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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 30, 2014

The United States congratulates Ukraine on its successful parliamentary elections on October 26. These elections demonstrate Ukraine's commitment to an inclusive and transparent political process that strengthens national unity. Collectively, the people of Ukraine made a bold and clear choice for democracy, reform, and European integration. The United States stands with the people of Ukraine as they forge a brighter future for their nation and succeeding generations.

Mr. Chair, despite a challenging security environment, millions of Ukrainians cast their ballots in an orderly and peaceful manner. We commend the government of Ukraine for its efforts to encourage and facilitate voter participation, particularly for those living in Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk. Secretary Kerry emphasized that the "hard work to provide for alternate voting arrangements, including for internally displaced persons, was a particularly laudable effort to overcome actions by Russian authorities occupying Crimea and Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine to prevent voters from exercising their democratic rights." These elections marked an important milestone in Ukraine's path towards a united and prosperous future. We also look forward to the local elections in the separatist-controlled areas of eastern Ukraine on December 7 as prescribed in the Law on the Special Status for Donetsk and Luhansk and as called for in the Minsk Protocol.

We thank the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission for their hard work in a difficult political and security environment. The number of important elections observed by ODIHR in a short time span and on a tight budget makes ODIHR's efforts even more commendable. We welcome Monday's preliminary statement from ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and other international observers that these elections were in line with Ukraine's international commitments. As the international observers made clear, an impartial and efficient Central Election Commission, general respect for fundamental freedoms, and an election that offered real choices to voters were some of the positive highlights. We note that Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko was elected as a member of the Verkhovna Rada, and urge that she immediately be released from captivity in Russia and allowed to take up her parliamentary duties.

The United States looks forward to the convening of the new parliament and the quick formation of a strong, inclusive government that reflects the choices of the Ukrainian people. We understand that Ukraine's leadership has already started talks to form a new governing coalition that solidifies national unity behind the new government. We stand ready to work with Ukraine's new government and the Verkhovna Rada as the Ukrainian people advance a reform agenda that includes an accountable judiciary, an end to corruption, a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk, and an end the occupation of Crimea.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.