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Report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)

Election Observation Mission

**Washington, D.C. and other regions, United States of
America**

From November 2 to 5, 2024

Report

From 2 to 5 November 2024, a delegation of three Canadian parliamentarians participated in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's (OSCE PA) election observation mission to the United States (U.S.) for the U.S. general elections. The delegation comprised:

- The Honourable Senator Mohammad Al Zaibak;
- The Honourable Senator Bernadette Clement; and
- Ms. Heather McPherson, MP.

Senator Al Zaibak served as Canada's head of delegation for this election observation mission.

THE OSCE PA ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES

On 5 November 2024, the U.S. held elections for federal, state, and local levels of government office positions. At the federal level, these included elections for U.S. President, all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and 34 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate. Eleven states and two territories (Puerto Rico and American Samoa) also held gubernatorial elections. In addition, there were elections for seats in the legislative chambers of 44 U.S. states and five territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), as well as for the Council of the District of Columbia.

The OSCE PA's election observation mission to the U.S. was a joint effort with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The mission was deployed at the invitation of the U.S. government, pursuant to commitments that the U.S. and all other OSCE participating States have made to uphold democratic standards in the OSCE region.

The observation mission, which totalled 249 observers from 45 countries, was composed of 85 ODIHR-deployed experts and long-term observers, and 164 parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA. OSCE PA election observers were deployed to the following areas: California, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Virginia, Wisconsin, as well as Washington, D.C. This was the OSCE PA's largest-ever election observation mission.

ODIHR's long-term observers were deployed to the U.S. approximately one month prior to the general election in order to monitor the pre-election environment. These long-term observers were then joined by OSCE PA delegates to monitor election day voting.

ODIHR's election monitoring team to the U.S. was led by Ambassador Tamás Meszerics of Hungary. For its part, the OSCE PA's election monitoring mission was led by Pere Joan Pons of Spain. OSCE PA President Ms. Pia Kauma (Finland) served as Special Co-ordinator for the OSCE short-term election observation mission. In that capacity, President Kauma acted as a connection between the OSCE PA mission and the ODIHR mission.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

Together with other OSCE PA election observers, Canadian delegates attended briefing sessions in Washington, D.C. on 2–3 November 2024. Those briefing sessions included presentations by representatives of ODIHR, election administrators, party officials, analysts and other stakeholders. Among other elements, OSCE PA election observers were briefed on election administration and legislation, polling and analysis, campaigning and campaign finance and elections security and integrity.

On November 3 to 4, 2024, OSCE PA election observers were deployed to various U.S. states to observe the election. Senator Al Zaibak was deployed to New York, New York; Senator Clement to Detroit, Michigan; and Ms. McPherson to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

On November 5, 2024, election day, Senator Al Zaibak was paired with Mr. Thomas Portes, a member of France's OSCE PA delegation. Senator Al Zaibak observed voting at 14 polling stations located across the New York metropolitan area, including in Rockland County, Kings County, Bronx County and New York County.

Senator Clement was teamed with Dr. Rupa Huq, a member of the United Kingdom's OSCE PA delegation, and Mr. Stephen Paul from the OSCE PA's international secretariat. On election day, Senator Clement visited 12 locations covering more than 20 precincts, which included including various polling stations across the greater Detroit area, as well as the city's main tabulation centre.

Ms. McPherson was teamed with Mr. Radoslaw Fogiel of the Polish delegation to the OSCE PA, and Ms. Odile Lelarge from the OSCE PA's international secretariat. On election day, Ms. McPherson observed voting at approximately 10 polling stations. She also visited the central counting centre in Milwaukee where mail-in and absentee ballots were being tabulated, as well as the Milwaukee County courthouse where election results were announced.

The delegates reported regularly on their observations throughout the day by completing observation report forms and submitting them to the OSCE PA international secretariat.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

On November 6, 2024, ODIHR and the OSCE PA released a joint statement of preliminary findings and conclusions. The purpose of the statement was to assess whether the U.S. elections complied with OSCE commitments, international obligations, and standards for democratic elections, as well as with U.S. domestic laws.

Overall, the joint ODIHR–OSCE PA election observation mission to the U.S. found that the U.S. general elections “demonstrated the resilience of the country's democratic institutions, with a well-run process in a highly-polarized environment, candidates campaigning freely across the country, and voters engaging actively.” With regard to the U.S. presidential election, the statement indicated that the campaign was competitive and that fundamental rights, including civil and political rights, were upheld. That said, the statement underscored that the campaign was also marked by “harsh and confrontational rhetoric, including personal attacks, inflammatory language, and mutual accusations” between the Republican and Democratic candidates for President.

More broadly, the joint ODIHR–OSCE PA assessment indicated that, while a range of useful tools and training were developed to strengthen election safety and to encourage the efficient use of new voting technology, disinformation from both domestic and foreign

sources sought to sow doubt regarding U.S. democratic processes. The statement further noted that there was “extensive and vibrant media coverage of the campaign and electoral process, and freedom of expression was respected, providing a basis for an informed choice.”

The full text of the joint ODIHR–OSCE PA report is available in English here: ODIHR, OSCE PA, [Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions](#), International Election Observation Mission, United States of America – General Elections, November 5, 2024.

ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report on the U.S. general elections, including recommendations for potential improvements, approximately two months after the completion of the electoral process.

Travel Costs

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation’s financial report. This report is available in the [Financial Disclosure](#) section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

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