

ENGLISH only

Canadian Delegation to the  
Organization for Security & Cooperation  
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de  
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération  
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE  
RESPONSE TO H.E. MR. KANAT B. SAUDABAYEV,  
SECRETARY OF STATE OF KAZAKHSTAN  
680<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007**

We join others in welcoming H.E. Secretary of State, Mr. Saudabayev to today's Permanent Council. We thank him for reiterating Kazakhstan's views on the OSCE, on the recent Parliamentary elections and political developments in his country, and on their OSCE Chairmanship aspirations. As the Secretary of State spoken at length regarding those recent elections, we wish to reiterate our own observations.

Canada followed the 18 August Parliamentary Elections in Kazakhstan with great interest. We were pleased to send a number of short-term and long-term observers to assist the extensive OSCE Election Observation Mission.

As the Secretary of State has noted, Canadian Senator Consiglio Di Nino was the head of PA's observing efforts and was designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator to lead the OSCE short-term observers.

On a positive note, the OSCE Election Observation Mission preliminary report noted some improvements in the conduct of these elections over the 2004 Parliamentary and 2005 Presidential votes. Improved access to media for all political parties, greater transparency from election officials and inclusive candidate registration lists were all cited as steps forward.

However, Canada notes with serious concern that according to that report, this election did not meet international and OSCE standards.

It is our view that at least one level of parliament should be filled entirely with popularly elected representatives, party and election officials should be separate, party registration processes should be reasonable and the threshold for inclusion into parliament should be low enough to ensure opposition parties have a real chance to sit in the legislature.

Canada is also deeply concerned about the widespread lack of transparency and systemic problems related to the vote count. This shortcoming alone undermines the fairness and legitimacy of elections.

Canada has spoken extensively on our strong support for strong democratic institutions, including free and fair elections that give voice to opposition parties and represent the will of citizens.

We have also highlighted the importance of respect for human rights, the development of a vibrant civil society unencumbered by oppressive government regulations and restrictions as well as a society based on pluralism and respect for diversity.

Mr. Chairman, these are key OSCE commitments and values which all OSCE participating States have accepted. It is Canada's hope and expectation that all States within this organisation adhere to these obligations to the fullest extent. Canada views this as a condition for effective and credible OSCE leadership in any capacity and encourages Kazakhstan to work with the Organisation and its institutions fulfill its commitments.