

Presidential election in Ukraine “impressive display of democracy,” says Soares

Ukraine’s run-off presidential election on 7 February confirmed the international election observation mission’s earlier assessment that the electoral process met most international commitments. This election consolidated progress achieved since 2004, the international observers concluded.

Joao Soares, OSCE PA President and leader of the OSCE short term observers, said at a press conference on Monday that “yesterday’s vote was an impressive display of democratic elections. For everyone in Ukraine, this election was a victory.”

The post-election statement noted that the lack of mutual trust between the candidates, as well as a deficient legal framework, were at the root of the problems observed and constitute a pressing challenge for the new leadership. Nevertheless, the candidates were able to campaign freely in a competitive election environment and the existing legal framework provided a basis for holding democratic elections.

The OSCE statement, supported by the parliamentary assemblies of NATO and the Council of Europe as well as the European Parliament, also noted that amending the election law between the two rounds of voting was “inappropriate” but pointed out that the last minute amendments adopted by the government did not impact the conduct of election day. The OSCE ODIHR provided invaluable assistance in drafting the OSCE statement.

In meetings with the two presidential candidates on 5 February, Mr. Soares stressed the importance of mutual understanding despite the changes to the election law and later expressed satisfaction that the changes did not lead to significant problems.

“It is now time for the country’s political leaders to listen to the people’s verdict and make sure that the transition of power



President Soares speaks to reporters after the press conference

is peaceful and constructive,” he said at the press conference.

The OSCE PA’s preparation for the election began in October, with substantive research conducted by the Secretariat in Copenhagen and a pre-election visit to Ukraine by President Soares in November. In both the first and second round, Mr. Soares observed the vote in Kyiv, while other PA Members were deployed in Kyiv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, Odesa, and Simferopol. The Assembly’s delegation in the first round consisted of 117 observers and 69 in the second round.

The PA mission was supported by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen, Special Representative Andreas Nothelle, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev, Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, Programme Officers Anna Chernova and Roberto Montella, Logistics Officer Petra Jezkova, and Director of Communications Klas Bergman.

Electronic documentation folder distributed

The International Secretariat has distributed an electronic documentation folder for the 2010 Winter Meeting, which is also available on the Assembly’s website, www.oscepa.org. Hard copies of some documents will be available in French and Russian at the Hofburg Centre in Vienna.

Since only a limited amount of documents will be available at the Winter Meeting we kindly ask delegations to print out whatever is needed. If you are having trouble opening the PDF please download the latest version of Adobe Reader here: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>



Johann Widmer (right), Head of the Swiss Delegation, observing mobile voting in Donetsk