

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1106/24
26 September 2024
ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1489th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 September 2024

**The electoral methodology of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
as a means of interference in the internal affairs of OSCE participating States**

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) continues to be a tool of the collective West that is actively used to promote non-consensual concepts and objectionable reports and approaches. The activities of this executive structure, which for now is still located in Warsaw, are geared towards advancing the interests of a small group of countries and blatantly interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States, chiefly through international election observation.

The ODIHR's methodology was never negotiated by the OSCE participating States. Yet, it is presented as some kind of "gold standard" that makes it possible to allegedly determine whether an election was "free and fair". The attempts undertaken and appeals made over many years by interested countries, including Russia and other like-minded delegations, with a view to the development of uniform and understandable observation rules, and to the grounding of such rules in consensus, have not proved successful.

Furthermore, the lack of election monitoring principles that have been agreed on by all has resulted in criteria being applied to States inconsistently and in different ways, depending on their geographical location, thereby dividing them into "democratic and non-democratic" countries. As far as those in the first category are concerned – even making allowances for the shortcomings identified earlier – observation takes place in a limited format or does not take place at all. That is what happened, for example, in the case of the elections in the United Kingdom and France and the forthcoming elections in Austria. As for countries in the second category – we are talking mainly about countries "east of Vienna" here – full-scale missions are, as a rule, deployed to them and the mission team members do not deny themselves anything: they relish taking a magnifying glass to all the aspects of the electoral process, scrupulously evaluate them for non-compliance with relevant CSCE/OSCE commitments and impute an extensive list of so-called violations to the "delinquent" countries.

Active use is made of these lists by countries from the Western camp, which disseminate the accusations contained in them, calling into question the entire electoral process and sometimes even its

outcomes. This pattern can easily be made out in the assessments presented by the ODIHR in its reports on the elections in, for example, Serbia and Azerbaijan.

It is clear that, in its reports, the Office is simply carrying out political orders that it has been given, and that it presents those findings and conclusions that the ordering party expects to see from it. Where it is necessary to stoke up protests or call the election results into question, the Office's findings will be tailored to that end. The ODIHR's assessments regarding such countries are literally shot through with frustration at the outcome of the vote not having been the "right" one, at the dashed expectations of the Brussels bloc and at the failure of their attempts to shake up the domestic situation in the country concerned. In contrast, where it is necessary to conceal violations and manipulations during the electoral process, the corresponding report will be indulgent and any criticism will be blunted through general positive conclusions.

One means of exerting pressure on a country's authorities is to publish interim reports containing assessments of the pre-election situation that appear shortly before election day. These are prepared by a small group of contractors that is not accountable in any way for its actions. The resulting opus does not reflect the real state of affairs in a given country but is, rather, an "essay on a set topic". By the look of things, it is precisely through such assessments that the ODIHR plans to stir up the situation in Georgia ahead of the elections due to take place there. If the election results are not to the West's liking, then the Office's verdict can serve as a pretext for protests and attempts to contest the results, all the way up to yet another "colour revolution".

Mr. Chairperson,

At the request of friendly countries, Russia sometimes sends its experts to take part in ODIHR missions. We do this for the purposes of observing the voting directly and gaining a proper picture of what is going on, since the official conclusions and statements of the Office end up being biased and non-objective. Commitments on inviting international observers can also be honoured without involving the ODIHR. As practice has shown, elections can go ahead perfectly well without the Office; moreover, voters' confidence in the election results – and that is what observers are invited for in the first place – will not be diminished as a result. The legitimacy of an election is determined by the will of the voters – by that alone, and not by the ODIHR's assessments. The only way to strengthen trust in the Office's election observation mechanism is to overhaul it thoroughly on the basis of the principles of respect for the sovereign equality of all States, impartiality and criteria that enjoy consensus and have been approved by all.

The process of filling the OSCE's top four leadership posts is now in full swing. We hope that all the candidates for the post of ODIHR Director will listen most carefully to Russia's position. We expect from the Office's future leadership that it should remedy the existing situation and put this executive structure's activities back on track, specifically by ensuring that the ODIHR reverts to taking into account the opinions of all parties, returns to objectivity and refrains from double standards.

Thank you for your attention.