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Hastings, George, Grafstein, Lennmarker, Kiljunen Lead PA Christmas Election Observers in Ukraine



PA President Emeritus Bruce George speaks to the press

"I cannot express to you how delighted I am to say that in our collective view Ukraine's elections have moved substantially closer to meeting OSCE and other European standards in such a short period of time. In our judgment the people of this great country can be truly proud that yesterday they took a great step towards free and democratic elections, by electing the next President of Ukraine",

concluded Mr. Bruce George (UK), President Emeritus of the OSCE PA, who was appointed by PA President Alcee L. Hastings and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead the OSCE Election Observation Mission to the repeat second round of the presidential election in Ukraine on 26 December 2004.

Mr. George made his statement at a press conference in Kiev on 27 December on behalf of the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM), which was composed of the OSCE

PA, Council of Europe PA, European Parliament, NATO PA and the ODIHR. The IEOM concluded that there had been great improvement in the work of the election administration, in particular, the Central Election Commission. Other positive elements included fewer examples of abuse of state resources, freedom of association was respected, media coverage was significantly more balanced, editorial instructions issued to journalists disappeared and there were far fewer reports of people dependent on the State for their livelihood being pressured in their choice of candidate.

However, some shortcomings remained, such as poorly prepared voter lists, inflammatory campaign material and the failure to incorporate provisions in the newly amended electoral legislation clarifying the role of the police on election day and requiring the Central Election Commission to publish all polling station results promptly.

The IEOM deployed a record number of 1.370 observers, including some 150 parliamentarians representing four parliamentary institutions. The OSCE PA deployed 90 observers from 22 participating States, providing the largest number of parliamentary observers. The OSCE PA Observer Team was also led by PA President Alcee L. Hastings and Senator Jerry Grafstein (Canada), who was the Deputy Head of the OSCE PA Delegation. They participated in the negotiations on the unanimously agreed joint statement. First Committee Chair Göran Lennmarker and former PA Vice-President Kimmo Kiljunen also spent Christmas in Ukraine and were deployed respectively in Odessa and Donetsk.

PA Secretary General Spencer Oliver, along with Paul LeGendre, Tina Schøn, and Jan Jooren, led the team from the Copenhagen Secretariat.



Petr Sulak, Head of the Czech Delegation to the OSCE PA, at a debriefing meeting for parliamentarians



PA President Alcee L. Hastings and Secretary General Spencer Oliver at a polling station in Kiev