

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2015

Statement by the Czech Republic

Working Session 9: Democratic Institutions

The Czech Republic aligns herself with the intervention delivered by the European Union and the recommendations made on all the described topics. We especially subscribe to the European Union's commitment to implement OSCE Election Observation Missions recommendations to contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and to further improve electoral processes.

The Czech Republic appreciates the high professional standards and expertise of the ODIHR. A full ODIHR's autonomy is absolutely necessary to effectively assist Participating States in the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments.

Election observation remains a corner stone of ODIHR's activities. This year belongs to one of the busiest election observation years. The Czech Republic contributed with its long-term and short-term observers to all OSCE Election Observation Missions in 2015. Czech observers will participate in the upcoming important elections in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Turkey.

Unfortunately, the selected Czech observers could not be deployed to Azerbaijan for the upcoming parliamentary elections. We regret the decision of the Government of Azerbaijan to drastically limit the number of invited observers which compelled ODIHR to cancel the election observation mission. ODIHR simply cannot conduct a credible election observation with just 6 long-term observers in the whole country.

The Czech Republic continues to cooperate with different electoral oriented non-governmental organisations including the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. We are glad IFES has chosen Prague for the seat of its regional office for Europe and we have gladly welcomed many National Elections Commissions' representatives from Eastern Partnerships States in Prague participating in different IFES' training programmes and seminars. The highlight of cooperation between IFES and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the successful conference on the 25th anniversary of the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia, which was organised together by IFES and the Czech MFA in June 2015 in Prague.

Promotion of election rights and full implementation of Article 25 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights belongs to long-term priorities of the Czech Republic in the human rights and democracy support area. That's why we presented in 2013 and 2014 the resolution on Equal Participation in Political and Public Affairs to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The resolution was supported by the overwhelming majority of OSCE Participating States as cosponsors. At the current Human Rights Council, we are presenting

once again an updated resolution. This year the resolution is recognizing the need for further work on the full and effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs in the context of Article 25 of the ICCPR. The resolution as well recognises new forms of participation, in particular through new information and communication technologies and social media.

Thank you.