

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



ENGLISH only
Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT ON FEDERAL GENERAL ELECTION
732ND MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
11 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to inform the Permanent Council that on Sunday, September 7, a federal general election was called in Canada for October 14, 2008.

In accordance with our Copenhagen commitments, Canada's Chief Electoral Officer is pleased to extend an invitation on behalf of Canada to election observers from OSCE participating States, the ODIHR and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to observe the course of our national election procedures.

We request that participating States, institutions and organizations interested in observing these elections contact the Canadian delegation to the OSCE.

We also take this opportunity to reiterate our confidence in and the importance of the ODIHR election observation activities. Canada was pleased to host an OSCE/ODIHR election assessment mission to our last federal general election in January 2006. Since then, Canada has taken some key actions with regard to the recommendations contained in the OSCE/ODIHR report, including:

- the appointment of returning officers by the Chief Electoral Officer through a merit-based process for 10-year, renewable terms;
- the creation of the Community Relations Officer Program, which allows for increased outreach to aboriginal and ethnic minority electors to facilitate their greater participation, both as electors and elections workers; and
- The Chief Electoral Officer's subsection 17(1) adaptations of the Canada Elections Act, which are now published on Elections Canada's website.

Further, in one of his reports to Parliament, Canada's former Chief Electoral Officer recommended many changes in keeping with the ODIHR report.

The OSCE's election observation activities constitute an essential part of the third dimension and serve to strengthen public confidence in electoral processes in participating States. All participating States should support independent, autonomous and unhindered election observation activities and unequivocally facilitate the work of OSCE and ODIHR observation missions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.