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THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**Election Observation Mission
Czech Republic 1998**

PRESS RELEASE

21 June 1998

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Election Observation Mission concluded that the 19-20 June parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic were held in accordance with OSCE commitments. International observers attending the two-day elections for the Chamber of Deputies noted a high quality of organisation and transparency in the conduct of the electoral process.

"The electoral authorities are to be congratulated for carrying out the elections in a manner which enjoys the widespread confidence of the voting public and the political parties in the Czech Republic," said Mrs. Tone Tingsgard (Member of Parliament—Sweden), Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to the Election Observation Mission.

Nearly 70 observers from 20 OSCE participating States took part in the Observation Mission and travelled to all eight electoral regions of the Czech Republic. The international observer group was composed of long-term observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and short-term observers from OSCE participating states, the diplomatic community and a 23-member delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

"There needs to be clarification of some aspects of the election law," said Mark Power-Stevens, the OSCE On-Site Co-ordinator, who has headed the OSCE office in Prague since its opening on 13 May. "Under the current legislation, for instance, parties failing to pay the financial bond were allowed campaign airtime, even though they were not listed on the ballot." Despite the need for some technical clarifications, the OSCE Joint Observation Mission found few problems in the framework or conduct of the elections or the campaign.

"Campaign coverage and reporting were generally balanced," said Power-Stevens, whose OSCE long-term observer team also monitored press and media coverage during the election campaign. "All parties competing in the election enjoyed full and balanced coverage during the campaign. This was instrumental in allowing Czech voters the opportunity to make informed decisions when casting their ballots."

The two-day elections were well organised, according to international observer findings, and carried out in a calm and orderly manner. The OSCE observers were impressed with the efficient work of polling station officials, as well as by the large and peaceful turn-out of voters.

A detailed preliminary statement of observer findings is attached to this press release, and a final report will be issued by the Warsaw-based OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in July.

For further information, please contact:

Mark Power-Stevens, On-Site Co-ordinator for the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission—
Tel. (+420 2) 96 220 610 / Fax (+420 2) 96 220 669;
Eric Rudenshiold, Director of Programmes for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—Tel. (+45) 3332
9400 / (+45) 3332 5505; or
Gerald Mitchell, Head of Election Section OSCE/ODIHR – (+48 22) 520 0600 / (+48 22) 628 6967.