

UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION
MISSION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN UKRAINE 25 MAY 2014

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

26 May 2014, Kyiv, Ukraine - The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) International Election Observation Mission (UWC Mission) is the third largest international observation mission to the early Presidential Election in Ukraine after the observation missions of the OSCE and the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations.

The UWC Mission numbers 236 observers who have travelled to Ukraine from 22 countries (including observers from the World Congress of Ukrainian Youth Organizations, who were supported by the International Renaissance Foundation).

The conclusions of the UWC Mission are based upon direct observations by its short-term observers and meetings held with officials from state institutions, representatives of political parties, media, civil society and the international community.

The UWC Mission is also cooperating with the observation mission of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, a UWC member organization.

In total, the UWC Mission monitored the vote in over 1700 electoral precincts in 39 Ukrainian cities.

During the election campaign eight (8) media releases were issued. The UWC Mission has analyzed both the campaign and the elections in light of Ukraine's international commitments to democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, and fair and free elections.

To properly examine whether the Presidential Election and municipal elections in Ukraine demonstrated the will of the Ukrainian people, the UWC Mission examined the entire election process in the context of key international standards. These included universal and equal suffrage, a sound legal framework, a level playing field for all candidates in the campaign, impartial and transparent election administration, an election process free of pressure and coercion, independent media and balanced coverage, ability to remedy violations of electoral rights, and a voting process that is free of manipulation.

UWC observers recorded a range of infractions in various regions of Ukraine, the most common being:

- campaigning at the polling stations and outside them;
- delays in opening the polling stations;
- missing names of voters on Precinct Election Commission voters' lists;
- confusion in the work of Precinct Election Commissions;
- inappropriately sealed ballot boxes;
- distribution of ballots without the appropriate documentation;
- obstacles to the work of observers and mass media.

During the observation, two UWC observers, from Canada and Moldova, were blocked at polling station №480752 in the city of Mykolayiv, and together with the Precinct Election Commission members and the candidates' observers, they held back a group of individuals of athletic appearance who were trying to storm the premises.

The UWC Mission highlights that in cities where mayoral races were being run concurrently, including in the cities of Kyiv, Mykolayiv, Kherson, Odesa, Cherkasy and Sumy, the voting process was considerably slower and long lines were experienced resulting in extended hours in some polling stations. Higher incidents of infractions were observed in cities where mayors and municipal representatives were being elected as opposed to cities in which there was only a Presidential vote, however, these infractions had no material impact on the results of the vote.

These infractions and shortcomings did not impact the election results and were instead isolated and irregular occurrences. The Government of Ukraine made an effort to ensure that the elections would be transparent and conducted on the highest level without the misuse of administrative resources for the support of any one candidate. **Most voters were able to express their will on election day**, despite the complicated situation in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Official government statistics and the statistics of independent non-governmental organizations confirm a voter turnout surpassing 60%.

On the basis of the monitoring results of the UWC Mission the 2014 early Presidential Election in Ukraine has met international standards for the conduct of democratic elections.

This preliminary statement is delivered prior to the completion of counting and tabulation, the announcement of preliminary and final results, and adjudication of possible complaints and appeals. The UWC Mission will publish a comprehensive final report, offering recommendations for potential improvements after completion of the process.

The UWC Mission expresses gratitude to the Ukrainian people for their hospitality during its work, particularly on 25 May 2014, the day of monitoring of the early Presidential Election and municipal elections in Ukraine.

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About UWC

The UWC is the international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora representing the interests of over 20 million Ukrainians. The UWC has member organizations in 33 countries and ties with Ukrainians in 14 additional countries. Founded in 1967, the UWC was recognized in 2003 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with special consultative status.