



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on ODIHR Final Report on 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Election

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 2, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States commends ODIHR for its extensive final report on the Ukraine 2004 presidential election cycle, which was published on May 11th.

We would like to express our great appreciation to all of the observers and the staff of ODIHR, as well as the various parliamentary bodies, for their sustained observation effort and the unified, authoritative assessments that they produced in the final report and in earlier preliminary findings.

The final report is based on extensive data collected over a period of months by over 2,500 observers from dozens of participating States and it was subject to impartial analysis by highly experienced election experts.

It is a testament to the sophistication of OSCE election observation methodology and to the organizational abilities of ODIHR.

The United States would especially like to highlight the issuance of interim recommendations by the International Election Observation Mission on December 6. These recommendations were a very valuable and a very timely input for Ukrainian decisionmakers on how to improve conditions rapidly in time for the final round of voting on December 26, 2004.

As ODIHR itself observed, the Ukrainian presidential election cycle illustrates how countries can considerably improve their compliance with OSCE election-related commitments in the space of mere weeks when the will to do so is present.

The improved performance of the Ukrainian Central Election Commission, after it was reconstituted under its current Chairman, Mr. Davidovych, provides encouraging evidence of the importance of political will.

We note that the final report provides numerous recommendations that, if acted upon, will consolidate the democratic breakthrough that Ukraine achieved in 2004.

In light of parliamentary elections scheduled for the first half of 2006, we urge Ukraine to act swiftly to study and implement the recommendations, particularly with regard to voter registration.

The United States is confident that ODIHR is ready and is able to provide every assistance as Ukrainian authorities prepare for the 2006 elections.

We hope that Ukraine and ODIHR found the visit to Kiev of Ambassador Strohal and Ambassador Ahrens on May 24-25 a useful first step in an ongoing process of cooperation to follow up on the final report.

Mr. Chairman, thanks are really owed to the people of Ukraine – that's where the truest thanks go. Their very moving example of civic courage should inspire all of us to strive within our own countries and encourage each other to meet our OSCE human dimension commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.