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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Election Observation
Mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

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

**Kyiv, Ukraine
May 25-28, 2014**

Report

On Sunday, May 25, 2014, a Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), led by Mr. James Bezan, M.P., and composed of Mr. Lawrence Toet, M.P., Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon, M.P., Mr. Chris Warkentin, M.P., Mr. Ted Opitz, M.P., Ms. Stella Ambler, M.P., Mr. David Christopherson, M.P., Ms. Peggy Nash, M.P., Ms. Linda Duncan, M.P., Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse, M.P., Ms. Chrystia Freeland, M.P. and Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, M.P., participated in an election observation mission that monitored the presidential elections held in Ukraine. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Alexandre Roger, Secretary of the Association and Mr. Maxime Ricard, Association Secretary.

A. The Election Observation Mission in Ukraine

A key element of the OSCE's mandate is the promotion of democratic elections. To this end, the Canadian delegation to OSCE PA has participated in numerous international election observation missions. As a community of countries committed to democracy, the OSCE has placed great emphasis on promoting democratic elections as a key pillar of stability. All OSCE participating States have committed themselves to invite international observers to their elections, in recognition that election observation can play an important role in enhancing confidence in the electoral process. Deploying election observers offers demonstrable support to a democratic process and can assist OSCE participating States in their objective to conduct genuine elections in line with OSCE commitments.

The OSCE election observation mission in Ukraine was a common endeavour, involving the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE PA, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the European Parliament (EP) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). The mission was deployed at the invitation of the Government of Ukraine, pursuant to commitments made by all OSCE participating states.

On election day, over 1,200 observers from 49 countries were deployed, including 1,025 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as a 116-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 46-member delegation from the PACE, a 18-member delegation from the NATO PA, and a 14-member delegation from the EP. Voting was observed in over 4,050 polling stations out of a total of 32,244. Counting was observed in some 360 polling stations across 162 election districts. IEOM observers reported from 151 out of 213 District Electoral Commissions.

B. Activities of the Canadian Delegation

Canadian delegates attended briefing sessions provided by the OSCE for parliamentarians on Friday, May 23, and on Saturday, May 24, in Kyiv, Ukraine. Over the course of the two days, delegates were provided with an overview of the political background to the elections. They were also briefed on the administration of the elections, as well as the process for election-day reporting and statistical analysis. The delegates heard presentations from domestic observer organisations, non-governmental

organizations and media representatives. Furthermore, they met with representatives from the political parties and blocs.

On Friday, May 23, the delegation attended a situational briefing provided by Troy Lulashnyk, Ambassador of Canada to Ukraine.

On Saturday, May 24, the delegates were deployed across Ukraine to observe the elections. Mr. Bezan, Mr. Opitz, Ms. Nash and Mr. Christopherson were deployed to the Karkiv region. Mr. Warkentin, Mr. Lizon, Ms. Duncan, Ms. Freeland and Ms. Latendresse were deployed to the Dnepropetrovsk region. Mr. Toet, Ms. Ambler, Mr. Lamoureux, Mr. Roger and Mr. Ricard were deployed to the Kyiv region.

On election-day, the delegates observed several aspects of the election process, including:

- The opening of a polling station in the morning;
- the voting process in a number of polling stations throughout election day;
- the closing of a polling station and the vote count in that polling station;
- the transfer of election material to the District Election Commission (DEC) and handover at the DEC;
- the processing of election materials and the tabulation of results at the DEC, including on Monday, May 26, where necessary.

The delegates reported regularly on their observations throughout the day by completing observation report forms at each polling station visited and submitting them to their assigned long-term observers.

In the evening of Monday the 26, Ambassador Lulashnyk hosted a debriefing with the Canadian delegation. It was also attended by Senator Andreychuk and Mike Harris, heads of mission, CANEOM.

C. Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

The 25 May early presidential election in Ukraine was characterized by high turnout and a clear resolve by the authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and that respected fundamental freedoms, despite the hostile security environment in two eastern regions of the country, international observers concluded. While the election administration ran the process impartially and transparently on the whole, some decisions taken may have been beyond its authority.

Genuine efforts were made by the electoral authorities to conduct voting throughout the country, despite continued unrest and violence in the east, which seriously impacted the election environment, negatively affected the human rights situation, obstructed meaningful observation, and had a significant adverse effect on preparations. Forced evictions and closures of District Election Commissions by armed groups, abductions, death threats, forced entry into private homes and the seizure of equipment and election materials were attempts to prevent the election and to deny citizens their right to vote, the observers said.

The election did not take place in the Crimean Peninsula, which is not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities, and Ukrainian citizens living there faced serious difficulties in participating in the election.

Despite the challenging environment and limited lead-time, the Central Election Commission operated independently, impartially and efficiently, in general, and met all legal deadlines. A lack of adequate regulation of a few aspects of the election, however, lessened uniformity in the administration of the process. The substitution of numerous candidate nominees to District and Precinct Election Commissions affected the stability and efficiency of election administration, but most commissions outside of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were able to overcome time constraints, the frequent changes in their composition and some resource problems.

Most candidates were able to campaign without restrictions, except in the two eastern regions, although there were a number of campaign-related incidents, including cases of intimidation and attacks on party and campaign offices, and allegations of instances where campaigning by candidates was obstructed.

In a positive development, no cases were observed of the misuse of state resources and, unlike in previous elections, allegations of such practices were not made to observers. Despite recent amendments to campaign finance regulations, these should be further strengthened to provide greater oversight and transparency.

The media landscape is diverse, but the lack of media autonomy from political or corporate interests often affects their editorial independence. Freedom of the media was severely undermined in the east, where journalists and media outlets faced threats and harassment throughout the campaign period. Editorial coverage of candidates was limited and focused on a few candidates. The organization and broadcasting of debates among all candidates by state television and the adoption of a law transforming state television into a public-service broadcaster were both welcome initiatives. Steps to stop certain channels from broadcasting alleged propaganda, while they did not directly impact the election, were an unwelcome restriction, the observers found.

The legal framework is adequate for the conduct of democratic elections. Numerous changes were introduced to this during the election period, both to address the rapidly changing political and security environment and as a further step in the electoral reform process. While most of the changes were seen as necessary by election stakeholders, the result was a significantly different framework than the one in place when the election was called.

While voting was largely conducted in line with procedures, there were long queues to vote in some parts of the country, and there were some technical problems in the early stages of the tabulation process.

The full preliminary report, prepared jointly by the OSCE PA, ODIHR, PACE, EP and NATO PA missions, is available in English at the following site: <http://www.oscepa.org/publications/all-documents/election-observation/past-election-observation-statements/ukraine/statements-25/2393-2014-presidential-eng-1/file>

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.
Director, Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
ACTIVITY	Election Observation Mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co- operation in Europe (OSCE)
DESTINATION	Kyiv, Ukraine
DATES	May 25-28, 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	None
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. James Bezan, M.P., Mr. Lawrence Toet, M.P., Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon, M.P., Mr. Chris Warkentin, M.P., Mr. Ted Opitz, M.P., Ms. Stella Ambler, M.P., Mr. David Christopherson, M.P., Ms. Peggy Nash, M.P., Ms. Linda Duncan, M.P., Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse, M.P., Ms. Chrystia Freeland, M.P. and Mr. Kevin Lamoureux, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Alexandre Roger, Secretary to the Delegation and Mr. Maxime Ricard, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$94,104.30
ACCOMMODATION	\$11,170.05
HOSPITALITY	\$2,497.99
PER DIEMS	\$5,580.54
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$3,673.40

TOTAL

\$114,528.29 (\$93,917.49 of this amount was funded by DFATD under an agreement to allow more parliamentarians to be present)