

ANNEX G



Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PRESS RELEASE

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Parliamentary Elections in the Russian Federation

A Delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the elections to the Russian State Duma on 17 December at the invitation of the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, Mr. Nikolai Ryabov.

The delegation congratulates the Russian Federation for having successfully carried out these second multi-party elections in an overall free and fair manner.

Consisting of 114 observers, the Delegation, led by Sir Peter Emery, MP (UK) and Treasurer of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, included parliamentarians from twenty-six OSCE countries. After two days of high-level briefings in Moscow, the delegation deployed into seven groups, observing the elections in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Smolensk, Tver and Voronezh. Over 400 polling stations were visited by members of the delegation on election day.

These 1995 parliamentary elections constitute a clear improvement from those in 1993. Electoral legislation has been made clearer and more simple, thus enhancing the transparency of the process. The increased popular participation in all aspects of the election process is a positive sign of a healthy democratic development in Russia. Further, the pre-election campaign was visibly freer and more fair than the last time around.

Some participants noted, however, minor weaknesses in the vote counting procedures at polling station level. There were not enough officials to handle the mid-day surges of voters, thus encouraging open voting, and the same officials who had worked a fourteen hour day had to count the votes well into the night without relief.

Some procedural flaws, at least by Western standards, continued to be observed in some areas, including open voting and in some isolated instances, proxy voting. Other problems have been reported in the regions not covered by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

OSCE parliamentarians who participated in the Assembly's 1993 monitoring project noted major improvements in the election process, particularly the ability to oversee all facets of the counting of votes at all levels from polling station up to the Central Election Commission.

A comprehensive report will soon be available from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's International Secretariat in Copenhagen.