

Election observation mission

Observation of the referendum in Montenegro

Following invitations from the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed a Referendum Observation Mission to observe the referendum on future state-status of the Republic of Montenegro on 21 May 2006.

The referendum was announced by Parliament on 2 March 2006.

On 21 May, voters were asked if they wanted the Republic of Montenegro to be an independent state, with full international and legal personality. The decision in favour of independence is considered as valid, if 55% of the valid votes are cast for the option 'yes', provided that the majority of the total number of registered voters voted on the referendum.

The ODIHR Referendum Observation Mission and the OSCE Office in Montenegro, headed by Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu, operated separately under their specific mandates.

Long-term observation

The mission, headed by Jorgen Grunnet of Denmark, consisted of ten international staff based in Podgorica drawn from seven different OSCE participating States. 20 long-term observers were requested for work across the Republic. Long term observers arrived on 7 April and were deployed on 10 April.

The mission assessed the entire referendum process for its compliance with principles for democratic electoral processes, including commitments agreed to by all OSCE participating States, as well as national legislation. Observers closely monitored campaign activities, media coverage, the legislative framework and its implementation, the media situation, the work of the referendum administration and relevant government bodies, and the resolution of referendum-related disputes.

Referendum day

The ODIHR requested 200 short-term observers to be deployed immediately prior to the 21 May Referendum. These observers were joined by delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The short-term observers were deployed around the country in multi-national teams of two to monitor the opening of polling stations, the voting, the counting of ballots, and the tabulation of results.

The day after the referendum, the Referendum Observation Mission issued a statement of preliminary findings and conclusions.

A final report on the observation of the entire referendum process was issued approximately eight weeks after the end of the Referendum Observation Mission.

Previous Elections

The ODIHR has observed a number of elections in Montenegro, including: the 2003 presidential elections; the 2002 presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections; the 2001 parliamentary election; the 2000 unicipal elections in Podgorica and Herceg Novi, the 1998 parliamentary election and the 1997 presidential election