

# Election Observation



A decade of monitoring elections:  
the people and the practice

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# Foreword

**T**he OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has extensive experience in observing elections. For the last decade, we have observed around 150 election processes, deploying thousands of experts and observers from the entire OSCE region.

Election observation is one of the most transparent and methodical ways to promote and encourage democracy and human rights. Ensuring that these principles are upheld is, of course, the task of governments, not observers.

Election observation is based on two fundamental principles: first, clear commitments entered into by governments for ensuring democratic elections; and second, the simple and incontrovertible rule that an observer is just that, an objective individual who does not interfere in the process. Transparency is key to ensuring that election observation remains objective and that all those interested in it can trust that it will remain so. Add hard work, dedication, professionalism, and experience, and we have an activity that we can be proud of, an effort that enjoys widespread respect and on which several international organizations have based their own observation activities.

Behind the observation is a diverse group of people from a variety of backgrounds. What they have in common is expertise, years of experience, an open mind, and dedication. You can meet a few of these individuals in the following pages and see what they have to say about the practice behind a decade of OSCE/ODIHR election observation. We at the ODIHR are certainly grateful to them.



*Ambassador Christian Strohal*

*Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*



# International Election Observation: The Origins

**T**he first reported case in modern history of international election observation took place in 1857, when a European commission of Austrian, British, French, Prussian, Russian, and Turkish representatives observed the general elections in the disputed territories of Moldavia and Wallachia.

One would be hard-pressed to come up with detailed records about the method employed by these pioneering election observers, but it is safe to assume that it would have little in common with the observation missions of today as deployed by a number of international organizations. Such missions are structured, systematic, and regularly involve hundreds of individuals over a period of several months.

Anyone with an interest in world events has likely heard the findings of international election observers as conveyed regularly in news reports and might wonder why so many elections are now observed globally, why so many people are needed for election observation, or why observers spend months monitoring what many perceive as a one-day event. Ultimately, some may even ask why the international community has such an interest in the elections of sovereign states and what a country stands to gain from international election observation.

International organizations and government representatives have monitored electoral events to some degree since the First World War, and this became even more common in the period following World War II. At that time, election observation was conducted mainly under the auspices of the United Nations, which concentrated its efforts on non-sovereign territories, as this was more closely in line with its Charter, which prohibited it from intervening “in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the state”.

But it was not until the last two decades that election observation became a regular activity, spurred on by the movement towards democracy occurring around the globe. While holding an election does not equate to instant democracy, genuine and periodic elections that permit fair competition are fundamental to the democratic process. Election observation has thus emerged as a valuable tool to support and promote democratic elections as an essential element of sustainable democratic governance.





**The 1996 Lisbon Summit Declaration stated that, “among the acute problems within the human dimension, the continuing violations of human rights, such as (...) electoral fraud (...) continue to endanger stability in the OSCE region.”**

Fast-forward to 2005, when United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed a gathering of international organizations at UN headquarters in New York to endorse a Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. This was the first universal effort to outline a code of practice for safeguarding the integrity of objective and impartial election observation as a shared global activity.

“The presence of international election observers, fielded always at the invitation of sovereign states, can make a big difference in ensuring that elections genuinely move the democratic process forward,” Annan said. “Their mere presence can dissuade misconduct, ensure transparency, and inspire confidence in the process.”

While isolated examples have existed for nearly a century and a half, election observation was essentially born in the 20th century and came of age as a prominent feature of international relations by the late 20th century. Today, the United Nations rarely fields its own observers; instead, observation is carried out by regional governmental and international non-governmental organizations.

### **Support for democratic transition in Europe**

Foremost among such regional inter-governmental efforts are those undertaken by the 55-member-state Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and specifically its Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The OSCE comprises the broader European region, including all of continental Europe and all of the successor states to the former Soviet Union. The OSCE is unique due to its transatlantic character, as it also counts the United States of America and Canada as member states.

The OSCE is a community of countries where decisions are made by consensus and states are subsequently bound by their political commitments to one another and to their citizens. Many of those consensus-based commitments refer specifically to democratic governance and human rights, including the promotion of democratic elections as a pillar of stability and regional security.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the 55 member states of the OSCE reached agreements that established a new foundation for building democracy throughout a newly unified Europe.

In a landmark document formulated in Copenhagen in 1990, the OSCE’s member states confirmed their commitment to abide by fundamental democratic principles.

“The Copenhagen Document is one of the most significant international agreements to support, protect, and promote democratic governance and a broad range of fundamental human rights, including those necessary for the conduct of a genuinely democratic election process,” says Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. “And 15 years after its adoption, the Copenhagen Document continues to provide the benchmark by which elections are assessed in all participating States.”

The Copenhagen Document was the first political agreement among sovereign states to institutionalize election observation by extending a standing invitation for OSCE states to observe each other’s electoral proceedings.

“Once the member states agreed to this, the organization responded by establishing a mechanism to foster election assist-





**The core OSCE commitments on elections are contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, which requires states to:**

- › Hold free elections at reasonable intervals;
- › Permit all seats in at least one chamber of the legislature to be popularly elected;
- › Guarantee universal and equal suffrage;
- › Respect the right of citizens to seek office;
- › Respect the right to establish political parties, and ensure the parties can compete on the basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities;
- › Ensure that political campaigning can be conducted in a free and fair atmosphere without administrative action, violence, intimidation or fear of retribution against candidates, parties or voters;
- › Ensure unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis;
- › Ensure votes are cast by secret ballot, and that they are counted and reported honestly, with the results made public;
- › Ensure that candidates who win the necessary votes to be elected are duly installed in office and are permitted to remain in office until their term expires.

ance and observation efforts: the Warsaw-based Office for Free Elections,” explains Gerald Mitchell, Head of the ODIHR’s Election Department. “The office’s initial focus was to assist new and emerging democracies of the OSCE region through the process of democratic transition, and the conduct of democratic elections was a priority.”

Following closely upon the heels of the Copenhagen achievement, the OSCE’s member states, meeting in Moscow a year later, declared that matters pertaining to democracy and human rights are of direct and legitimate concern to all OSCE member states and “do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned”.

“This principle reinforces the standing invitation for participating States to observe elections in other countries in the OSCE region,” says the ODIHR’s Mitchell. “And while our early observation efforts concentrated on countries in transition, we’re now increasingly receiving and accepting invitations from longer-standing democracies.”



# The Development of OSCE Election Observation

The early days of election observation could be termed the “free and fair” years, as one sought a fast and simple characterization from observers on election day proceedings. It soon became evident that such black-and-white assessments were insufficient to describe and assess the complexity of an election process.

A watershed moment in the development of OSCE election observation came in 1994, when the organization’s member states duly recognized that an election is not a one-day event but a process that commences several months before election day.

“The electoral process has to be seen as a film rather than an instant photo,” says the ODIHR’s Ambassador Strohal. “What happens on election day is just the tip of the iceberg.”

As a result, the ODIHR was mandated to play an enhanced role in election monitoring before, during, and after an election. Instead of just concentrating on election day events witnessed in polling stations, including violations such as ballot-box stuffing or voter intimidation, more-complex missions could now be established. If one considers all the possible ways that the pre-election environment can be manipulated, including administrative constraints and disregard for fundamental civil and political rights, it is clear that long-term observation of elections is not only justified, it is indispensable.

“It was clear that the ODIHR would need a consistent and structured methodology in order to fulfill its mandate for enhanced election observation,” says Ambassador Strohal. “This development would permit ODIHR observation missions to offer more than impressions, but to make authoritative and constructive recommendations based on well-established facts.”

## **ODIHR election observation methodology**

In response to a request from the OSCE member states, the ODIHR published a handbook in 1996 that detailed the observation methodology that it had developed after the Budapest Summit.

**The 1994 Budapest Summit decided that the ODIHR should “play an enhanced role in election monitoring before, during and after elections”.**

**“The OSCE/ODIHR’s election observation methodology is widely recognized for its high standards of impartiality, transparency, and professionalism by election observation organizations around the world, including the European Union, the Carter Center, and many others.” — Former US President Jimmy Carter**



“Developing a more structured approach to election observation presented operational challenges for the ODIHR and challenges for the organization as a whole, including its member states,” says the ODIHR’s Mitchell, who was primarily responsible for developing the methodology. “Long-term election observation permitted the ODIHR to comment more comprehensively on all aspects of an election process, including cases in which OSCE states failed to fully meet their commitments.”

Already in its fifth edition, the handbook provides the guidelines that observers use to get an in-depth insight into all aspects of the electoral process, beginning with a review of the legal framework, and including the performance of the election administration; the conduct of the campaign; the media environment and equitable media access; the complaints and appeals process; voting, counting, and tabulation; and the announcement of results.



“A decade after its introduction, the ODIHR’s methodology for election observation continues to produce comprehensive assessments and constructive recommendations,” says Ambassador Strohal. “It has served the purpose for which it was intended: to assist OSCE states in conducting genuine democratic elections. This approach has also inspired others beyond the OSCE region: the European Union has stated that its own methodology, which is used for observing elections worldwide, has been enriched by the experience of the OSCE. So has the recent adoption of principles and a code of conduct in the framework of the United Nations.”

Although the ODIHR's methodology has not been fundamentally altered since its introduction in 1996, it has been expanded in recent years to take more detailed account of certain issues, including the participation of women and the inclusion of national minorities in the electoral process. In addition, guidelines have been developed to improve certain aspects of media monitoring in the context of the election campaign.

### **Overall aim: to improve the electoral process**

Election observation is not an end in itself. Its purpose is not to criticize countries for failing to hold fully democratic elections or to praise others that live up to their commitments. Election observation has a much more practical purpose: to help all OSCE member states improve their electoral processes to the benefit of their citizenry. With this in mind, the ODIHR attempts to maintain

a post-election dialogue with countries in which it has observed elections in order to follow up on its recommendations and facilitate their implementation. One area of follow-up that the ODIHR is particularly active in is the review of election legislation for improving the legal framework for the conduct of elections.

The ODIHR has shared aspects of its methodology with non-governmental organizations that engage in election observation in their own countries. Although domestic and international observation are conducted as separate activities, they are complementary: they both aim to assess and improve an election process. Therefore, the ODIHR regularly exchanges experience with domestic observer groups, and has always been vocal in supporting their right to observe elections in their own countries.

**“We appreciate the role of the ODIHR in assisting countries to develop electoral legislation in keeping with OSCE principles and commitments, and we agree to follow up promptly ODIHR’s election assessments and recommendations.”**

*— Istanbul Summit Declaration 1999*







# To Observe or Not to Observe?

**T**he ODIHR maintains a rolling calendar to identify upcoming elections throughout the OSCE region. There are, however, many elections in any given year at the national level and below, and the ODIHR has to determine which elections it will observe.

“We have 55 countries in the OSCE but finite human and budgetary resources,” says ODIHR Director Strohal. “With some 30 elections throughout the region in any given year, it is inevitable that we won’t be able to observe them all. Once we accept that fact, choosing where to observe is a matter of allocating our resources rationally, where they will have the most added value.”

“It was much more obvious in the early 1990s as to which elections to monitor, when observation was seen — by both the observers and the observed — as a response to the immediate challenges of democratic transition sweeping the region after 1989,” says Ambassador Audrey Glover, a former ODIHR Director who has also headed several observation missions. “The assumption was that, if one of these countries were to hold an election, the OSCE would observe it.”

While the ODIHR continues to regularly observe elections in OSCE member states emerging from a non-democratic past, it has also begun to focus its attention on electoral challenges in longer-established democracies. For example, the introduction of new voting technologies poses potential challenges for transparency and accountability in any country where such tech-

**In order to observe effectively, the ODIHR expects assurances from the host government that an election observation mission will be able to carry out its duties in a timely manner, and specifically to:**

- › Establish a mission within a time frame that permits observation of all phases of the election process;
- › Decide at its own discretion the number of observers necessary to mount a viable observation mission;
- › Receive accreditation for all its observers through a simple and non-discriminatory procedure;
- › Obtain all necessary information regarding the electoral process from authorities at all levels;
- › Meet with candidates, members of all political parties, representatives of civil society, and with all other individuals of its choice;
- › Have the freedom to travel in all regions of the country during the election process and on election day, without any restriction or prior notification;
- › Have unimpeded access to all polling stations, election commissions, and counting and tabulation centres throughout the country;
- › Be able to issue public statements.



**The following are among the principal and emerging areas where the conduct of democratic elections requires further attention and improvement:**

- › Respect for the civil and political rights of candidates and voters;
- › Compilation of accurate voter lists;
- › Equitable access to the media;
- › Unbiased coverage by the media;
- › Access for international and domestic election observers;
- › Participation of women;
- › Inclusion of national minorities;
- › Access for disabled voters;
- › Honest counting and tabulation of the votes;
- › Effective complaints and appeals process with an independent judiciary;
- › Overall transparency and accountability that instills public confidence;
- › Development and implementation of new voting technologies.



nologies are being used or considered. Long-standing democracies tend to give a priority to the principle of enfranchisement, which is sometimes achieved through absentee, early, or postal voting, and these are all aspects of an election process that need to be regulated carefully in order to ensure secrecy of the vote and thus full confidence in the process. Furthermore, the legal provisions in established democracies have not always envisaged the presence of observers, which has led some OSCE member states to consider the need to update their legislation.

The ODIHR has attempted to address such issues by deploying assessment missions to longer-established democracies. Such missions consist of a group of experts who visit a country for a period of time immediately prior to and during election day to make an overall assessment of the administrative and legal framework for the conduct of elections and to provide targeted recommendations. An assessment mission does not comment on the process in the same comprehensive manner as an observation mission, and it does not undertake any systematic observation on election day.

“Since, in most cases, established democracies have well-tested electoral practices that enjoy the overall confidence of their electorates, as well as pluralistic media that identify electoral shortcomings for public debate, independent judicial organs, and a generally robust civil society, these assessment missions can review targeted issues at a minimal cost,” says Vadim Zhdanovich, the ODIHR’s Senior Election Adviser.



All OSCE member states from throughout the region, both east and west, are invited to send long- and short-term observers to contribute to each and every ODIHR election observation mission.

## Observers: Who Are They and Where Do They Come From?

The media usually use the blanket term *international observers* — another term that is commonly used is *Western observers*; this, however, is a holdover from the days when observers were almost exclusively Westerners; for today's diversified missions, this term is simply wrong — to describe both short-term observers who visit polling stations on election day, as well as the entire apparatus of an election observation mission.

While use of the term *observer* may be convenient shorthand, it doesn't do justice to the scale of an election observation mission or to the degree of professional specialization and diversity within one. A standard mission involves six different groups, each of which plays a distinct, though interrelated, role in the overall work of an observation mission. They include:

1. Officials from the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. This usually includes the ODIHR Director, the Head and Deputy Head of the Election Department, the Election Adviser responsible for the particular country where the election is being held, the ODIHR Spokesperson, as well as support staff;
2. The mission core team, which includes the Head and Deputy Head of mission; profes-



**The ODIHR maintains a roster of experts accessible on the ODIHR website ([www.osce.org/odihr](http://www.osce.org/odihr)), whereby individuals with election, political, legal and other relevant experience corresponding to each of the core team functions can submit their curricula vitae. Often, individuals who have served as long-term observers are identified for recruitment to the core team in subsequent missions.**

sional analysts with experience in the areas of media analysis, electoral systems, political issues, law, and women's and national minority issues; logisticians, statisticians, and finance officers;

3. Long-term observers, who are deployed to regional centres throughout the country six to eight weeks before election day;
4. Short-term observers, who arrive several days before voting and leave a day or two after voting;
5. Parliamentarians, who join the short-term observers for election day observation, representing bodies such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office regularly designates a senior member of



the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to be a Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term observers for a particular election, and this person works closely with the ODIHR Head of Mission;

6. National support staff, including administrative assistants; logistics assistants; assistants for each member of the core team, who usually have some expertise in the relevant area; translators and drivers.

While the members of the core team are professionals who are contracted by the ODIHR based on their expertise, the long- and short-term observers are offered by the 55 OSCE participating States, with the exception of the country where the election is being held.





Since 2001, the ODIHR's diversification fund has allowed 850 long- and short-term observers to take part in election observation missions.

Since not all OSCE member states are in the regular practice of sending observers, the ODIHR has developed several mechanisms to ensure a higher degree of diversity and geographic balance among its observers. In 2001, the ODIHR established a voluntary fund for the diversification of observation missions to finance the participation of additional observers. This fund has been instrumental in enhancing representation of election observers from Central and Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia.

No OSCE member state should contribute more than 10 per cent of the requested numbers of long- and short-term observers. In addition, long- and short-term observers work in teams comprising two individuals from different countries.

"When preparing our deployment plan, we pay close attention to the element of diversity within each team of observers. We don't pair up two citizens of the same country, and we try to partner a less-experienced observer with someone who has more experience," says Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj, a Slovak diplomat who has headed several observation missions. "Since each team fills out only one observation form per polling station, they have to agree on their findings, which helps ensure a more balanced view of operations."





# How It All Works

**J**ust as there are different types of observers, there are also different types of observation missions. Depending on the particular circumstances, the ODIHR can deploy a full election observation mission, which includes hundreds of short-term observers on election day; a limited election observation mission, which includes a core team of analysts and long-term observers in regional centres, but no short-term observers; an election assessment mission, which comprises a small team of analysts who examine particular election-related issues; or a decision may be made not to deploy a mission at all.

## Getting started

Every OSCE election observation mission normally begins with an official communication from the host government, inviting the OSCE to send observers.

The next step is to deploy a so-called needs assessment mission to assess the situation in the relevant country and determine the scale of a potential observation activity.

“We determine when to initiate a needs assessment mission prior to an election in order to permit sufficient planning time,” explains the ODIHR’s Mitchell. “This gives us an opportunity to be updated on the major issues specific to the election, to establish dialogue with the authorities and other interested organizations in the country, and also to determine the necessary make-up of any observation mission, including the numbers of long- and short-term observers.”

## The structure of an election observation mission

A standard election observation mission is deployed throughout the entire host country and involves several levels of observers and analysts. This structure allows the mission to gain sufficient insight into the entire election process.

**“The participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from any other [O]SCE participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law. They will also endeavour to facilitate similar access for election proceedings held below the national level. Such observers will undertake not to interfere in the electoral proceedings.”**

— *Copenhagen Document, Paragraph 8*



"We are not election police," says the ODIHR's Mitchell. "We are not present in every polling station and do not interfere in the process. However, pre-election observation, in combination with election day findings, provides a sufficiently comprehensive picture to make a genuine assessment of the degree to which an election meets agreed democratic standards."

**A needs assessment mission typically considers the following issues:**

- › The extent to which recommendations emerging from previous ODIHR election observation missions have been implemented;
- › The pre-election environment, including the general extent to which human rights and fundamental freedoms are being observed by the government in relation to the upcoming election;
- › The legislative framework and any amendments since the last election (whenever possible or relevant, the ODIHR will prepare a separate detailed analysis of the election legislation);
- › The composition and structure of the election administration, as well as the status of its preparations for the election and the general extent of public and political confidence in its work;
- › The status of the media and their expected role in the elections;
- › Any other issues of particular relevance, such as the compilation of voter registers, the candidate/party registration process, the participation of women, the inclusion of minorities, or election activities of civil society organizations;
- › The degree to which interlocutors believe the establishment of an observation mission can serve a useful purpose; and
- › Whether the security situation is conducive to an observation mission.

**Core team**

Mission headquarters is home to the core team, which usually consists of at least 12 members, including a head and deputy head; media, elections, political, and legal analysts; a co-ordinator of long-term observers; logistics officers; statisticians; finance officers; and security officers. Where relevant, the core team may also have analysts responsible for other issues, including women's participation or national minorities.

**Head of mission**

"As head of mission, you have to oversee everything that goes on, and that can often involve the work of five hundred or six hundred people," says Peter Eicher, a former First Deputy Director of the ODIHR who has also headed a number of observation missions. "In addition to being responsible for day-to-day decisions in the mission, you're also the public face of the mission. That means spending a lot of time with government officials, political parties, NGOs, the media, and with the diplomatic community to ensure that they all understand the mission's role, activities, and, ultimately, its findings."

Eicher says that the biggest challenge in election observation is "being sure to get it right".

"Election observation missions and the conclusions they draw are important. They deal with the most critical and politically sensitive issues facing any country. Just as we're watching a country conduct an election, they're watching us to see how well we do our job, and our analysis must therefore be sound, even-handed and objective."

### **Deputy head of mission**

"The main task of the deputy head of mission is to make sure things work," explains Stefan Krause, a German citizen who has nearly a decade of elections experience with both the ODIHR and the European Union. "On the one hand, you are something of a chief of staff, co-ordinating the mission's internal work, ensuring that tasks are completed on time, and seeing that logistical arrangements are made and reports are drafted within deadlines. On the other hand, you have to stay on top of the findings of all the analysts and really know the substance of the mission's work."

"The most challenging part of the job of deputy is to make sure things work when the pressure is on. The deputy needs to make sure that people understand their role, that they work together as a team, and that any problems that arise are resolved quickly and amicably."

### **Election analyst**

As the mission's primary contact with the election administration, he or she attends all meetings of the central election commission, or equivalent body.

In addition, the election analyst is responsible for monitoring voter registration, candidate registration, election regulations and procedures, the design and printing of ballot papers, the effec-

tiveness of lower-level election commissions, and other issues within the purview of the election administration. The election analyst also reviews the counting and tabulation procedures and analyses the production of the final aggregated results for conformity with legal regulations and administrative procedures.

"For me, elections with repeated rounds are particularly difficult. I once worked on a parliamentary election that had voting on four consecutive Sundays. The stress of the job accumulates during the run-up to election day, and then it decreases and builds up again just before the next election day," says Riccardo Chelleri, an Italian citizen with more than seven years of elections experience with the ODIHR, the United Nations, and the European Union.

### **Legal analyst**

The legal analyst is interested in two questions: whether legislation complies with OSCE and other universal principles; and whether domestic law is applied properly, impartially, and consistently.

"While most countries in the OSCE region have laws that are in line with international standards for democratic elections, it is the implementation of those provisions that an observation mission follows," says Bojana Asanovic, a citizen of Serbia and Montenegro and the UK who has experience as a short- and long-term observer and as a legal analyst. "Knowing what the nature of the system is, where the grey areas are, where the electoral administration is likely to encounter problems with implementation is the job of the legal analyst."



The legal analyst also follows all election-related disputes, complaints, court cases, and appeals. This permits an assessment of the extent to which effective remedies are available for complainants and the impartiality of the judiciary in dealing with election-related cases.

### *Political analyst*

The political analyst is an observation mission's main contact with candidates and political parties; he or she also monitors and assesses the political campaign. The political analyst pays close attention to the general political environment, as well as any decisions or developments that may have an impact on the election campaign, such as the creation of new political parties, the nomination of candidates, and the conduct of rallies and demonstrations.



"You regularly meet with candidates, political parties, non-governmental organizations, government representatives, and journalists in order to come to grips with the issues that are pertinent to the political race," says Lolita Cigane, a Latvian citizen who has been working as an expert on election-related issues since 2001. "It is important to see, for example, if the campaign is interrupted in any way by the state administration. Another issue that often comes up are allegations of abuse of administrative resources by incumbents."

### *Media analyst*

Beyond parties and candidates themselves, the media are the most important source of election-related information for the public. Their ability to function freely and independently is essential to a democratic election.

The media analyst leads a team of four to eight individuals responsible for preparing both quantitative — the total amount of time and space devoted to candidates and parties — and qualitative — whether that coverage is positive, negative, or neutral — analysis.

An observation mission also assesses media laws, the performance of regulatory bodies, and whether media-related complaints are handled fairly and efficiently.

"In a number of countries where I have conducted media analysis, the media



are still not sufficiently free,” says Rasto Kuzel, a Slovak citizen who has worked on more than twenty election observation missions or projects as a media analyst. “Media-monitoring projects can provide the general public with benchmarks to judge the fairness of the entire election process. This function is vital even in those countries that have a long-term tradition of freedom of speech and freedom of the media.”

#### *Co-ordinator of long-term observers*

It is essential that the core team in the capital and the long- and short-term observers in the field provide each other with the accurate and timely information they need to do their jobs properly.

The co-ordinator of long-term observers and the deputy head of mission also devise a deployment plan for long-term observers. In doing so, they need to ensure that they have a sufficient number of teams to provide adequate coverage of the country, while also providing for diversity — both in terms of nationality and experience — within the teams themselves.

“The role of an LTO coordinator is to ensure that the observers and the core team are communicating properly, feeding each other with the information they need,” says Delphine Blanchet, a French citizen who has been working in the elections field since 2000. “I also need to ensure that any information we receive about events in the field is checked by our observers, that it is accurate and relevant to our observation.”

#### *Logistics officer*

The logistics officer is the first mission member to arrive in-country and the last to leave.

“It is up to the logistics officer to find, equip, and secure an office before the core team arrives,” says Valeriy Shyrokov, a Ukrainian citizen who has been handling logistics on election observation missions, for both the ODIHR and the United Nations, since 1999. “Once the core team is set up, the next wave of LTOs begins. They need to be met at the airport, accommodated, briefed, and deployed to the field.”

As election day approaches, the logistics officer is primarily responsible for ensuring that short-term observers are deployed and properly accommodated, which includes arranging an interpreter and driver for each team.

“It is hard to overestimate the role of the logistics officer,” Shyrokov says. “He has to be aware of every single operational detail throughout the mission.”



Since 1996, the ODIHR has deployed some 1,500 long-term and 25,000 short-term observers.

### *Long-term observers*

The core team is complemented by a number of long-term observers (LTOs), election experts offered to the ODIHR by OSCE participating States, who are deployed to regional centres throughout the country. Long-term observers must have the appropriate election experience and should be capable of objective analysis. They meet regularly with local officials, as well as with representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations, in order to contribute their regional findings to the ODIHR's overall reporting on the pre-election period.



LTOs spend six to eight weeks observing and assessing the election administration, implementation of the law and other regulations, the conduct of the campaign, and the political environment — in essence, carrying out the same sort of observation and reporting activities in the regions that the core team is doing in the capital.

“The long-term observers are really the core team’s eyes and ears in the field,” says Yekaterina Glod, a Belarusian citizen who has been involved in elections work since 2000.

“LTOs meet with regional election administration officials, local authorities, political candidates, journalists, and civil society representatives, and they observe rallies and various campaign events,” Glod explains.

LTOs also work with the core team’s logistics officer to take care of all logistical arrangements for the short-term observers (STOs).

“LTOs brief the STOs after their arrival in their particular region of deployment to ensure that they are aware of any issues that deserve particular attention,” explains Glod. “And on election day itself, we co-ordinate reporting by the short-term observers to ensure that the core team is fully informed of trends and developments in all the regions.”

### *Short-term observers*

Every standard election observation mission will have anywhere from a hundred to a thousand short-term observers, also offered to the election observation mission by OSCE participating States. They arrive several days before voting; are given a comprehensive briefing about their role, responsibilities, and expectations; and

leave a day or two after voting. Their job is to observe the polling, counting and tabulation procedures, and to report their findings.

Observers visit, on average, about ten polling stations on election day, where they fill out forms (each form contains general questions, as well as questions related to specific issues that are important for that particular election) to gather detailed information about each polling station. Each form contributes to the overall statistical profile of how polling-station procedures are being conducted throughout the country, which the core team analyses and uses to draw conclusions about the election day process. This permits the observation mission to determine whether irregularities, when they occur, are of an isolated nature or are systematic.

“The most important function of an STO is to provide data from polling stations for the long-term observers and core team to analyse and interpret,” says Jakob Preuss, a German citizen who has been both a long- and short-term observer on a number of ODIHR missions. “But there is also a symbolic element to STOs, who represent the idea of the international community in the eyes of the host country.”

### **What a mission observes**

The areas that come under scrutiny during an election represent all key stages of the process. The ODIHR commences with a review of the election-related legislation, following which it monitors the registration of candidates and voters; the campaign period, including the activities of all the candidates and parties; the coverage provided by the major television stations and newspapers, including both publicly and privately owned media; the work of the election administration at all levels, from the central election commis-

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ODIHR OBSERVERS**

**All observers are expected to abide by the following Code of Conduct in order to ensure impartiality and professionalism. Any observer that breaches the code may have his/her accreditation withdrawn.**

- › Observers will maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties and will, at no time, publicly express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to national authorities, parties, candidates, or with reference to any issues in contention in the election process.
- › Observers will undertake their duties in an unobtrusive manner and will not interfere in the electoral process. Observers may raise questions with election officials and bring irregularities to their attention, but they must not give instructions or countermand their decisions.
- › Observers will remain on duty throughout election day, including observation of the vote count and, if instructed, the next stage of tabulation.
- › Observers will base all conclusions on their personal observations or on clear and convincing facts or evidence.
- › Observers will not make any comments to the media on the electoral process or on the substance of their observations, and any unauthorized comment to the media will be limited to general information about the observation mission and the role of the observers.
- › Observers will not take any unnecessary or undue risks. Each observer's personal safety overrides all other considerations.
- › Observers will carry any prescribed identification issued by the host government or election commission and will identify themselves to any authority upon request.
- › Observers will comply with all national laws and regulations.
- › Observers will exhibit the highest levels of personal discretion and professional behaviour at all times.
- › Observers will attend all required mission briefings and debriefings and adhere to the deployment plan and all other instructions provided by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission.





sion, or similar body, right down through regional administrations and municipal and polling-station commissions; the handling and resolution of complaints and appeals, including the functioning of the judiciary; as well as the final stage of any election, which is, of course, the installment in office of elected officials.

“A democratic election involves a genuine political competition where voters are able to make an informed choice between distinct alternatives, competing on a level playing field,” says Nikolai Vulchanov, Deputy Head of the ODIHR’s Election Department, who has also served as head of numerous observation missions.



“This is impossible without true respect for a broad range of fundamental civil and political rights, including freedom of association, expression and assembly. Take away just one of those rights, and an election could become nothing more than a house of cards. Take freedom of expression, for ex-

ample. If a candidate is unable to campaign freely, or if the media are prevented from reporting fairly about all candidates, then voters can’t really make an informed choice.”

On election day, short-term observers begin by monitoring the opening of one polling station to see whether it opens according to regulations, whether ballot boxes are empty and properly sealed, whether the polling station has received and can account for ballots and other sensitive materials, and whether the commission is familiar with the relevant procedures. Throughout the day, observers monitor how voters are processed, whether they are accurately listed in the voter register, whether all procedures in practice guarantee their right to vote, and whether they are able to vote in secrecy and in an environment free from intimidation.

“Election day observation is a very individual experience. One team of observers may witness no problems, another may see many problems, and yet others may observe a mixed picture,” says Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, a former German diplomat who has headed several observation missions. “The observation

mission is interested in the collective picture in order to ascertain whether any problems are isolated or represent a systematic problem.”

The vote count at the end of the day is an important part of the election process and therefore receives close attention. “Experience has demonstrated that, where election fraud is a concern, it is often more likely to take place during the vote count or the tabulation of results than during the actual balloting,” says the ODIHR’s Vulchanov.

Observing the count provides an opportunity to assess whether ballots are counted and reported accurately to truly reflect the choices expressed by voters.

“During one election, my partner and I witnessed how the chairperson of one polling station put ballots clearly marked for one candidate on top of the pile for another candidate,” recalls Preuss. “But when we asked to see these ballots, he refused.”

After the ballots are counted, the results of the polling-station count are usually transmitted to a regional election commission, where the regional results are tabulated and transmitted to the national level. Often, short-term observers accompany the official results to the tabulation centres to observe that the results from the polling station are properly delivered, received, and accounted for in the tabulation. Short-term observers assess whether the transport of ballots and other voting material is direct, secure, and transparent. The overall goal is to monitor each level of the tabulation process and to follow the results of individual polling stations up to the national level.



When combined, the findings of short-term observers, the pre-election findings of long-term observers in each region of the country, and the overall findings and analysis of the core team allow an observation mission to make an accurate, detailed assessment of the conduct of an electoral process — in other words, to answer the question of whether a particular election was conducted in line with the OSCE commitments as contained in the 1990 Copenhagen Document.



# Reporting

Credible election observation requires periodic and transparent public reporting. The ODIHR regularly publishes a number of **pre-election interim reports** during the course of an election observation mission. These provide current details about issues such as voter and candidate registration, the nature of the political campaign, the work of the election administration, media coverage, and election disputes, and can provide an indication of potential problems in the run-up to the vote.

A **preliminary post-election statement** is released the day after election day. This statement of preliminary findings and conclusions reflects all of the work of the mission so far, including long-term observation and analysis, and the reports provided by short-term observers on election day. A preliminary statement is issued before the expiry of a number of complaints and appeals deadlines and, most often, before the election administration has announced the final official results of the polls.

Once the election process has been completed, often weeks or months after polling day, the ODIHR carries out an in-depth analysis of the entire process, which it presents in its **final report**. This draws on the findings of the whole mission, including the work of the core team, LTOs, and STOs, and it includes sections describing the election's political context; legislative framework; the performance of the election administration; voter and candidate registration; the election campaign; the media; participation of women and national minorities; and the voting, counting, and tabulation processes.

The final report also takes into consideration whether any reported irregularities or violations of law are isolated incidents or whether they form a systematic pattern that could pose a threat to the integrity of the election process. It reflects the extent to which the electoral process was carried out in a manner that enjoyed the confidence of the candidates and the electorate, as well the degree of political will demonstrated by the authorities to conduct a genuine democratic election process.

*“The participating States will increase the openness of the [O]SCE institutions and structures and ensure wide dissemination of information on the [O]SCE. (. . .) The [O]SCE institutions will, within existing budgets, provide information to the public and organize public briefings on their activities.” — Helsinki Summit 1992, “The Challenges of Change”*

**“[The OSCE participating States] recognize the assistance the ODIHR can provide to participating States in developing and implementing electoral legislation. (...) We agree to follow up promptly the ODIHR’s election assessment and recommendations.”**  
— *Istanbul 1999, “Charter for European Security”*

“I am pleased that increasingly more attention is being paid to the implementation of the recommendations in the ODIHR’s final report,” says Ambassador Glover. “For these reports to have the authority they deserve, it is important that the statement made on the day after the election be clear and unambiguous and not open to misinterpretation.”

Ultimately, all elections are assessed in terms of their compliance with OSCE commitments, universal standards, and other international obligations. The ODIHR does not comment on the outcome of the election, and any comments related to election results are limited to assessing whether the results were reported by the relevant authorities honestly and in a timely manner.

The final report also provides recommendations for the host government on how the process might be improved and brought more closely into line with OSCE commitments.

### **Follow-up to reports**

The ODIHR’s role does not end with the publication of a final report, and it encourages OSCE member states to seek its assistance in follow-up to election observation reports. A follow-up dialogue with the authorities, provided that the necessary political will is evident, as well as with the electoral contestants and civil society, enhances implementation of ODIHR recommendations for improving an electoral process.

ODIHR follow-up assistance often includes the review of electoral legislation, or technical assistance on specific topics, such as effective voter registration. The ODIHR does not provide technical assistance immediately prior to or during the election observation period.





# Looking Ahead

International election observation expresses the interest of the international community in the achievement of democratic elections in a given country. It has become widely accepted around the world and plays an important role in providing accurate and impartial assessments of election processes. It has the potential to enhance the integrity of an election by deterring and exposing irregularities and by providing detailed recommendations for improving elections. Accurate and impartial long-term election observation requires a credible methodology, and this is what the ODIHR has provided to the benefit of OSCE member states for the last decade.

“International election observation is one of the most important tools the international community has to promote democracy and human rights,” says Ambassador Robert Barry, a former American diplomat who has headed several observation missions. “The ODIHR has set the international standard for election observation. This OSCE success story has been largely possible because member states not only entrusted this politically sensitive mandate to the ODIHR, but also by providing the institutional autonomy necessary to deliver it effectively.”

The ODIHR will continue a dialogue with all member states, and in particular with countries in which there is the need for further improvement in elections, with a view to support the authorities, electoral contestants, and civil society to enhance confidence in the process. Equally, it is taking up the challenge to follow specific election issues in countries that do enjoy an overall high level of public trust but where its presence can still lead to useful recommendations.

In this context, the introduction of electronic voting technologies may pose perceived or real challenges to the transparency and accountability of an election process. Furthermore, they may influence perceptions of the security of the vote, with a potential impact on voter confidence. The ODIHR will closely follow the development and introduction of new voting technologies.

Other ongoing challenges include the participation of women in the election process, the inclusion of national minorities, measures to accommodate internally displaced persons, and full access for disabled persons.

The ODIHR will continue to assist member states to deliver meaningful democratic elections, in line with its mandate, both through the exercise of credible election observation and through follow-up dialogue with authorities. In order to assist member states to improve the democratic standard of their election processes, it also feeds its observation results into the wider range of its assistance activities in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democratic governance.

**“We emphasize that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the [O]SCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. The protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of democratic institutions continue to be a vital basis for our comprehensive security.” — Helsinki Summit 1992, “The Challenges of Change”**



# Annexes



## A. Standards

OSCE states have agreed to a vast number of election-related commitments that bind them all to meet certain standards when conducting elections.

The ODIHR's election observation methodology is based on the election-related commitments of the Copenhagen Document and other universal principles for democratic elections enshrined in UN documents. The Copenhagen commitments provide key standards that all 55 member states have agreed need to be in place for an election process to be democratic.

### OSCE commitments on elections

#### Paris 1990

Democratic government is based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections. (...)

We affirm that, (...) everyone (...) has the right: (...) to participate in free and fair elections (...)

#### Copenhagen 1990

(5) [The participating States] solemnly declare that among those elements of justice which are essential to the full expression of the inherent dignity and of the equal and unalienable rights of all human beings are the following:

(5.1) - free elections that will be held at reasonable intervals by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, under conditions which ensure in practice the free expression of the opinion of the electors in the choice of their representatives;

(...)

(6) The participating States declare that the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections, is the basis of the authority and legitimacy of all government. The participating States will accordingly respect the right of their citizens to take part in the governing of their country, either directly or through representatives freely chosen by them through fair electoral processes (...)

**The key principles of a democratic election can be summed up in seven words: universal, equal, fair, secret, free, transparent, and accountable.**

(7) To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will

(7.1) - hold free elections at reasonable intervals, as established by law;

(7.2) - permit all seats in at least one chamber of the national legislature to be freely contested in a popular vote;

(7.3) - guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens;

(7.4) - ensure that votes are cast by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, and that they are counted and reported honestly with the official results made public;

(7.5) - respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination;

(7.6) - respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities;

(7.7) - ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution;

(7.8) - provide that no legal or administrative obstacle stands in the way of unimpeded access to the media on a nondiscriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process;

(7.9) - ensure that candidates who obtain the necessary number of votes required by law are duly installed in office and are permitted to remain in office until their term expires or is otherwise brought to an end in a manner that is regulated by law in conformity with democratic parliamentary and constitutional procedures.

(8) The participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from any other [O]SCE participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law. They will also endeavour to facilitate similar access for election proceedings held below the national level. Such observers will undertake not to interfere in the electoral proceedings.

### Related commitments of the Copenhagen Document include:

In order to strengthen respect for and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, to develop human contacts and to resolve issues of related humanitarian character, the participating States agree on the following:

- (...)
- (3) They reaffirm that democracy is an inherent element of the rule of law. They recognise the importance of pluralism with regard to political organisations.
- (...)
- (5) They solemnly declare that among those elements of justice which are essential to the full expression of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings are the following:
  - (5.1) free elections that will be held at reasonable intervals by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, under conditions which ensure in practice the free expression of the opinion of the electors in the choice of their representatives;
- (...)
- (5.3) the duty of the government and public authorities to comply with the constitution and to act in a manner consistent with law;
- (...)
- (5.4) a clear separation between the States and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State;
- (...)
- (5.9) all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law will prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any grounds;
- (5.10) everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions so as to guarantee respect of fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity;
- (5.11) administrative decision against a person must be fully justifiable and must as a rule indicate the usual remedies available;
- (...)
- (10) In reaffirming their commitment to ensure effectively the rights of the individual to know and act upon human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to contribute actively individually or in association with others, to their promotion and protection, the

participating States express their commitment to:

- (10.1) respect the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to seek, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to disseminate and publish such views and information;

(...)

- (10.3) ensure that individuals are permitted to exercise the right to association, including the right for form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organisations which seek the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including trade unions and human rights monitoring groups;

- (10.4) allow members of such groups and organisations to have unhindered access to and communication with similar bodies within and outside their countries and with international organisations, to engage in exchanges, contacts and co-operation with such groups and organisations and to solicit, receive and utilise for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms voluntary financial contributions from national and international sources as provided for by law.

(...)

- (24) The participating States will ensure that the exercise of all the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out above will not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law and are consistent with their obligations under international law, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and with their international commitments, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These restrictions have the character of exceptions. The participating States will ensure that these restrictions are not abused and are not applied in an arbitrary manner but in such a way that the effective exercise of these rights is ensured. Any restriction on rights and freedoms must, in a democratic society, relate to one of the objectives of the applicable law and be strictly proportionate to the aim of that law.

### **Budapest 1994**

The ODIHR will play an enhanced role in election monitoring, before, during and after elections. In this context, the ODIHR should assess the conditions for the free and independent functioning of the media.

### **Lisbon 1996**

9. (...) Among the acute problems within the human dimension, the continuing violations of human rights, such as (...) electoral fraud (...) continue to endanger stability in the OSCE region. We are committed to continuing to address these problems.

### **Istanbul 1999 (Summit Declaration)**

26. With a large number of elections ahead of us, we are committed to these being free and fair, and in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments. This is the only way in which there can be a stable basis for democratic development. We appreciate the role of the ODIHR in assisting countries to develop electoral legislation in keeping with OSCE principles and commitments, and we agree to follow up promptly ODIHR's election assessments and recommendations. We value the work of the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly — before, during and after elections — which further contributes to the democratic process. We are committed to secure the full right of persons belonging to minorities to vote and to facilitate the right of refugees to participate in elections held in their countries of origin. We pledge to ensure fair competition among candidates as well as parties, including through their access to the media and respect for the right of assembly.

### **Istanbul 1999 (Charter for European Security)**

25. We reaffirm our obligation to conduct free and fair elections in accordance with OSCE commitments, in particular the Copenhagen Document 1990. We recognize the assistance the ODIHR can provide to participating States in developing and implementing electoral legislation. In line with these commitments, we will invite observers to our elections from other participating States, the ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and appropriate institutions and organizations that wish to observe our election proceedings. We agree to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations.





## B. Elections Observed or Assessed Since 1996

### 2005

| Country/Region                        | Type of Election | Date                       |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Tajikistan                            | Parliamentary    | 27 February/13 March       |
| Kyrgyzstan                            | Parliamentary    | 27 February/13 March       |
| Moldova                               | Parliamentary    | 6 March                    |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Municipal        | 13 March/27 March/10 April |
| United Kingdom                        | General          | 5 May                      |
| Bulgaria                              | Parliamentary    | 25 June                    |
| Albania                               | Parliamentary    | 3 July/21 August           |
| Kyrgyzstan                            | Presidential     | 10 July                    |
| Azerbaijan                            | Parliamentary    | 6 November                 |
| Kazakhstan                            | Presidential     | 4 December                 |

### 2004

| Country/Region     | Type of Election | Date      |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Georgia            | Presidential     | 4 January |
| Russian Federation | Presidential     | 14 March  |

|                                       |                                |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Spain                                 | Parliamentary                  | 14 March                           |
| Georgia                               | Parliamentary                  | 28 March                           |
| Slovakia                              | Presidential                   | 3 April                            |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Presidential                   | 14 April/28 April                  |
| Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro)        | Presidential                   | 13 June/27 June                    |
| Kazakhstan                            | Parliamentary                  | 19 September/3 October             |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina                | Municipal                      | 2 October                          |
| Belarus                               | Parliamentary                  | 17 October                         |
| Ukraine                               | Presidential                   | 31 October/21 November/26 December |
| United States                         | Presidential/other             | 2 November                         |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Referendum                     | 7 November                         |
| Romania                               | Presidential and parliamentary | 28 November/12 December            |
| Uzbekistan                            | Parliamentary                  | 26 December                        |

## 2003

| Country/Region                      | Type of Election    | Date                |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)  | Repeat presidential | 9 February          |
| Armenia                             | Presidential        | 19 February/5 March |
| Russian Federation (Chechnya)       | Referendum          | 23 March            |
| United Kingdom (Scotland and Wales) | Parliamentary       | 1 May               |
| Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)  | Presidential        | 11 May              |
| Armenia                             | Parliamentary       | 25 May              |

|                                   |               |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Moldova                           | Municipal     | 25 May/8 June |
| Albania                           | Municipal     | 12 October    |
| Azerbaijan                        | Presidential  | 15 October    |
| Georgia                           | Parliamentary | 2 November    |
| Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro)    | Presidential  | 16 November   |
| Croatia                           | Parliamentary | 23 November   |
| United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) | Parliamentary | 26 November   |
| Russian Federation                | Parliamentary | 7 December    |
| Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro)    | Parliamentary | 28 December   |

## 2002

| Country/Region                              | Type of Election  | Date                    |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Ukraine                                     | Parliamentary     | 31 March                |
| Hungary                                     | Parliamentary     | 7 April                 |
| France                                      | Presidential      | 21 April/5 May          |
| Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) | Municipal         | 15 May                  |
| Czech Republic                              | Parliamentary     | 14-15 June              |
| Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)     | Partial municipal | 28 July                 |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia       | Parliamentary     | 15 September            |
| Slovakia                                    | Parliamentary     | 20-21 September         |
| Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)     | Presidential      | 29 September/13 October |
| Latvia                                      | Parliamentary     | 5 October               |

|                                             |                                      |             |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Bosnia and Herzegovina                      | General                              | 5 October   |
| Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) | Parliamentary, municipal (Podgorica) | 20 October  |
| Turkey                                      | Early parliamentary                  | 3 November  |
| United States                               | General                              | 5 November  |
| Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)     | Repeat presidential                  | 8 December  |
| Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)          | Presidential                         | 22 December |

## 2001

| Country/Region                              | Type of Election     | Date                   |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Azerbaijan (11 constituencies)              | Repeat parliamentary | 7 January              |
| Moldova                                     | Parliamentary        | 25 February            |
| Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) | Parliamentary        | 22 April               |
| Croatia                                     | Municipal            | 20 May                 |
| Bulgaria                                    | Parliamentary        | 17 June                |
| Albania                                     | Parliamentary        | 24 June/8 July/22 July |
| Belarus                                     | Presidential         | 9 September            |

## 2000

| Country/Region | Type of Election | Date                  |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Croatia        | Parliamentary    | 2-3 January           |
| Croatia        | Presidential     | 24 January/7 February |
| Kyrgyzstan     | Parliamentary    | 20 February/12 March  |

|                                             |                            |                           |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tajikistan                                  | Parliamentary              | 27 February               |
| Russian Federation                          | Presidential               | 26 March                  |
| Georgia                                     | Presidential               | 9 April                   |
| Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) | Partial municipal          | 11 June                   |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia       | Municipal                  | 10 September/24 September |
| Albania                                     | Municipal                  | 1 October/15 October      |
| Belarus                                     | Parliamentary              | 15 October                |
| Kyrgyzstan                                  | Presidential               | 29 October                |
| Azerbaijan                                  | Parliamentary              | 5 November                |
| Romania                                     | Presidential/parliamentary | 26 November               |
| Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)     | Parliamentary              | 23 December               |

## 1999

| Country/Region                        | Type of Election | Date                   |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Kazakhstan                            | Presidential     | 10 January             |
| Estonia                               | Parliamentary    | 7 March                |
| Slovakia                              | Presidential     | 15 May/29 May          |
| Armenia                               | Parliamentary    | 30 May                 |
| Kazakhstan                            | Parliamentary    | 10 October/24 October  |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Presidential     | 31 October/14 November |
| Ukraine                               | Presidential     | 31 October/14 November |
| Georgia                               | Parliamentary    | 31 October/14 November |

|                    |               |                        |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Uzbekistan         | Parliamentary | 5 December/19 December |
| Russian Federation | Parliamentary | 19 December            |

## 1998

| Country/Region                              | Type of Election          | Date              |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Armenia                                     | Presidential              | 16 March/30 March |
| Moldova                                     | Parliamentary             | 22 March          |
| Ukraine                                     | Parliamentary             | 29 March          |
| Hungary                                     | Parliamentary             | 10 May            |
| Montenegro (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) | Parliamentary             | 31 May            |
| Czech Republic                              | Parliamentary             | 19-20 June        |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina                      | General                   | 12-13 September   |
| Slovakia                                    | Parliamentary             | 25-26 September   |
| Latvia                                      | Parliamentary             | 3-4 October       |
| Azerbaijan                                  | Presidential              | 11 October        |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia       | Parliamentary             | 18 October        |
| Albania                                     | Constitutional referendum | 22 November       |

## 1997

| Country/Region | Type of Election        | Date     |
|----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Croatia        | Parliamentary/municipal | 13 April |
| Bulgaria       | Parliamentary           | 19 April |
| Croatia        | Presidential            | 15 June  |



|                        |                            |                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Albania                | Parliamentary              | 29 June/6 July         |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Municipal                  | 13-14 September        |
| Republic of Serbia     | Presidential/parliamentary | 21 September/5 October |
| Republic of Montenegro | Presidential               | 5 October/19 October   |
| Republika Srpska       | National Assembly          | 22-23 November         |
| Republic of Serbia     | Repeat presidential        | 7 December/21 December |

## 1996

| Country/Region                        | Type of Election | Date                   |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Albania                               | Parliamentary    | 26 May/2 June          |
| Romania                               | Municipal        | 2 June/16 June         |
| Russian Federation                    | Presidential     | 16 June/3 July         |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina                | General          | 14 September           |
| Armenia                               | Presidential     | 22 September           |
| Lithuania                             | Parliamentary    | 20 October/10 November |
| Bulgaria                              | Presidential     | 27 October/3 November  |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Municipal        | 17 November            |
| Moldova                               | Presidential     | 17 November/1 December |



*The key principles of a democratic election can be summed up in seven words:  
universal, equal, fair, secret, free, transparent, and accountable.*

