



United States Mission to the OSCE

Invitation to Observe U.S. November 4 Presidential Elections

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 3, 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

On November 4th, millions of Americans will exercise their democratic right to vote in the elections in the United States for the U.S. Presidency, one-third of the members of the U.S. Senate, and all members of the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as many state and local officials. On behalf of the United States Government, I extend an invitation to the OSCE participating States to observe these elections. Letters of invitation have been sent to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We have invited ODIHR to conduct a Needs Assessment Mission in the United States in preparation for a possible OSCE observation mission.

Within the U.S. federal system, the responsibility for organizing elections rests with state and local governments. The Department of State is committed to facilitating the Needs Assessment Mission and election observation by assisting ODIHR in contacting election officials in those U.S. jurisdictions to which the OSCE would like to send observers.

The United States fully supports the OSCE's important work, in particular its election observation efforts, in promoting free and fair elections eastward from "Vancouver to Vladivostok." We consider this invitation an opportunity to demonstrate, once again, the United States' dedication to fulfilling its OSCE commitments.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.