

Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



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Observation of the presidential election in Ukraine (31 October 2004)

Report
Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr Doros Christodoulides, Cyprus, Group of the Unified European Left

I. Introduction

1. Following an invitation by the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Mr Lytvyn, the Bureau of the Assembly decided on 21 June 2004 to set up an 30 member ad hoc Committee to observe the Presidential Elections in Ukraine to be held on 31 October 2004, and on 7 September appointed Mr Doros Christodoulides as its Chair. Taking into account the importance of these elections and the complicated pre-electoral situation, the Bureau of the Assembly decided on 8 October 2004, at the request of the Monitoring Committee of the Assembly, to increase to 40 the number of members of the ad hoc Committee.

2. On 4 October 2004 a co-operation agreement was signed between the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). Acting on the proposal of the Venice Commission, and in conformity with article 15 of the agreement – “*When the Bureau of the Assembly decides to observe an election in a country in which electoral legislation was previously examined by the Venice Commission, one of the rapporteurs of the Venice Commission on this issue may be invited to join the Assembly’s election observation mission as legal adviser*” -, the President of the Assembly invited an expert of the Venice Commission to joint the ad hoc Committee as advisor.

3. Based on proposals by the political groups in the Assembly, the ad hoc Committee was composed as follows:

Socialist Group (SOC)

Mr Abdulkadir ATEŞ
Ms Meritxell BATET
Ms Anna ČURDOVÁ
M. Taulant DEDJA
Mr Andreas GROSS
Ms Jelena HOFMAN
Mr Jerzy JASKIERNIA
Mr František MEZIHORÁK
Ms Katrin SAKS
Mme Rugh-Gaby VERMOT-MANGOLD
Ms Jane GRIFFITHS
Mr Algirdas SYSAS
Ms Elvira CORTAJARENA

Turkey
Spain
Czech Republic
Albania
Switzerland
Germany
Poland
Czech Republic
Estonia
Switzerland
United Kingdom
Lithuania
Spain

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)

Mr Christos POURGOURIDES	Cyprus
M. Pasquale NESSA	Italie
Mr Murat MERCAN	Turkey
Mr Marko MIHKELSON	Estonia
Mr Andrea RIGONI	Italy
M. François ROCHEBLOINE	France
Ms Elsa SKARBØVIK	Norway
Mr Kimmo SASI	Finland
Ms Jozefina TOPALLI	Albania
Mr Jan RZYMELKA	Poland

Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group (LDR)

Ms Hanne SEVERINSEN	Denmark
Mr Giorgi ARVELADZÉ	Georgia
Mr Stef GORIS	Belgium
Mr Mike HANCOCK	United Kingdom
Mr Harald LEIBRECHT	Germany
Mr Johannes RANDEGGER	Switzerland
Mr Didier RAMOUDT	Belgium

European Democratic Group (EDG)

Mr André KVAKKESTAD	Norway
Mr Mevlüt CAVUSOGLU	Turkey
Mr Umar DZHABRAILOV	Russia
Mr Aydin MIRZAZADA	Azerbaijan

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

Mr Doros CHRISTODOULIDES	Cyprus
Mr Piotr PALAMARCIUC	Moldova

Venice Commission

Mr Angel Sanches NAVARRO	Spain
Mr Sergey KOUZNETSOV	Venice Commission Secretariat

Secretariat

Mr Vladimir DRONOV, Head of Secretariat of the Interparliamentary co-operation unit
Mr Bas KLEIN, Deputy to the head of Secretariat
Mr Francesc FERRER, Press Officer
Ms Alexandra ALLEON, Administrative Assistant

4. The ad hoc Committee acted as part of the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) which also included the election observation missions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly as well as the election observation mission of the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR). Besides the observers deployed by the IEOM, 4000 other international observers, among which observers from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS as well as Embassies accredited to Ukraine, were observing these elections

5. The ad hoc Committee met in Kyiv from 29 October to 1 November 2004 and held, inter alia, meetings with representatives of the main candidates contesting in these elections the Chairman of the CEC, Ambassadors representing the countries holding the chairmanship of the organisations constituting the IEOM, the Head of the election observation mission of the OSCE/ODIHR and his staff, as well as the mass media. The programme of the meetings of the ad hoc Committee appears in Appendix 1.

6. On Election Day the ad hoc Committee was split into 25 teams which observed the elections in and around Kyiv, Simferopol, Odessa, Lviv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv.

7. In order to draw an assessment of the electoral campaign as well as the political climate in the run-up to the elections, the Bureau sent a pre-electoral mission to Ukraine from 26 to 29 September 2004. The pre-electoral mission, composed of a member of each of the political groups in the Assembly, consisted of: Mr. Doros Christodoulides (UEL, Cyprus), Mr Abdulkadir Ateş (SOC, Turkey), Mr Christos Pourgourides (EPP/CD, Cyprus), Ms Hanne Severinsen (LDR, Denmark) and Mr André Kvakkestad (EDG, Norway). In Kyiv the delegation met with, inter alia, the candidates contesting in these elections, the Chairman of the Central Election Committee, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, the Chairmen of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts, the Deputy Ministers of Foreign and Internal Affairs, the Head of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission, Ambassadors of Council of Europe member States as well as representatives of NGOs and the mass media. The press release issued by the delegation at the end of their stay appears in Appendix 2.

8. The IEOM unanimously concluded that the first round of the Presidential Elections in Ukraine did not meet a considerable number of OSCE and Council of Europe standards for democratic elections. Despite the relatively calm and orderly vote itself, the pre-electoral period can only be assessed negatively as non conducive to the free expression of the will of the electorate, due to which, in the opinion of the IEOM, the election process constituted a step backwards from the 2002 Parliamentary Elections. The press statement issued by the IOM appears in appendix 3.

9. The ad hoc Committee wishes to thank the Verkhovna Rada, the OSCE/ODIHR election Observation Mission and Ambassador Jostein Bernhardsen of the Kingdom of Norway in Ukraine, representing the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, for their co-operation and logistical support provided to the ad hoc Committee and its pre-election mission.

II. Political and legal context

10. Ukraine is a presidential republic where the constitution grants strong powers to the President. The 2004 elections are the fourth since Ukraine gained independence in 1991. Despite a decision of the Constitutional Court that grants him the right to run for a third five year term, the incumbent President Leonid Kuchma decided not to seek re-election. These elections therefore constitute a crucial opportunity for Ukraine to show that is capable of organising a presidential succession in line with internationally accepted democratic standards.

11. Despite the large number of candidates competing, the elections centred on the two front running candidates: Prime Minister Mr Victor Yanukovich who was supported by the incumbent President and the pro-government parties, and Mr Victor Yushchenko, who was supported by the main opposition parties.

12. The Presidential Elections in Ukraine are governed by the Presidential Election Law, which came in force on April 2004 and the Law on the Central Election Commission (CEC) which was adopted in June 2004. The election law stipulates that a candidate needs 50% plus 1 vote of the voter turnout to be elected in the first round of elections. If none of the candidates passes this threshold a second round will be organised three weeks after the first round between the two candidates that secured most of the votes. In the second round simple majority is required to win the elections.

13. If implemented balanced and impartially the election law does, despite several shortcomings, provide an adequate framework to organise elections. The ad hoc Committee regretted however that the law was often implemented restrictively and partially by the courts and election administration, therewith diminishing its effectiveness. The complexity of some of the provisions in the law, as noted by the advisor from the Venice Commission to the ad hoc Committee, and the absence of sufficient detail in other provisions, may have contributed to the problems witnessed with its implementation.

14. A serious shortcoming of the election law is that it does not require the CEC to publish the individual Territorial Election Commission (TEC) results when it publishes the aggregate national results, which would have greatly improved the transparency of the election process. Moreover, certain legal provisions and Supreme Court decisions give party nominated candidates advantages over self nominated candidates, such as Mr Yushchenko, which is contradictory to the democratic principle of non-discrimination between candidates.

15. The new election law contains an, albeit limited, number of improvements, such as the right for international and party observers to obtain copies of the Territorial Election Commission (TEC) and Precinct Election Commission (PEC) protocols and the legal requirement for these protocols to be displayed publicly, which enhances the transparency of the election process on the TEC and PEC level.

16. The election law provides for out-of-country voting and stipulates that polling stations can be created in diplomatic and consular offices of Ukraine abroad and in military units located outside the territorial boundaries of Ukraine. In total 113 polling stations were created abroad, however no clear indications were given about the number of voters that are registered in these polling stations. The latter is especially of concern to the ad hoc committee as the CEC, citing legal constraints, ruled that, contrary to the assurances given to the pre-election mission by the Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of the out-of-country voting, international observers can not observe the polling process abroad as their accreditation is only valid *inside* Ukraine.

17. A controversy broke out regarding the creation of exceptional polling stations abroad. The law does provide that in exceptional situations a new polling station can be created, including abroad, up till 23 October 2004. In its resolution 415 the CEC ruled that exceptional polling stations can also be created outside diplomatic and consular representations or military units abroad, ostensibly in contravention of the law. On 23 October the CEC considered the proposal for the creation of 420 exceptional polling stations in the Russian Federation. On insistence of opposition MPs it turned out that at least 379 of these polling stations did not meet the legal requirements for their creation. After a heated debate, the CEC voted to create 41 exceptional polling stations in the Russian Federation. This decision was later overturned by the Supreme Court on 28 October. The ad hoc Committee can not but wonder about the willingness of the CEC to consider such a large number of exceptional polling stations abroad in apparent contradiction to the law and its own legal obligations, which fuelled public tension and popular conspiracy theories.

III. Election Administration

18. The election administration is conducted by a three-tiered structure consisting of the Central Election Commission (CEC), 225 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs) and approximately 33.100 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). The CEC is appointed by the Verkhovna Rada upon nomination by the President of Ukraine. The TECs and PECs are exclusively based on candidate nominations with each of the candidates having the right to nominate two members on each commission. With 24 registered candidates this resulted in very large election commissions making the decision taking process at times difficult and raising concerns, fortunately later unfounded, about the possibility of some polling stations not having the legally required quorum on Election Day.

20. The large size of the polling commissions led to staffing problems where several candidates were not able to provide the required members to all polling commissions or where members were appointed that did not seem to know which candidate they represented. This, combined by the uneven distribution of chairmanships among the candidates made that the requirement of balanced and impartial polling station commissions in a number of cases was not met.

21. In addition to the two members on the commissions each candidate could appoint two observers to follow the work of the PECs and TECs. As a result an extremely large number of up to 98 persons could be legally present in the polling stations on Election Day, which led to overcrowding in a significant number of polling stations although not to the extent initially feared.

23. The ad hoc Committee welcomes the transparent manner in which the CEC conducted its work, but regrets that the CEC failed to take a proactive approach in assuring a uniform application of the election law and in ensuring the protection of electoral rights. Moreover, the ad hoc Committee is concerned about reports and allegations of pressure being put on members of PECs, mainly representatives of opposition candidates, to resign from polling station commissions.

IV. Candidate and Voter Registration

24. Initially 26 candidates registered with the CEC, each of whom was required to make a deposit of approximately € 80.000 and 500.000 signatures to support their nomination. One candidate withdrew and another failed to secure the required number of signatures, therefore in total 24 candidates ran in these elections, offering the voter a genuine choice on Election Day.

25. The large number of candidates lacked broad public recognition or a nation wide party or campaign structure led to allegations that they were only technical candidates nominated to increase the number of representatives of one of the better known candidates on the election commissions. The ease with which some of these candidates secured the required 500.000 signatures seemed to support these allegations. Moreover, the law does not limit the number of candidates an individual can sign for, technically allowing for the same group of persons to nominate multiple candidates.

26. The quality of the voter lists continues to be problematic in Ukraine. No system of central voter registration exists and voter lists are drawn up from civil data provided by local government authorities. Despite the legal requirement to the contrary, in many polling stations voter lists were displayed late, giving voters only a limited amount of time to check for their inclusion in the list or to correct their data. As a result the voter lists were often incomplete, contained multiple entries and errors in the spelling of names and addresses. The large number of errors and/or omissions noted by observers challenged the principle of universality of the vote.

V. Pre-election period

27. The election campaign was dominated by the competition between the two front runners Mr Yanukovich and Mr Yushchenko. Their rivalry took on a regional dimension, dividing the country between the Ukrainian speaking West and predominantly Russian speaking East, and increasingly polarised the political discourse of the election campaign.

28. Government and election authorities failed to ensure conditions during the pre-election period that allowed for fair and equal opportunities to all candidates to convey their message to the public. Fundamental Freedoms, such as the freedom of movement and the freedom of association were often infringed upon. Law enforcement officers were reported to block the movement of opposition candidates and their supporters to campaign events and the disruption and obstruction of opposition campaign events by State authorities were observed. A significant number of politically motivated violent incidents were reported during the pre-election period.

29. Observers noted substantial abuse of administrative resources by state authorities and administrative structures in favour of the incumbent Prime Minister, or hindering the organisation of campaign activities of other candidates.

29. The election campaign was characterised by the harassment of opposition supporters and campaign activists. Moreover the ad hoc Committee is greatly concerned by a large number of allegations, several of which were verified, of pressure and intimidation on voters, students, election commission officials and - State - employees to support the campaign of Mr Yanukovich, which is in direct contravention of democratic principles and the commitments Ukraine took upon itself when it joined the Council of Europe. Similar pressure was also exerted on citizens to cease their political activity for opposition candidates.

VI. Media

30. The electronic media failed to provide an unbiased, balanced and fair coverage of the election campaign which would have allowed the electorate to make an informed choice on Election Day. The main television channels failed to provide equal airtime to the opposition candidates and if opposition candidates were given coverage it was mostly negative in tone, in sharp contrast to the coverage of the activities of the incumbent Prime Minister, and Presidential candidate, which was overwhelmingly positive.

31. Only one private TV station with significant outreach, Channel 5, offered favourable coverage of Mr Yushchenko, but experienced, and reported, a series of administrative difficulties in reaching its audience such as the freezing of its bank accounts by order of the Kyiv District Court, invalidation by the Economic Court of Appeal of its license to broadcast in Kyiv and "technical" difficulties in broadcasting its programmes in several regions.

32. The State-funded channel UT1 complied with its legal obligation to provide free airtime to all candidates and the ad hoc Committee welcomed UT1's initiative to broadcast regular debates between candidates, although their significance was diminished by the regrettable decision of both front-running candidates, Mr Yanukovich and Mr Yushchenko, not to participate. News coverage on UT1 was unbalanced and biased with the channel openly promoting the incumbent Prime Minister.

33. The ad hoc Committee is deeply concerned about the issuing of guidelines, the so-called *temnyky*, to control the political content of the news coverage on the main TV Channels, which raises questions about the Freedom of Speech and the Freedom of the Media in Ukraine. On 28 October more than 40 journalists from the Inter, ICTV, Novy Kanal and NTN TV Channels issued a statement condemning the censorship of their TV stations and 7 journalists from the 1+1 TV's newsroom resigned for similar reasons.

34. The printed media offered a more diverse range of views, although almost all favoured one candidate or the other in their coverage.

V. Election day -Vote count and tabulation

35. Despite the charged pre-election climate, the vote took place in a generally calm and orderly manner, and no violent incidents were observed during Election Day. Overcrowding in polling stations was a point of concern, but overall the secrecy of the vote had improved in comparison to previous elections. Fortunately, concerns that many polling stations would not open due to a lack of quorum did not materialise. In contravention of the law police officers were present inside a large number of polling stations without any valid reason to be there, which could be perceived as an attempt to intimidate voters.

36. The vote count in general was conducted in line with legal procedures. Tension and lack of transparency was observed to be more evident during vote tabulation on TEC level.

37. With 94% of the votes counted the CEC announced that none of the candidates would receive the 50% of the vote necessary to win the elections in the Second. The CEC therefore indicated that a second round of elections would be organised on 21 November 2004 between Mr Yanukovich and Mr Yushchenko who, again with 94% of the votes counted had secured 40.12 % and 39.15 % of the vote respectively.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

38. The first round of the Presidential Elections in Ukraine did not meet a significant number of internationally accepted democratic standards and did not constitute a step forwards in comparison to the 2002 Parliamentary Elections. Ukraine now has only the second round to show that it is willing and capable of organising truly democratic elections in line with the commitments it took upon itself when joining the Council of Europe. Failure to do so will clearly hurt its credibility as a member of the Council of Europe.

39. In order to ensure that voters can make an informed choice on Election Day, both candidates in the second round should be encouraged to participate in televised debates and all media should offer fair, equal and unbiased access to, and coverage of, both candidates competing in the second round. The Ukrainian authorities bear special responsibility to the compliance of the State-funded media in this respect.

40. Pressure on, and intimidation of, voters, election officials and campaign activists have no place in a democratic society. The Ukrainian authorities and the two presidential candidates should ensure that the second round and its electoral campaign take place in full compliance with the Election Law of Ukraine and international commitments and democratic standards. Any irregularities noted during both rounds should be duly addressed by the authorities and where violations of the law are found perpetrators should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. There can be no impunity in this respect.

41. The ad hoc Committee will issue a full set of recommendations to the Ukrainian authorities in its report on the second round of the Presidential Elections in Ukraine which will be discussed during the January 2005 part-session.

APPENDIX I

AS/BUR/UKR (2004) 5 rev 1
20 October 2004

**Ad Hoc Committee for the observation of the
Presidential Election in Ukraine
(31 October 2004)**

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Thursday, 28 October 2004

Arrival of the members of the ad hoc Committee

All members will be met at the airport and provided with transport to their hotel.

DNIPRO Hotel
1/2 Kreschatik Str.
Kyiv, 01001
Ukraine
Tel: + 380 44 291 8450
Fax: + 380 44 229 8213

President Hotel
12, Hospitalna St.,
Kyiv, 01023
Ukraine
Tel: + 380 44 220 41 44
Fax + 380 44 220 45 68

Friday, 29 October 2004

Arrivals, Continued

President Hotel

For those members staying at the Dnipro Hotel: departure by bus at 13:30

14:00 Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Joint Briefing Programme

14:30 Opening remarks of the Heads of Delegation of PACE, OSCE-PA, EP and NATO-PA

14:45 Briefings by ODIHR Election Observation Mission

15:45 Briefings by Ambassadors representing the countries that are holding the Chair of the organisations in the IEOM

17:15 Meeting with the Chairman of the Central Election Commission

18:15 Meeting Mass Media representatives

Saturday, 30 October 2004

President Hotel

For those members staying at the Dnipro Hotel: departure by bus at 08:30

- 09:00 Meeting with the representative of Mr Yanukovich, candidate for the Presidency of Ukraine
- 10:00 Meeting with the representative of Mr Yushenko, candidate for the Presidency of Ukraine
- 11:15 Meeting with Mr Moroz, candidate for the Presidency of Ukraine
- 12:00 Meeting with the representative of Mr Simonenko, candidate for the Presidency of Ukraine
- 12:45 Meeting with the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Ukraine
- 13:30 Meeting with Drivers and Interpreters

Afternoon:

Deployment of the members that are observing the elections outside Kyiv

Sunday, 31 October 2004

Observation of the Presidential Election

Monday, 01 November 2004

President Hotel

For those members staying at the Dnipro Hotel: departure by bus at 07:35

- 08h00 Ad hoc Committee meeting
- 08h30 Joint debriefing
- 13h00 Press Conference (TBC)

Afternoon:

Departure of the members of the ad hoc Committee

Tuesday, 02 November 2004

Departure of the members of the ad hoc Committee continued.

APPENDIX II

PRESS RELEASE

PACE delegation expects 'corrective action' in time for Ukraine election

Kyiv, 29.09.2004 – A five-member cross-party pre-election delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)* visited Ukraine from 26 to 29 September to assess the political situation in the country in the run-up to the 31 October presidential election as well as the state of preparedness of Ukraine's institutions for the conduct of the vote. It issued the following statement:

"The delegation had an extensive and intensive programme of meetings with presidential candidates and their representatives, the Speaker of the Rada, top electoral officials, Chairpersons of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts, as well as a representative cross-section of civil society and the media. The delegation met with the Prime Minister, who is also running for the Presidency, and had a useful exchange of views with the diplomatic corps and the OSCE ODIHR long-term election observation mission.

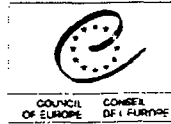
'We are here to listen, analyse and assess,' said Doros Christodoulides, leader of the delegation. 'Our goal is to see what PACE can do to promote Ukraine's further advancement on the road to democracy.'

The delegation has received extensive information indicating that the upcoming presidential election may be conducted in a manner not meeting Council of Europe standards. Mindful of the statement dated 15 September by the PACE Monitoring Committee on the forthcoming Presidential election in Ukraine, the delegation will make proposals to the PACE bodies concerned and expects that corrective action will be taken in Ukraine in time for the election."

The PACE will send a full-size election observation mission to Ukraine at the end of October that will observe the upcoming election in co-operation with its partners from the OSCE PA and other like-minded institutions.

*Members of the delegation

Doros CHRISTODOULIDES (UEL/Cyprus) – Leader of the Delegation
Abdulkadir ATEŞ (SOC/Turkey)
Christos POURGOURIDES (EPP-DC/ Cyprus)
Hanne SEVERINSEN (LDR/Denmark)
André KVAKKESTAD (EDG/ Norway)



APPENDIX III

Widespread campaign irregularities observed in Ukrainian presidential election

Kyiv, 01.11.2004 - The first round of voting in the 31 October presidential election in Ukraine did not meet a considerable number of OSCE, Council of Europe and other European standards for democratic elections, concluded the International Election Observation Mission in a preliminary statement released today. Nevertheless, the very high participation of the electorate and civil society in the election process show encouraging signs for the evolution of Ukrainian democracy.

The mission included some 600 observers from the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It reported a number of concerns about the electoral process, including bias by the State media, interference by the State administration in favour of Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, the disruption or obstruction of opposition campaign events by the State authorities, and inadequacies in the Central Election Commission's handling of complaints.

"With a heavy heart, we have to conclude that this election did not meet a considerable number of OSCE, Council of Europe, and other European standards for democratic elections," said Bruce George, President *emeritus* of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Special Co-ordinator for the short-term observers. "Consequently, this election process constitutes a step backward from the 2002 elections."

"Although we are grateful to the Ukrainian authorities for their co-operation during our mission, we regret that they did not create equal campaign conditions. The election also came up short on other counts, such as the failure to allow Ukrainian civil society to directly observe the process," said Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR's long-term observation mission. "We will remain in the country, and we call on the authorities, including the Central Election Commission, to address existing deficiencies prior to the second round."

The Head of the delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Doros Christodoulides, said: "Ukraine now has three weeks to show that it is willing to organise democratic elections in accordance with its commitments. The authorities should ensure that both candidates have equal access to, and unbiased coverage by, the media. Both the authorities and political forces should refrain from any undue interference in the electoral process and fully respect the provisions of the electoral law and international standards and should prosecute to the full extent of the law any violations committed during the first round."

"The elections represent a significant test for democracy in the country, and we welcome the high participation of voters on polling day. The conclusions of this report must be taken on board in order to ensure that the second round is free, fair, and transparent and that the people of Ukraine can elect the President of their choice," said Marek Maciej Siwiec, Head of the delegation from the European Parliament. "The European Parliament stands ready to co-operate with the next President of Ukraine and looks forward to fruitful dialogue as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the agreed Action Plan."

"We stand by the findings of the long-term observation mission and those of the short-term observers deployed on election day," said Jane Cordy, Head of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly delegation. "A true democracy thrives on the freedom of its citizens to express a plurality of opinions and ultimately to express their will in the election of their representatives. The irregularities observed in the election are a disappointment for the international community, and, above all, they must be a disappointment for the Ukrainian people, especially for those we saw working so hard on election day itself."

A final report will be released four to six weeks after the completion of the electoral process.