules to join us.

I anticipate a rewarding, unforgettable, and enriching experience for all over the next few days in Portugal.

Matt Gokhool
Chief Executive
International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS)

ABOUT ICPS

The International Centre for Parliamentary Studies exists to promote effective policymaking and good governance through enhanced interaction between Parliaments, governments and other stakeholders in society.

The Centre's primary focus is the empowerment of human capital through capacity building. To this end, the Centre organises a range of training programmes, conferences and policy discussions to address current public policy issues on the international stage, within Europe and in the UK. These provide a forum for policy discussion, debate, networking and consolidation of international best practice.

ICPS also provides a range of in-country consultancy services to public administrations and government agencies around the world that bring tangible and lasting change. Our consultancy services cover a range of areas including electoral affairs, regulation, governance, public sector reform, health and security.

We have worked with a variety of international organisations including the World Bank, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Council of Europe, the African Development Bank, the European Development Bank, the International Labour Organisation, the International Organisation for Migration,



International Centre for Parliamentary Studies

USAID, and many UN bodies including the UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF.

We have also worked with a broad range of governments including the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Kenya, the UK, Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Portugal, Lithuania, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Bermuda, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia. We have trained more than 5,000 individuals and organisations in the last 4 years.

In addition, we are the publisher of The Government Gazette, a quarterly magazine which provides quality analytical and politically neutral coverage of the leading institutions and policymakers in the European Union.

MONDAY 13TH

ARRIVAL & WELCOMING DRINKS

10:00

Arrival & Registration – this will happen across the day as delegates arrive and check in at the hotel.

18:00

Welcome Drinks – drinks reception for all delegates hosted by the Portuguese National Electoral Commission.



TUESDAY 14TH

SYMPOSIUM DAY ONE – MORNING

10:00

Symposium Registration

10:30

Chair's Welcome and Opening Address

- His Excellency Mr. Augusto Santos Silva, President of the Parliament of Portugal, AR
- Lord Justice of the Supreme Court of Justice José Vitor Soreto de Barros, Presidente of the National Electoral Commission of Portugal (CNE)
- Mr. Matt Gokhool, Chief Executive of the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS)

11:00 – 12:00

Panel Discussion – Navigating Elections in a Pandemic: Lessons Learned from COVID-19

- João Almeida, Commissioner, Portuguese National Election Commission
- Joaquim Morgado, Commissioner, Portuguese National Election Commission
- Judge Patricia Lorenzo Paniagua, Central Electoral Commission of the Dominican Republic
- Thomas Hicks, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

12:00 – 12:15

Coffee Break & Networking

12:15 – 13:15

Keynote Presentation – The Observer & the Observed: How the Electoral Cycle is Monitored

- Alberto Guevara, Former Director of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (Mexico)

13:15 – 14:30

Lunch Break – lunch will be available for delegates in the restaurant of the Crowne Plaza.

TUESDAY 14TH

SYMPOSIUM DAY ONE – AFTERNOON

14:30 – 14:45

Symposium resumes

14:45 – 15:45

Panel Discussion– The Future of Voting: Voter Identification, Biometrics, and Electronic Voting

- Alberto Guevara, Former Director, the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (Mexico)
- Greg Essensa, Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Ontario
- Giorgi Kalandarishvili, Chairperson, Central Election Commission of Georgia
- Denis Kačan, Product Lead, Neurotechnology

15:45 – 16:00

Coffee Break & Networking

16:00 – 17:00

In Conversation – Kenya Election 2022: Success Story

- Wafula Chebukati, Former Chairman, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Kenya)

17:00 – 18:00

Fringe events: Industry demonstrations

Industry partners have stands across the back of the conference hall and will be welcoming delegates with demonstrations and discussions around leading and emerging technologies in the field of electoral management.

20:00

Dinner hosted by Neurotechnology at the Crowne Plaza

WEDNESDAY 15TH

SYMPOSIUM DAY TWO

09:30 – 09:45

Symposium Day Two Opening

09:45 – 10:45

Keynote Presentation – Demystifying Electoral Regulations & Procedures

- Madhukar Gupta, State Election Commissioner, Election Commission of Rajasthan

10:45 – 11:00

Coffee Break & Networking

11:00 – 12:00

Panel Discussion – Combating Disinformation: Strategies for Protecting Electoral Integrity

- Chair & Expert in Electoral Disinformation
- Thomas Hicks, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- Ingrid Bicu, Expert in Gender Disinformation
- Anna Nyqvist, Chief Executive, Swedish Electoral Authority

12:15 – 13:15

Keynote Presentation – Electoral Backsliding? Election quality worldwide, Future Threats & how Electoral Integrity can be Protected

- Toby James, Director, Electoral Integrity Project

13:15 – 13:30

Symposium Closing

13:30 – 14:30

Fringe events: Industry demonstrations

19:00

The International Electoral Awards Ceremony will start at 19:00, ending at 22:00. There will be a dinner and entertainment accompanying the awards ceremony.

THURSDAY 16TH

SIGHT SEEING TRIP & DEPARTURES

10:00

Departures and morning sight seeing. This day is reserved for a day tour in the morning for delegates who have late departures, and departures throughout the day.

10:00 – 13:00

Sight seeing trip to Cristo Rei Sanctuary, then onto the Queluz Palace, and finishing at the Jerónimos Monastery.



SPEAKERS' BIOS



Matt Gokhool
Chief Executive
International Centre for Parliamentary Studies

Matt is the Chief Executive of the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies. He has extensive experience of both the private sector and the workings of government. He is a qualified Barrister and a member of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. He has previously held the position of Chief Executive of the Outer Territories of Mauritius, and the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Communication Cell.

Matt was a founder member of Parliamentary Communications, which is the largest parliamentary and political communication organization in Europe. In 2005, he was nominated Chief Executive of Huveaux Learning which was the result of the merger of Westminster Explained, Epic plc and Fenman, thus creating the largest independent trainer of the UK Civil Service. He is presently the Chairman of the International Centre for Electoral Psychology and has assisted numerous Heads of States and Heads of Governments in their endeavor to engage with the electorate and to sustain their democratic principles through the electoral process.



Cesar Flores-Zavarce
Consultant
International Centre for Parliamentary Studies

Cesar is a seasoned international electoral specialist with over 18 years of experience in electronic voting systems, biometric voter registration, and online voting. He has contributed to electoral processes in 20+ countries, collaborating with a variety of stakeholders including election bodies, political parties, and NGOs.

Previously at Smartmatic, Cesar led the expansion of election technologies worldwide, stationed across Asia Pacific, Europe, and Latin America. He now runs his consultancy, Valencia Consulting, and advises groups like ICPS. Cesar studied Economics at Munich and Augsburg universities, and Sociology at Universidad Católica Andrés Bello.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



João Almeida
Commissioner
Portuguese National Election Commission

João graduated in Philosophy from the University of Coimbra. He has held various public positions for around 40 years and is now retired. For 20 years, the functions performed also involved electoral processes at both local and metropolitan level.

João was appointed member of the National Electoral Commission by the Portuguese Parliament in March 2003 and successively until the present legislature (2005, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022).

João is the former site's administrator and spokesperson, is now the Commission's elected secretary.



Joaquim Morgado
Commissioner
Portuguese National Election Commission

Joaquim serves as Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Internal Administration and heads the Portuguese Electoral Administration (AE/SGMAI), overseeing national voter registration and elections at various levels. In 2018, he spearheaded the Electronic Voting Pilot for the 2019 European Parliament election in Évora. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, his team successfully managed multiple elections in recent years. Since 2022, Joaquim has been a member of the National Elections Commission.

With over two decades of experience, Joaquim has coordinated intricate projects in domains such as ICT, Security, and Cybersecurity for several governmental entities, including CEGER, PSP, CI-RNSI, UTIS, ITIJ, CNCS, and INEM.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Ingrid Bicu
Expert in Gender Disinformation

Ingrid is a Research Associate at the University of Salamanca, who has had a progressive career of over 17 years in international affairs and in the electoral field. She consistently focuses on exploring opportunities and challenges stemming from rapid technological advancements through a human rights lens. Ingrid provides expert contributions to national and international organizations across areas including emerging digital challenges, artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, strategic communication, open source and competitive intelligence.

A substantial portion of her current research centres on the impact of digital and AI-enabled technologies on human rights and democracy. Ingrid places special emphasis on contexts marked by instability and conflict, with a particular concern for women and marginalized groups.



Wafula Chebukati
Former Chairman at the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Kenya)

Wafula is the former Chairperson of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission in Kenya and former President of the General Assembly of Association of African Election Authorities. During his tenure, he displayed exceptional leadership by overseeing comprehensive electoral reforms and fostering an environment of cooperation and trust among various stakeholders due to his unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability. His tenure emphasized the vital role of integrity in the democratic process.

He is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya with 37 years post-qualification experience and a trained legislative drafter and policy formulator. He holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Business Administration degree.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Greg Essensa
Chief Electoral Officer
Elections Ontario

Greg was appointed Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer with the unanimous consent of the Legislature in June 2008. He is the seventh person to hold the position. Greg has over 35 years of municipal, provincial and international election experience. Over the years, he took on positions of increasing scope and responsibility and prior to his appointment he served as the Director of Elections and Registry Services for the City of Toronto.

As a dedicated election official, governments of all levels, associations and not-for-profit organizations have sought his election administration expertise. He has advised on municipal elections in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick and primary elections in Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas. Born and raised in Toronto, Mr. Essensa studied economics at McGill University.



Alberto Guevara
Former Director of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal
Judiciary (Mexico)

Alberto is a political scientist, with Master's degrees in Public Policy and Public Administration, and a PhD in Law. He served at International IDEA as member of the Secretariat of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security, where he worked with former Heads of State and former UN-Secretary General Kofi Annan, to put together recommendations to strengthen the integrity of democracy.

In Mexico, he worked as political communications advisor for the Specialized Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes in the aftermath of the 2006 elections. Later, Alberto was appointed General Director of International Relations at the Federal Electoral Tribunal, where he organized and participated in more than thirty observation missions in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. He currently advises public and private sector organizations on institutional relations, streamlined processes, and strategic communications.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Dr. Madhukar Gupta
State Election Commissioner, Election Commission of
Rajasthan, India

Madhukar is a Mason Fellow from Harvard University and has gained a global perspective with international expertise in areas like Public Administration, Public Policy Making, Environment, Disaster Management, and Health.

Gupta's contributions have been recognized on international platforms such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). His role has taken him to locations like Hawaii, George Washington University and several renowned Universities highlighting his global influence. He has engaged with prestigious international institutions, including the World Bank, UNDP, and the University of Maryland, sharing his insights on critical subjects. His expertise and contributions have transcended borders, making him a notable international figure.



Thomas Hicks
Commissioner
U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Thomas was confirmed by unanimous consent of the United States Senate on December 16, 2014 to serve on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Prior to his appointment with the EAC, he served on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration from 2003 to 2014. Mr. Hicks recently completed the Election Center and Auburn University's Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) program. He received his J.D. from the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law and his B.A. in Government from Clark University (Worcester, MA).

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Toby James
Director
Electoral Integrity Project

Toby is Professor of Politics and Public Policy at the University of East Anglia. He is currently Co-Director of the Electoral Integrity Project, an independent academic research project based at UEA and the Royal Military College of Canada/Queens University. The project produces innovative and policy-relevant research to improve elections worldwide. The flagship publication is the annual Global Electoral Integrity Report.

Toby's research focuses on the electoral integrity and democracy, the policy process and political leadership. Toby has written commissioned policy reports for national and international organisations, and collaborated with organisations such as International IDEA, IFES, the Carter Center, Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the UK Foreign Office.



Giorgi Kalandarishvili
Chairperson
Central Election Commission of Georgia

Giorgi is the Chairperson of the CEC of Georgia since 2021. He graduated with honours in Information Technologies and holds an MA in Law with distinction. Since 2008, he has obtained various managerial and decision-making positions at the CEC. Under his leadership, several noteworthy initiatives were progressed within the CEC: an international standard ISO 9001:2015 was introduced, Administration successfully underwent two international annual control audits, showcasing and maintaining high standards of EAs; the Chairperson's proactive initiative led to the effective inception and development of strategies for combatting disinformation; the successful conduct of pilot electronic elections and the full-scale implementation of electoral system modernization through the electronification is a path firmly rooted under the leadership of Mr. Kalandarishvili.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Anna Nyqvist
Chief Executive
Swedish Electoral Authority

Anna is Director of the Swedish Election Authority (SEA), the principal body for managing and evaluating Sweden's general elections at the national level. Responding to growing challenges in election administration globally, Nyqvist has been instrumental in advancing electoral best practices, with a strong focus on securing the integrity of the electoral process and enhancing voter outreach. Her tenure at the SEA has been marked by fostering strategic partnerships and fostering a culture of information sharing across Sweden's electoral infrastructure.

Formerly the Executive Office Director of The Swedish Customs, Nyqvist brings over two decades of experience within the government sector, contributing her expertise to numerous councils and boards across Sweden. Her academic pursuits are rooted in Political Science and Economics, providing a solid foundation for her contributions to public service.



Judge Patricia Lorenzo Paniagua
Junta Central Electoral (JCE) of the Dominican Republic

Patricia serves on the Board of the Junta Central Electoral (JCE) in the Dominican Republic and leads both the Technology and the Equality and Inclusion Policies Commissions. She is also part of the Association of Electoral Magistrates of the Americas (AMEA).

Driven by a commitment to challenge systemic biases against women and marginalized groups, Patricia actively champions women's political engagement and combats political violence through numerous conferences. As a key member of the JCE's Plenary Board, she is dedicated to fostering a social and democratic state governed by law in the Dominican Republic, prioritizing the political participation of women as a cornerstone of her mandate.

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Denis Kačan
Product Lead
Neurotechnology

Denis possesses extensive experience in the biometrics and identity management industries. At Neurotechnology he is responsible for biometric solutions development and overseeing their successful implementation in national scale projects.

With his main attention on bridging the gap between clients and technology, Denis is continuously enhancing the practical applicability of biometrics and driving its widespread adoption.

Some of his most recent experiences include hands-on participation in the national election in Liberia, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.