



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine's May 25 Elections

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 22, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States offers its support and encouragement to Ukraine as it prepares for Sunday's Presidential elections. These elections are an opportunity for all Ukrainians across the country to come together, exercise their right to vote, and express their shared commitment to a better future in a united Ukraine. We believe that elections and national dialogue are the best route to political healing in Ukraine and they will demonstrate that Ukrainians support national unity and strongly reject the violence perpetrated by the separatists and their supporters. We are impressed by the commendable efforts made thus far by the Government of Ukraine and its Central Election Commission to ensure these elections meet the highest international standards and are a true expression of the political will of the people of Ukrainian.

We thank ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for their tremendous efforts as they mount the largest election observation mission in OSCE's history in support of Ukraine's democracy and its future. With this very large Mission, the OSCE is again proving its capacity to do what it does best—to quickly provide support and tools to assist participating States in implementing their commitments. My government is pleased to support these efforts – the United States seconded 96 people to the short-term observation mission, and contributed 12 long-term observers, approximately one-tenth of the total. We are also pleased that a distinguished delegation from the U.S. Congress has joined the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observation effort.

As ODIHR's second interim report on the Ukrainian elections clearly indicated, election preparations are on track in the vast majority of Ukraine. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has demonstrated an efficient, independent and collegial manner of work. Pro-Russian separatist forces and related violence are creating a climate of fear that negatively impacts the ability of the CEC to hold elections in a few isolated areas. In such cases, the Ukraine government has provided alternative voting sites.

We are encouraged as we look to Sunday. The Government of the Ukraine and the Central Election Commission have worked hard to ensure elections can proceed smoothly and, according to recent independent polls, a substantial majority of Ukrainians intend to vote on May 25. Any efforts to disrupt this democratic process will be seen clearly for what they are: the denial of the right of Ukraine's citizens to express their political will freely. As long as efforts to destabilize Ukraine continue, we must remain determined to impose further costs on

those who seek to disrupt these elections. The United States stands with the government and people of Ukraine as they prepare for the elections this Sunday. And on Sunday, we stand with Ukrainian people as they freely express their democratic will.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.