



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine's May 25 Elections

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 29, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States congratulates the people of Ukraine and the Ukrainian government for their historic elections on May 25th. Ukrainians united to express their political will and to choose their own future together. The high turnout, well-administered election, and clear results of voters across the whole country in favor of President-Elect Petro Poroshenko sent an unmistakable message: the Ukrainian people want to live in a united, democratic, and peaceful Ukraine anchored in European institutions.

We should not underestimate the significance of what has occurred in Ukraine this week. Good elections, in the best of situations, are no small undertaking. And as many of us spoke in this Permanent Council last week to offer words of encouragement and support ahead of Sunday's elections, I think few of us dared to predict that the elections would proceed so smoothly. As we offer our congratulations to the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian government, Ukraine's new President-Elect, Petro Poroshenko, we also offer our sincere thanks to ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for their tremendous and successful efforts in providing the largest election observation mission in the OSCE's history in support of Ukraine's democracy and its future.

We welcome Monday's preliminary report from ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and other international observers, including their finding that the election demonstrated: "the clear resolve of the authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and with a respect for fundamental freedoms in the vast majority of the country."

As the international observers made clear, the violence and intimidation by separatist groups prevented some voters in two of Ukraine's regions in the east from participating in the polling, while voting was also prevented in the occupied Crimean region, though we acknowledge the efforts of the government of Ukraine that allowed some residents of Crimea to vote outside of Crimea. We commend the courage and determination of those in Donetsk and Luhansk who ensured voting did take place in some precincts.

I think it is important to remember that, despite the challenges, the people of Ukraine won this election as much as any candidate by coming together in an election that many noted lacked the abuse of administrative resources or media time of past elections, and in many ways was the best ever in Ukraine. Second, despite all the talk of division, Ukrainians showed through their many voices that they are one. In an unprecedented result for Ukraine, the first place candidate in the east was also the first place candidate in the west, and in the north and south, and everywhere in between. Ukraine's unity shone through.

The successful conduct of these elections reaffirms Ukraine's commitment to the democratic process. The United States will continue to work with the people of Ukraine and the newly elected President to build on this victory for democracy. We will support their efforts to determine their own future in a more united, secure, independent, and prosperous Ukraine. The United States supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and condemns and rejects Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, and remains committed to working with Ukraine and other partners to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.