

Canada – Europe
Parliamentary Association



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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the Presidential Election Observation
Mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

**Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-
operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly**

**Kyiv, Ukraine
March 31, 2019**

Report

On Sunday, March 31, 2019, a Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), led by the **Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.**, and composed of the **Hon. Colin Deacon, Senator**, the **Hon. Michael MacDonald, Senator**, Mr. **Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P.**, Mr. **Peter Fonseca, M.P.**, Mr. **Jim Eglinski, M.P.**, Mr. **Mark Warawa, M.P.**, and Mr. **David Christopherson, M.P.**, participated in an election observation mission that monitored the presidential elections held in Ukraine. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Matthieu Boulianne, Secretary of the Association.

A. The Election Observation Mission in Ukraine

One of the key elements of the OSCE's mandate is the promotion of democratic elections. To this end, the Canadian delegation to OSCE PA has participated in numerous international election observation missions. As a community of countries committed to democracy, the OSCE has placed great emphasis on promoting democratic elections as a key pillar of stability. All OSCE participating States have committed themselves to invite international observers to their elections, in recognition that election observation can play an important role in enhancing confidence in the electoral process. Deploying election observers offers demonstrable support to a democratic process and can assist OSCE participating States in their objective to conduct genuine elections in line with OSCE commitments.

The OSCE election observation mission in Ukraine was a common endeavour, involving the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE PA, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the European Parliament (EP) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). The mission was deployed at the invitation of the Government of Ukraine, pursuant to commitments made by all OSCE participating states.

On election day, 967 observers from 45 countries were deployed, including 797 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the ODIHR, as well as a 107 parliamentarians and staff from the OSCE PA, 32 from PACE, 19 from the NATO PA and 12 from the EP. Voting was observed in over 3,300 polling stations. Counting was observed in 331 polling stations across 153 election districts.

B. Activities of the Canadian Delegation

On Thursday, March 28, the delegation received a security briefing provided by Drew Evans, Readiness and Security Program Manager, Canadian Embassy in Ukraine, and Rouslan Kats, Counsellor, Political and Public Affairs, Canadian Embassy in Ukraine.

Canadian delegates attended ODIHR briefing sessions for parliamentarians on Friday, March 29 and Saturday, March 30, in Kyiv, Ukraine. Over the course of the two days, delegates were provided an overview of the political background to the elections and exchanged with representatives of presidential candidates. They were also briefed on the administration of the elections, had panel discussions with representatives of civil society

and representatives of mass media. Finally, the final briefing from ODIRH focused on the process for election-day reporting and statistical analysis.

The delegation attended a situational briefing followed by a reception with H.E. Roman Waschuk, Ambassador of Canada to Ukraine on Friday, March 29.

On Saturday, March 30, three delegates were deployed across Ukraine to observe the elections on March 31. Mr. Christopherson was deployed to Karkiv. Mr. Warawa and Mr. Eglinski were deployed to Lviv. The remaining members of the delegation were deployed on the morning on March 31 in and around the Kyiv region.

On election-day, the delegates observed several aspects of the election process, including:

- the opening of a polling station in the morning;
- the voting process in a number of polling stations throughout election day;
- the closing of a polling station and the vote count in that polling station;
- the transfer of election material to the District Election Commission (DEC) and handover at the DEC;
- the processing of election materials and the tabulation of results at the DEC.

Delegates reported regularly on their observations throughout the day by completing observation report forms at each polling station visited and submitting them to their assigned long-term observers.

C. Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

The March 31, 2019 presidential election in Ukraine was characterized with a very high voter turnout of 63.5 per cent, largely in line with international commitments and respected fundamental freedoms. Citizens were given a broad choice of candidates, though many of which were considered 'technical' who are in fact affiliated with leading candidates and are registered in part to obtain seats in lower level commissions.

Polling stations were well organized, transparent and efficient with proper procedures generally adhered to. Canadian observers witnessed between 15 and 20 polling stations, including the opening and the closing of stations.

Fundamental freedom of vote was respected for Ukrainian citizens living outside of the Crimean peninsula. Ukrainian citizens living there faced serious difficulties in participating in the election if they wanted to cast their vote.

The election took place in the context of ongoing armed conflict and other hostilities in the east of the country and the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation. As a consequence, the election could not be organized in Crimea and certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that are controlled by illegal armed groups.

Candidates were able to campaign freely, though several credible indications of misuse of state resources and vote-buying undermined the credibility of the process. The media landscape is diverse, but campaign coverage in the monitored media lacked in-depth analysis and often showed biased opinions.

The legal framework remains unchanged since the previous presidential election in 2014. The right of individuals to lodge constitutional complaints, introduced in 2016, now allows citizens and political parties for the first time to challenge election-related legislation.

The full preliminary report, prepared jointly by the OSCE PA, ODIHR, PACE, EP and NATO PA missions, is available in English at the following site:
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/415733>

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.
Director

Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation
in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
(OSCE PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly
ACTIVITY	Presidential Election Observation Mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
DESTINATION	Kyiv, Ukraine Kharkiv, Ukraine Lviv, Ukraine
DATES	March 27 to April 1, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Colin Deacon, Senator Hon. Michael MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P. Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P. Mr. Peter Fonseca, M.P. Mr. Jim Eglinski, M.P. Mr. Mark Warawa, M.P. Mr. David Christopherson, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Matthieu Boulianne, Secretary to the Association
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 67,009.75
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 6,433.63
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,830.89
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 852.73
TOTAL	\$ 78,127.00 (\$ 53,968.61 of this amount was funded by GAC under an agreement to allow more parliamentarians to be present)