



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. elections convincing demonstration of U.S. democracy, OSCE PA observers say

WASHINGTON, November 6, 2008 - The U.S. elections clearly reflected the will of the people and demonstrated convincingly the country's commitment to democratic elections, reports the International Election Observation Mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly in its report released today in Washington, DC.

The observers pointed to the high turnout and a record breaking registration process in its assessment of the elections, and said that the American voters were given a genuine opportunity to make an informed choice.

"Frankly, there has been a lack of trust in many parts of the world towards the U.S. election system, but yesterday's elections were a display in democracy and they regained trust in the American electoral system," said Joao Soares (Portugal), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President and head of the election observation mission to the United States.

The observers lauded the increased participation in early voting but pointed to capacity problems at polling stations. They also regarded positively the increased use of paper ballots since those leave a paper trail and simplify eventual recounts. However, they also noted the lack of uniform election standards, the complicated registration process, the oftentimes confusing ballots and the difficulty, at times, to observe elections in the United States, due to the highly decentralized legal framework for elections.

OSCE PA's election observation mission contained 76 parliamentarians from 28 countries plus staff for a total of 94 observers. They observed the elections in nine states: Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, New Hampshire, Ohio, Missouri, New Mexico and Colorado. The OSCE PA has observed elections since 1993 in the OSCE area, from North America to Central Asia. It observed the 2004 U.S. Presidential elections.

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