

News from Copenhagen

OSCE PA

Number 452 Current Information from the OSCE PA International Secretariat

31 October 2012

Habsburg Douglas notes reverse of democratic progress in Ukraine



Walburga Habsburg Douglas and Tina Schoen at a polling station in Kyiv



Mecacci and Habsburg Douglas outside Tymoshenko's hospital in Kharkiv

Ukraine's parliamentary elections on Sunday were characterized by a tilted playing field, concluded international observers in a statement delivered by OSCE PA Vice-President Walburga Habsburg Douglas, the Special Co-ordinator who led the OSCE short-term election observation mission. This was the result, primarily, of the abuse of administrative resources, as well as a lack of transparency in campaign and party financing and of balanced media coverage.

Voters had a choice between distinct parties and candidate registration was inclusive, with two notable exceptions, representing a wide variety of political views. The political environment, however, is dominated by powerful economic groups, to the detriment of the electoral process, the statement said.

Election day was calm overall, and the voting and counting was assessed mostly positively by the observers, but tabulation was assessed negatively, as it lacked transparency.

"Considering the abuse of power, and the excessive role of money in this election, democratic progress appears to have reversed in Ukraine," said Habsburg Douglas (MP, Sweden), who served as Head of the OSCE PA delegation.

Following the election observation mission, Habsburg Douglas and OSCE PA human rights committee chair Matteo Mecacci (MP, Italy) were denied access to a previously approved meeting with former Ukrainian Prime Minister

Yulia Tymoshenko at a hospital in Kharkiv.

Habsburg Douglas had intended to hand-deliver a copy of the post-election statement and discuss issues related to the elections. Ukrainian authorities had helped to facilitate the meeting, but the delegation was informed just before their arrival at the hospital that due to the fact Tymoshenko is on a hunger strike, the meeting could not take place.

"I regret the fact that Ms. Tymoshenko was prevented from meeting us to exchange views about the elections," said Habsburg Douglas. "I am aware of some of her allegations regarding fraudulent activity on election day, and I intended to discuss with her the findings of the election observation mission. Ukraine is going to take over the OSCE Chairmanship in two months. It is disconcerting when the incoming Chairmanship is not fulfilling their OSCE commitments."

Mecacci added, "Tymoshenko is being punished not because she broke a rule while in detention, but because she refused to eat. I hope the Ukrainian authorities will correct this serious mistake very soon."

The OSCE PA's delegation in Ukraine was supported by Programme Director Anna Chernova, Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen, Senior Counsellor Semyon Dzakhayev, Communications Director Neil Simon, Operations Officer Iryna Sabashuk and Programme Officer Maria Chepurina.

Migliori calls for a more effective partnership with Mediterranean Partner States

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Riccardo Migliori addressed on Tuesday the 2012 Mediterranean Conference in Rome, sharing his vision of how the partnership between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partner States can be more effective.

He reminded participants that after the Arab Spring and amid the ongoing economic and a humanitarian crisis, those who believe in the OSCE model must work for it.

Pointing out that state pledges to the partnership fund have dropped 80 per cent in four years, he called for increased participation in exchange programmes between the OSCE and partner governments to help partners to be "more integrated in the OSCE year-round beyond their routine interactions in Vienna."

"In the end the OSCE is not about programmes and policies – it's about people," Migliori said, pointing out recent steps

taken regarding the participation of the Palestinian National Council and the Libyan foreign ministry at OSCE Parliamentary Assembly events.

On potential joint projects, he called for a quick decision by Mediterranean Partners regarding which programmes they want to see implemented and asked them to participate in other OSCE work.

Highlighting the need to show a greater commitment to OSCE principles, Migliori stressed that parliamentarians must stand up against hate and be a leading voice for inclusion.

Migliori also announced he would travel next month to Turkey, where more than 100,000 Syrians are living in refugee camps. He said the consequences of the conflict in Syria have spread into the OSCE region with Syrians seeking help or asylum. He thanked Turkey, Jordan and Egypt for their help in this humanitarian crisis.