



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON UKRAINE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council 30 October 2014

Mr Chairman,

I join others in congratulating Ukraine on Sunday's parliamentary elections. Despite immense challenges and certain irregularities, international observers have preliminarily concluded that the elections were generally free, fair and transparent.

This year's presidential and parliamentary elections are important milestones for political stabilization in Ukraine, and pave the way for reform. Local elections in Donbas in December will be the next step on that road. We expect also these elections to be held in accordance with Ukrainian law and OSCE commitments.

Mr Chairman,

We regret that the voters in Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine were denied the opportunity to take part in the elections. This is an unacceptable violation of a fundamental human right. We condemn those responsible, as we condemn Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and their role in destabilizing Eastern Ukraine.

Mr Chairman,

The significant inclusion of civil society activists across party lists in the new parliament is most encouraging. We are furthermore pleased to note that extreme right wing nationalists received very limited popular support in these elections. The Ukrainian people have given the Verkhovna Rada a clear mandate for continued reform and European integration. We expect Ukrainian authorities to deliver on this mandate. A stable European Ukraine depends on inclusive, transparent and comprehensive reforms. This process must be locally driven and locally owned. However, we will continue to render our support bilaterally, and through the OSCE and other international institutions.

Mr Chairman,

The outgoing Verkhovna Rada had the lowest proportion of female members of parliament in the OSCE, with only 10 percent. Reports so far indicate that this will not change substantially in the newly elected Rada. We therefore hope that Ukrainian authorities and political parties will intensify efforts to ensure gender equality, including women's participation in political life.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by thanking ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for their highly competent election observation. We encourage our Ukrainian colleagues to study thoroughly the recommendations in ODIHR's forthcoming final report. We believe implementation of these recommendations will contribute to consolidating Ukraine's democracy.

Thank you, Mr Chairman