



PC.DEL/893/05
15 September 2005

ENGLISH only



**United Kingdom
Delegation**

To the Organisation for Security and
Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Vienna

Jaurèsgasse 12
1030 Vienna

Telephone: 71613-3304

Facsimile: 71613-3900

**Statement to Permanent Council of 15 September, 2005: United
Kingdom Government Response to the OSCE/ODIHR Assessment
Mission Report on the UK General Election 5th May 2005**

The United Kingdom welcomes the final report of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission to the General Election held in the UK on 5 May 2005. This report was issued on 5 August.

I would like to thank ODIHR for accepting our invitation, and for all the hard work that went into organising the mission and preparing their report.

The report has received thorough consideration and has been well received by my Government.

A detailed response to the report was issued yesterday by the Minister of State with responsibility for elections at the UK's Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Right Honourable Harriet Harman, QC MP. This response will be circulated to all delegations.

The UK's independent Electoral Commission has also responded directly to ODIHR.

In this context, I would like to take this opportunity to invite colleagues to a side event that my delegation will convene at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) on 19 September at 1330, in the Salon Belweder of the Sofitel Victoria Hotel in Warsaw.

The purpose of this side event is to present the UK Government's approach to organising elections, and in particular to highlight the importance we attach to co-operating with ODIHR, and we shall be ready to discuss the contents of ODIHR's report.

The side event panel will consist of experts from the UK's Department for Constitutional Affairs, the UK Independent Electoral Commission, a local electoral official from Manchester and the ODIHR elections advisor who took part in the assessment mission.

I think it is evident from this that the United Kingdom takes its OSCE commitments on elections very seriously indeed. As we have said on many occasions in the past, we recognise that our elections are not perfect - nothing is so perfect that it cannot be improved - and that we can learn from others, not least other participating States of the OSCE, and in particular from the impartial and professional staff at ODIHR.

That is why following up on reports produced by the OSCE's election observation and assessment teams is vitally important for us, and we consider that this should be the same for other participating States.