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Observation of the presidential election in the Russian Federation (4 March 2012)

Election observation report

Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau

Rapporteur: Mr Tiny KOX, Netherlands, Group of the Unified European Left

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1. Introduction

1. On 12 December 2011, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly decided – in principle, and subject to the receipt of an invitation from the competent authorities of the Russian Federation – to observe the presidential election in that country, on 4 March 2012, and decided to set up an ad hoc committee for this purpose, comprising 30 members. It also authorised a pre-electoral mission to take place approximately one month before the election.

2. On 17 January 2012, Mr Sergey Naryshkin, Speaker of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, invited the Parliamentary Assembly to observe the presidential election.

3. At its meeting on 23 January 2012, the Bureau of the Assembly took note of the composition of the ad hoc committee and appointed me as its Chairperson (see Appendix 1). In accordance with Article 15 of the co-operation agreement signed on 4 October 2004 between the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), Mr Peter Paczolay and Ms Amaya Ubeda de Torres were invited to join the ad hoc committee as legal advisers.

4. The pre-electoral mission visited Moscow from 8 to 11 February 2012, in order to assess the state of preparations and the political climate in the run-up to the presidential election of 4 March 2012 (see the programme of the visit in Appendix 2). The delegation met four of the five candidates for the Presidency: Mr

Sergey Mironov, Mr Mikhail Prokhorov, Mr Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Mr Gennady Zyuganov. It could not, however, meet Mr Vladimir Putin. The delegation also met the Speaker of the State Duma, Mr Sergey Naryshkin, the Chair of the Central Election Commission (CEC), Mr Vladimir Churov, Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman, Mr Vladimir Lukin, members of the Russian Federation's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, Head of the Election Observation Mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), and members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow. The delegation met a representative of Mr Grigory Yavlinsky, whose candidature had not been registered, as well as representatives of the media and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

5. The findings of the pre-electoral mission are reflected in its statement (see Appendix 3).
6. The ad hoc committee, which met in Moscow from 1 to 5 March 2012, acted as part of the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM), which also included the election observation missions of the OSCE/ODIHR, led by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, led by Mr Tonino Picula. The co-operation between the three partners was excellent.
7. The ad hoc committee held meetings with all the presidential candidates or their representatives, with the Chair of the Central Election Commission, with the Head of the Election Observation Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR and her staff, as well as with members of the diplomatic corps in Moscow, and with representatives of civil society and the mass media (see the programme in Appendix 4).
8. The Chairperson of the ad hoc committee also met representatives of the observation team of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
9. On election day, the ad hoc committee split into 20 teams, which observed the elections in and around Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Astrakhan, Krasnodar and Petropavlovsk Kamchatski, as well as in the following regions: Vladimirskaya, Yaroslavlskaya, Tverskaya, Kaluzhskaya, Rязanskaya, Moskovskaya, Tul'skaya and Leningradskaya.
10. The joint press conference of the IEOM took place on Monday, 5 March 2012. The statement of preliminary findings and conclusions was published, as well as the joint press release (see Appendix 5).
11. The ad hoc committee wishes to thank the Russian authorities, in particular the State Duma, for the support and co-operation extended to the ad hoc committee in accomplishing its mission.

2. Political and legal context

12. On 25 November 2011, the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation adopted the decree on the holding of the presidential election on 4 March 2012. Two months earlier, on 24 September 2011, President Medvedev had announced that he would not seek re-election, while Prime Minister Putin announced his intention to stand for a third non-consecutive term on behalf of the governing United Russia party.
13. Five candidates for the presidential election were registered by the Central Election Commission. Eleven applicants were denied registration on the grounds of ineligibility or failure to comply with the registration requirements (submission of an insufficient number of signatures, non-compliance with the residency requirement, failure to have the self-nomination endorsed by a nomination group of 500 voters, prior extremism-related activities as established by a court). Two applicants, self-nominated Dmitry Mezentsev and the Yabloko party nominee Grigory Yavlinski, were denied registration following verification of their support signatures.
14. There was a radical change in the situation in the wake of the elections to the State Duma on 4 December 2011. Public opinion and opposition political parties reacted strongly to the manipulations and infringements of electoral legislation detected on 4 December. People proved to be increasingly committed to ensuring that the election of 4 March would be free and fair. Major demonstrations were organised, mainly in Moscow and St Petersburg, but also in other major cities, and everywhere demonstrators were calling for fair elections.
15. The demonstrations were peaceful in nature; there were large numbers of police and law enforcement officers present, who did not, however, take any action to prevent the demonstrators from expressing themselves freely – in contrast with the *modus operandi* in the run-up to the Duma 2011 elections. Participants

in demonstrations organised by the opposition called on people to vote for any of the candidates except for Mr Putin, while large pro-government demonstrations expressed the desire for stability in the country, accusing the opposition of preparing an “orange revolution”.

16. The real issue arising in respect of the presidential election, according to some interlocutors of the delegation, was not who would win the election, but whether there would be a second round of voting and, in particular, what might happen after the election.

3. Election administration and voter and candidate registration

17. The presidential election was administered by the Central Election Commission (CEC), 83 subject election commissions (SECs), 2 744 territorial election commissions (TECs) and 95 416 precinct election commissions (PECs) in the 83 federal subjects of the Russian Federation. In addition to the regular polling stations, 385 polling stations were opened abroad. The Russian authorities opened a number of polling stations in the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to allow residents in these regions that have Russian passports to vote in the Russian presidential election. The presence of these polling stations in the break-away regions raises two issues of concern. Firstly, the opening of polling stations in these regions without the explicit consent of the *de jure* authorities in Tbilisi violated Georgia’s territorial integrity as recognised by the international community, including the Assembly. Secondly, most – if not all – persons residing in those two regions had Russian passports as a result of the “passportisation” policy that was implemented by the Russian authorities. This passportisation policy was criticised in the Tagliavini report, as well as by the Assembly in its resolutions on the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia, as being in violation of international law and norms.

18. According to information received from the CEC, after 18 January 2012 voters could obtain absentee voter certificates (AVCs) if they were unable to attend their designated polling station on election day. In this context, it should be recalled that the members of the ad hoc committee, like other international observers, had noted cases of fraudulent use of absentee voter certificates during the elections to the State Duma on 4 December 2011.

19. The delegation was informed by the CEC that, in 63 federal subjects of the Russian Federation, membership of the TECs was being renewed after the Duma elections and that one third of the chairs of the PECs was also to be replaced. The main reason for this was said to be mistakes made by PEC chairs as a result of either lack of experience, in the case of those appointed recently, or poor practice, in the case of those still working in the same way as in the Soviet era. The Chair of the CEC indicated that he was convinced of the need to change the procedure for appointing PEC chairs, who were currently appointed just one month prior to the elections. He believed that it would be more efficient to appoint them for a five-year term, to organise appropriate training courses for PEC members and to simplify the procedure for drawing up protocols after the ballot.

20. The candidates who met the ad hoc committee alleged that these renewals and replacements, in general, were being done by the CEC in order to exclude those persons who had not wished to commit irregularities in favour of United Russia during the Duma elections.

21. Following the widespread allegations of fraud during the Duma elections, webcams were installed in each polling station in order to ensure greater transparency. One camera provided a general view of the polling station and a second camera focused on the ballot boxes. Access, in real time, to the video feed from these webcams was free to registered users. Recorded data was due to be preserved for one year and be available, upon a formal request, at no cost. However some interlocutors raised questions about the legal aspects of this procedure and about the risk of failure to respect the confidentiality of the voting. In addition, in order to increase the transparency of the electoral process, approximately 30% of polling stations used new, transparent ballot boxes with a smaller opening, purportedly in order to prevent ballot box stuffing.

22. Two types of new voting technologies were used: ballot scanning machines (in 5 233 polling stations) and touch screen electronic voting systems (in 333 polling stations, including 22 polling stations abroad).

23. Voter lists were prepared on the basis of citizens’ residence information, as provided by local administrations.

24. In order to have a candidacy registered for the presidential election, candidates had to present his or her candidature on behalf of a registered political party or, in the case of the self-nominated candidates, to collect 2 000 000 signatures. Many interlocutors of the ad hoc committee criticised the signature requirements as being excessively burdensome and almost impossible to comply with within the time frame provided.

25. One of the rejected candidates, Mr Grigory Yavlinsky, the leader of the Yabloko Party, lodged a complaint with the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation against the CEC's decision. The Supreme Court upheld the CEC's decision to reject Mr Yavlinsky's candidature. According to the CEC's decision, among the 2 086 050 signatures collected, 600 000 were selected for verification, out of which 153 938 were deemed not to be authentic and therefore invalid. The other rejected candidates did not contest the CEC's decisions rejecting their candidatures.

26. Some candidates the ad hoc committee met considered the electoral legislation in force to be inadequate. In order to improve it, they suggested a number of changes: a different procedure for appointing the members of election commissions, at different levels of the electoral administration, so that these bodies would be politically balanced; a reduction of the threshold for election to the State Duma; the elimination of the absentee voting procedure; a simplification of the procedure of registration, both for political parties and presidential candidates. According to the representatives of the Communist Party, most of these proposals were accepted by all political parties, with the exception of United Russia.

27. As stated in the Assembly's report on the observation of the parliamentary elections in the Russian Federation ([Doc. 12833](#)), the State Duma elections of 4 December 2011 were marked by a convergence of the State and governing party, limited political competition and a lack of fairness. On 28 February 2012, the Duma adopted, in the first reading, three pieces of draft legislation submitted by President Medvedev on 22 December 2011. These drafts could be regarded as representing President Medvedev's response to the protests that followed the parliamentary elections as well as international criticism. These proposals were aimed at simplifying the registration procedure for political parties, at facilitating the procedure for collecting signatures in order to be registered as a non-party candidate in the presidential election, and at reintroducing direct gubernatorial elections.

4. The campaign period and the media environment

28. The campaign period was marked by unprecedented country-wide demonstrations calling for fair elections, allowed by the authorities, in line with their commitment to freedom of assembly. Some of the presidential candidates took part in these rallies or otherwise endorsed them. In reaction to these protests, rallies of Prime Minister Putin took place, including a large rally in Moscow. Demands for honest elections by citizens and candidates led to greater civic involvement in observation efforts to enhance the integrity of the process.

29. All candidates emphasised in their campaigns how to deal with social inequality, corruption and abuse of the rule of law. All candidates addressed the need for electoral reform, although they offered different solutions. Prime Minister Putin especially addressed the need for maintaining stability through continuity.

30. Although candidates were able to campaign unhindered, conditions were clearly skewed in favour of one candidate, Prime Minister Putin, who was given a clear advantage in terms of media presence and, in addition, State resources were mobilised at the regional level in support for him. Public institutions, at various levels, instructed subordinate structures to organise and facilitate Mr Putin's campaign events. Local authorities used official communication (institutional websites or newspapers) for Mr Putin's campaign.

31. Strong support for the Prime Minister also came from authors, artists, sportspersons and Russian show business personalities, who apparently feared the possibility of a return to the instability of the 1990s should Mr Putin not win the election.

32. Representatives of NGOs involved in election observation emphasised that large scale falsifications had occurred in the past, but that, this time, people had decided not to be silent but to manifest their discontent. Following the Duma elections, the number of volunteers, mainly young people, wishing to observe the presidential election had risen considerably.

33. As the law does not allow for domestic observers other than those affiliated with candidates and parties, a number of NGOs approached different candidates to have their members registered as observers on their behalf. Another method used by NGOs in order to obtain accreditations was to appoint observers as journalists. Some NGOs, including the Golos Association, were said to be put under pressure from the authorities because of their election observation activities.

34. Campaigning concentrated on television as the main means to attract, inform and influence voters. The larger part of the campaign budgets was spent on buying airtime on the many TV channels.

35. Most interlocutors acknowledged that the media situation had generally improved. There were television debates between candidates, in which all candidates participated, with the exception of Mr Putin, who only sent his representatives. Interlocutors also pointed out that, this time, there was a more balanced coverage of the opposition and pro-government demonstrations than previously.

36. State-owned broadcast and print media complied with the legal obligation to allocate free time and space to the candidates. However, most of the free airtime was allocated outside of peak audience periods. In addition to the allocation of free airtime for the candidates, free airtime and space were granted to each political party which had appointed a candidate. This resulted in significantly less free airtime and space being allocated to the self-nominated candidate, Mr Prokhorov.

37. All candidates whom the delegation met said that the significant media coverage given to the Prime Minister's official activities during the campaign by State-owned and private broadcast media was seriously to their disadvantage. The media devoted considerable airtime to the Prime Minister's official activities during the campaign, clearly outweighing the other candidates. Televisions regularly aired documentaries praising Mr Putin's achievements. Seven articles by Mr Putin, outlining his long-term strategy, were published during the campaign period in a different newspaper every week. According to the Communist Party representatives, this clearly infringed the electoral legislation, since those articles had not been paid for by the candidate's campaign budget.

5. Complaints and appeals

38. Few complaints were filed with either the Central Election Commission or lower-level commissions during the campaign period, in contrast with the State Duma elections of 4 December 2011. The Chair of the CEC informed members of the pre-electoral delegation that a "green paper" about breaches of the electoral legislation during that campaign had been published on the CEC's website. Approximately 4 500 complaints about infringements of election rules had been lodged with the territorial election commissions. Half of the complaints had been lodged by the Communist Party and the Just Russia Party. Investigations had revealed that some 10% of the complaints were well-founded. Among the most widespread breaches of the rules was the failure to comply with rules on political advertising and with the candidate registration procedure. He stated, however, that the complaints about falsification of results had not been proven. Among some 100 video recordings relating to falsification, only one case was said to have been proven to be authentic by the investigating bodies.

39. The disbelief that effective remedies would be provided if complaints were filed, was according to interlocutors the main explanation for the low number of complaints. The election commissions and the courts were generally perceived by these interlocutors as lacking impartiality in election-related disputes.

40. Complaints were, however, filed concerning Mr Putin's domination of the campaign in the media because of his status of Prime Minister. All such complaints were dismissed by the CEC as being unfounded.

6. Election day

41. On election day, the observers of the International Election Observation Mission were able to visit over 1 000 polling stations throughout the country. Opening and voting procedures were duly followed in most of the polling stations visited.

42. Voting generally took place in a calm and relaxed atmosphere and was assessed as "good" and "very good" in 95% of polling stations visited.

43. Representatives of the candidates in the race were present in 95% of polling stations and many of them proved to be attentive, active and informed.

44. However, the process deteriorated during the count in a large number of polling stations, due to procedural irregularities. Of 98 counts observed, 29 were assessed as “bad” or “very bad”.

45. There were a few instances of ballot box stuffing and some indications of buses transporting groups to vote at multiple stations. In 21 polling stations where the count was observed, completed protocol results were not shown to web cameras as required and results were not read out loud in 18 cases. The signed protocol was not posted in 31 polling stations observed. The tabulation was observed by the International Election Observation Mission in over 70 territorial election commissions and the process in 11 of them was assessed as “bad” or “very bad”. In these cases there was a poor organisation of data entry, overcrowding, insufficient transparency and instances of protocols having been changed by territorial elections commissions. Formal complaints were filed in 4% of the polling stations observed.

46. Domestic observers informed one Assembly team about “carousel” voting being observed in a polling station in central Moscow, where a significant number of voters from remote areas of Russia arrived in groups and voted with AVCs. This led to an unusually high (22%) percentage of absentee voters in that polling station.

47. One Assembly team noticed that, in a polling station based in a hospital, persons who were not registered on the voter lists were allowed to vote without being asked for absentee voter certificates.

48. Another Assembly team was informed about the loss of a mobile ballot box, with more than 80 ballots in it.

49. One Assembly team noticed that, in a polling station where e-voting was used, the voting machines were close enough to compromise the secrecy of the vote. In actual fact, the secrecy of the vote was a more general issue, in particular in polling stations that were too small (mainly in rural areas). Also, ballot papers were frequently put into the ballot boxes without being folded; the voting patterns were thus easy to identify, in particular in those polling stations where transparent ballot boxes were in use.

50. During the counting, ad hoc committee members also observed some skipping of essential procedural steps. However, the procedures being rather complicated, this should not necessarily be considered as having been done in bad faith.

51. In one polling station, the Assembly team noticed that the opening of the ballot boxes was artificially delayed until after the team had to leave due to time constraints.

52. On 8 March 2012, the official results were made public by the CEC (see Appendix 6: CEC Decision No. 112/893-6, 7 March 2012). Mr Putin obtained 63,60% of the votes cast; Mr Zyuganov 17.18%; Mr Prokhorov 7.98%; Mr Zhirinovskiy 6.22% and Mr Mironov 3,85%. The turnout was 65.26%.

7. Conclusions

53. These elections showed a clear winner with an absolute majority, avoiding a second round. However, the voter’s choice was limited, the electoral competition lacked fairness and an impartial referee was missing.

54. Due to increased citizen awareness and involvement, these elections were more lively, better managed and more seriously observed.

55. The election campaign period was characterised by a broad and large-scale call for fair elections, which was made manifest in many mass rallies throughout the country, allowed by the authorities in line with their commitment to freedom of assembly.

56. Although all candidates were able to campaign unhindered, conditions were clearly skewed in favour of one of the contestants, the current Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin. He was given a clear advantage over his competitors in terms of media presence and State resources were mobilised in support of him, in particular at regional level.

57. Genuine competition and voters’ choice were limited by overly restrictive candidate registration requirements.

58. Administrative preparations for voting day were efficient and the voting process itself was assessed positively overall. However, procedural irregularities were noted, mainly during the vote counting, which was assessed as “bad” or “very bad” in almost one third of the polling stations observed.

59. The ad hoc committee recommends that the competent authorities of the Russian Federation make use of the increase in civic awareness and involvement and to take the necessary steps in order to build public confidence in elections, by improving the transparency and guaranteeing the fairness of the entire electoral process.
60. The changes in electoral legislation, now adopted by the State Duma and the Council of the Federation, to modify and simplify registration of political parties and presidential candidates are an important condition for holding free and fair elections in the future. Therefore these changes should be irreversible. About 85 parties have already asked for registration under the new rules. The agreement on the restoration of the Republican Party after the 2011 verdict of the European Court of Human Rights is a good sign. It is hoped that the registration of PARNAS, which has been, until now, denied, will soon be made possible under the new rules, in order to avoid them appealing to the European Court of Human Rights.
61. In order to have a more level playing field for all participants in elections, strict rules are needed with regard to the use of administrative resources in campaign periods.
62. Stricter rules are needed to guarantee equal media access for all candidates in the future. President Medvedev's proposal to have an independent public broadcasting channel should now be put into practice.
63. The need for an impartial, transparent and reliable Central Election Commission remains imperative. A structural change is needed in order to promote citizens' trust in the election results. Without this trust, any election result will always be questioned.
64. The dialogue between government, parliament and non-parliamentary parties and groups, which began during the election campaign period, should continue in order to make political change substantial and sustainable.

Appendix 1 – Composition of the ad hoc committee

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

- Tiny KOX, Head of the Delegation
- **Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)**
 - Miloš ALIGRUDIĆ, Serbia
 - Şaban DİŞLİ, Turkey
 - Terence FLANAGAN, Ireland
 - Olha HERASYM'YUK, Ukraine
 - Andres HERKEL, Estonia
 - Zaruhi POSTANJYAN, Armenia
 - Marietta de POURBAIX-LUNDIN, Sweden
 - Kimmo SASI, Finland
 - Maria STAVROSITU, Romania
 - Egidijus VAREIKIS, Lithuania
- **Socialist Group (SOC)**
 - Lennart AXELSSON, Sweden
 - Josette DURRIEU, France
 - Gianni FARINA, Italy
 - Andreas GROSS, Switzerland
 - Sabir HAJIYEV, Azerbaijan
 - Tadeusz IWIŃSKI, Poland
 - Pietro MARCENARO, Italy
 - Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria
 - Dana VAHALOVA, Czech Republic
- **European Democrat Group (EDG)**
 - Mevlüt CAVUŞOĞLU, Turkey
 - Jana FISCHEROVÁ, Czech Republic
 - Edward LEIGH, United Kingdom
 - Giacomo STUCCHI, Italy
 - Øyvind VAKSDAL, Norway
- **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)**
 - Marieluise BECK, Germany
 - Margus HANSON, Estonia
 - Michael Aastrup JENSEN, Denmark
 - Andrea RIGONI, Italy
- **Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)**
 - Tiny KOX, Netherlands
- **European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)**
 - Peter PACZOLAY, Hungary
- **Secretariat**
 - Mr Vladimir Dronov, Head of Secretariat, Interparliamentary Co-operation and Election Observation Unit
 - Mr Chemavon Chahbazian, Deputy to the Head of the Secretariat
 - Mr Bogdan Torcatoriu, Administrative Officer
 - Mr Franck Daeschler, Principal Administrative Assistant
 - Ms Daniele Gastl, Assistant
 - Ms Amaya Ubeda de Torres, Venice Commission Secretariat

The pre-electoral mission was composed of five members, one from each political group in the Assembly:

- Tiny KOX, Head of the Delegation

- **Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)**
 - Egidijus VAREIKIS, Lithuania
- **Socialist Group (SOC)**
 - Tadeusz IWŃSKI, Poland
- **European Democrat Group (EDG)**
 - Øyvind VAKSDAL, Norway
- **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)**
 - Andrea RIGONI, Italy
- **Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)**
 - Tiny KOX, Netherlands
- **Secretariat**
 - Mr Chemavon Chahbazian, Deputy to the Head of the Secretariat, Interparliamentary Cooperation and Election Observation Unit
 - Mr Bogdan Torcatoriu, Administrative Officer
 - Ms Daniele Gastl, Assistant
 - Mr Angus Macdonald, Press officer

Appendix 2 – Programme of the pre-electoral mission (Moscow, 8-11 February 2012)

Wednesday 8 February 2012

- 10:00-10:45 Ad hoc Committee meeting
- 10:45-12:30 Meetings with the diplomatic corps:
- Mr Denis Keefe, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, representing the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers chairmanship
 - Mr James Ford, British Embassy
 - Ms Heidi Tagliavini, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission
 - Mr Donald Bisson, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission
 - Mr Gavin Evans, European Union Delegation
 - Mr Jonas Grinevičius, Embassy of Lithuania
 - Mr Onno Elderenbosch, Embassy of the Netherlands
 - Mr Baid I. Svendsen, Embassy of Norway
 - Mr Simone Landini, Embassy of Italy
 - Mr Roman Kowalczyk, Embassy of Poland
- 15:00-15:45 Meeting with Mr Vladimir Churov, Chair of the Central Election Commission
- 16:30-17.30 Meeting with representatives of the civil society:
- Ms Lyudmila Alexeyeva, Moscow Helsinki Group
- 17:30-18.30 Meeting with Media Representatives:

Thursday 9 February 2012

- 10:00-12:30 Meeting with presidential candidates:
- 10:00-11:00 Mr Vladimir Zhirinovski
- 11:30-12:30 Mr Serguei Mironov
- 12:30-14:30 Meeting with the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:
- Mr Alexei Puchkov
 - Mr Sergei Sobko
 - Mr Valery Fedorov
 - Ms Elena Nikolayeva
 - Mr Leonid Slutzky
 - Mr Andrei Klimov
 - Mr Alexander Pochinok
- 15.00-15:45 Meeting with Mr Sergey Naryshkin, Speaker of the State Duma
- 15:50 Meeting with presidential candidates (continued):
- 15:50-16:50 Mr Guennadi Zyuganov

Friday 10 February 2012

- 10:00 Meeting with presidential candidates (continued):

10:00-10:45	Mr Ivanenko Yabloko (disqualified from running)
11:30-12:15	Mr Mikhail Prokhorov
16:00-17:00	Meeting with Mr Vladimir Lukin, Human Rights Ombudsmen

Saturday 11 February 2012

13:00	Press Conference
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Appendix 3 – Statement of the pre-electoral mission

Russian Federation: PACE pre-electoral delegation told of urgent need for a fair election

Strasbourg, 13.02.2012 – Russia on the eve of its Presidential election remains a nation poised between hope and fear, where much is possible but nothing is yet sure, according to a pre-electoral delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), concluding a four-day visit to Moscow.

The five-member delegation, in Moscow from 8 to 11 February 2012, met four of the five candidates: Sergey Mironov, Mikhail Prokhorov, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Guennady Zyuganov. All stressed the urgent need to meet widespread popular demands for a fair election, in order to guarantee public confidence in the result, and put forward detailed – though differing – programmes for achieving this.

Candidates pointed to the recent major peaceful rallies in Moscow and elsewhere in the country as a wake-up call for change, as well as vibrant online debate and greater grassroots activism, which some described as a revival of real politics in Russia.

All welcomed President Medvedev's significant proposals to simplify the registration of political parties and presidential candidates. However, it was noted that the proposed changes would only enter into force after this presidential election. The delegation was told by the Speaker of the State Duma that the draft laws implementing these and other changes should have their first hearing in the State Duma on 28 February. Some candidates called for deeper electoral reform, for example to achieve more balanced and independent electoral committees.

The head of the Central Election Commission informed the delegation about the installation of webcams in all polling stations, transparent ballot boxes, and the need for simplified procedures and the ongoing replacement of many heads of electoral commissions. Some candidates expressed concern that this last step could be politically motivated, however. The candidates met by the delegation also complained about the continuing use of administrative resources by the candidate who is now Prime Minister, as well as a biased media, and declared their loss of confidence in the electoral administration.

Many interlocutors emphasised the crucial role of candidates' observers in guaranteeing transparency on voting day, especially as Russian law does not foresee NGO observers. They called for changes to ensure that violations seen at the recent parliamentary elections, such as expulsion of observers or restrictions on their work, do not recur.

Most interlocutors acknowledged an improved media environment, including television debates between the candidates. However, all candidates met by the delegation felt that extensive coverage of the Prime Minister's official activities during the campaign period left them at a significant disadvantage.

The delegation met all the presidential candidates, with the exception of Vladimir Putin, as well as the Speaker of the State Duma, Sergey Naryshkin, the Chair of the Central Election Commission, Vladimir Churov, the Human Rights Ombudsman, Vladimir Lukin, members of the Russian delegation to PACE, Heidi Tagliavini, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission and members of the diplomatic corps. It also met a representative of Grigory Yavlinsky, whose candidacy was not registered, as well as representatives of media and NGOs. The delegation wishes to thank the State Duma for its excellent co-operation during the visit.

A full 30-member delegation from the Assembly will return to the country to observe the voting on 4 March before making a final assessment.

Appendix 4 – Programme of the observation of the presidential election in the Russian Federation (Moscow, 1-5 March 2012)

Thursday 1 March 2012

- 08:45-09:45 Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee:
- Opening of the meeting and presentation of the pre-electoral mission by Mr Tiny Kox, Head of Delegation
 - Statements by other members of the pre-electoral mission
 - Recent developments in the field of electoral legislation and the activities of the Venice Commission in the Russian Federation, by the Venice Commission representative, Mr Peter Paczolay
 - Practical arrangements and logistics, secretariat
- 11:00-17:30 Meetings with Presidential candidates or their representatives:
- Mr Nikolai Levichev, representing Mr Serguei Mironov, presidential candidate from the Just Russia Party
 - Mr Ivan Melnikov, representing Mr Guennady Zyuganov, presidential candidate from the Communist Party
 - Mr Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, presidential candidate from Russia's Liberal Democratic Party
 - Mr Mikhail Prokhorov, self-nominated candidate
- 15:00-16.00 Meeting with Mr Vladimir Churov, Chair of the Central Election Commission

Friday 2 March 2012

- 09:30-11:30 Briefing by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in the Russian Federation:
- Ms Heidi Tagliavini, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission
 - Ms Ingrid Gössinger, political analyst
 - Mr Don Bisson, legal analyst
 - Mr Armen Mazmarian, civil society analyst
 - Mr Egor Tilpunov, media analyst
 - Mr Konrad Olszewski, election analyst
 - Mr Anders Eriksson, statistics analyst
- 11:30-12:30 Meeting with the diplomatic corps:
- Mr Denis Keefe, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy
 - Mr Onno Elderenbosch, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Netherlands
 - Ms Helene Sand Andersen, Counsellor, Embassy of Norway
 - Mr Jonas Grinevicius, Minister plenipotentiary, Embassy of Lithuania
- 14:30-15:30 Meeting with representatives of the Civil Society:
- 15:30-16:30 Meeting with Media representatives:
- Rossiya/VGTRK – Mr Dmitry Kiselev and Ms Zoya Matveevskaya
 - Radio Liberty – Mr Danila Galperovich
 - Novaya Gazeta – Mr Vitaly Jaroshevsky
 - Moscow Times – Mr Nikolaus von Twickel

Saturday 3 March 2012

10:00 Meeting with drivers and interpreters

Departure to the regions for those members deployed outside Moscow

Sunday 4 March 2012

All day Observation of the opening, voting and counting procedures

Monday 5 March 2012

09:00-10:00 Debriefing and preliminary findings of the ad hoc committee

14:00 Press conference

Appendix 5 – Statement of the electoral mission

Russia's presidential election marked by unequal campaign conditions, active citizens' engagement, international observers say

Strasbourg, 05.03.2012 – Although candidates in yesterday's presidential election in the Russian Federation were able to campaign unhindered, conditions were clearly skewed in favour of one of the contestants, current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the international observers concluded in a statement issued today.

The observers noted that all candidates had access to the media, but the Prime Minister was given a clear advantage over his competitors in terms of media presence. In addition, state resources were mobilised at the regional level in his support. Also, overly restrictive candidate registration requirements limited genuine competition.

The election campaign was characterised by continuing and generally unobstructed large-scale protests over allegations of fraud during the December 2011 Duma elections. Demands for honest elections by citizens and candidates led to greater civic involvement in observation efforts to enhance the integrity of the process.

Voting on election day was assessed positively overall, but the process deteriorated during the vote count which was assessed negatively in almost one-third of polling stations observed due to procedural irregularities.

This election showed a clear winner with an absolute majority, avoiding a second round. However, the voter's choice was limited, the electoral competition lacked fairness and an impartial referee was missing. Due to increased citizen awareness and involvement, the elections were more lively, better managed and more seriously observed, whereas structural improvements in electoral regulation have been proposed to Parliament – but not yet passed," said Tiny Kox "(Netherlands, UEL), the Head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

"There were serious problems from the very start of this election. The point of elections is that the outcome should be uncertain. This was not the case in Russia. There was no real competition and abuse of government resources ensured that the ultimate winner of the election was never in doubt," said Tonino Picula, the Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission and Head of the delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In this election, candidates could not compete on an equal footing. Although the authorities made some effort to improve transparency, there remained widespread mistrust in the integrity of the election process. As a first step, all allegations of electoral violations need to be thoroughly investigated. In an encouraging development, we have seen a great number of citizens taking part in overseeing the election. Their active involvement can be a powerful vehicle for increasing confidence in future elections," said Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, the Head of the Election Observation Mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Appendix 6 – Resolution No. 112/893-6 of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (Moscow) of 7 March 2012 on the results of the Russian Federation presidential election

Published on 8 March 2012

In accordance with Articles 19, 76 and 79 of the Federal Law “On the election of the President of the Russian Federation” and on the basis of the Russian Federation Central Election Commission protocol of 7 March 2012 on the results of the Russian Federation presidential election, according to which 71 701 665 voters took part in the election, the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation hereby decrees:

1. That the Russian Federation presidential election shall be considered to have taken place and to be valid.
2. That Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin shall be deemed to have been elected to the office of President of the Russian Federation, having secured 45 602 075 votes, which represents 63.6%, or over half of the ballots cast by voters who took part in the election.
3. That the present resolution, together with information on the number of votes cast for each of the registered candidates for the office of President of the Russian Federation (appended hereto), shall be published in “*Rossiyskaya gazeta*”, “*Parlamentskaya gazeta*” and in the journal “The Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation”.

Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

V. Ye. Churov

Secretary of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

N. Ye. Konkin

Appendix

Information on the number of votes cast for each of the registered candidates for the office of President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich PUTIN	45 602 075	63.60%
Gennady Andreyevich ZYUGANOV	12 318 353	17.18%
Mikhail Dmitrievitch PROKHOROV	5 722 508	7.98%
Vladimir Volfovich ZHIRINOVSKY	4 458 103	6.22%
Sergey Mikhailovich MIRONOV	2 763 935	3.85%