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Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR ERIC LEBÉDEL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, AT THE 682nd MEETING OF
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 October 2007

**Observation of the French presidential elections of
22 April and 6 May 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) recently published the conclusions of its assessment mission on the French presidential elections of 22 April and 6 May 2007.

It noted that the elections reflected France's long tradition of democratic elections and that they were characterized by open and fair competition among the candidates.

We have taken note of the report's constructive comments and suggestions on items such as proxy voting, voter registration, improving the modalities to enable travellers (*gens du voyage*) to exercise their right to vote, and electronic voting, which was introduced in several constituencies on an experimental basis.

France would like to thank the ODIHR for the quality of its assessment, and for its recommendations, which will now be studied carefully.

Mr. Chairman,

France would like to take this opportunity to urge all the OSCE participating States to invite the ODIHR to observe their elections, in conformity with their Copenhagen commitments.

I might mention that France issued an invitation to the ODIHR 11 weeks prior to the first round of its presidential elections. Once the new President of the Republic had assumed office, a second invitation was issued, this time to observe the general election in June.