

14 September 2016

His Excellency Michael Georg Link
Director of the OSCE Office
for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Ul. Miodowa 10
00-251 Warsaw, Poland
office@odihr.pl

Re: So-called “elections” in four illegally occupied Crimean single-mandate constituencies as part of the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation

Dear Mr. Link:

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) is alarmed by the [Interim Report of 2 September 2016](#) (Interim Report) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation Mission to the Russian Federation (EOM), which does not acknowledge: (a) the internationally condemned illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation; and (b) the fact that the so-called “elections” to be held in four Crimean single-mandate constituencies (SMCs) by the occupation authorities must *a priori* be recognized as illegitimate.

According to the Interim Report “the 18 September State Duma elections voters will elect 450 deputies under a new electoral system”, without any mention that four of the SMCs out of 225 in total are located on the territory of the illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol which is a sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Moreover, the Interim Report does not indicate that under the new Russian electoral system, voters from 19th, 20th, 21st and 219th (Sevastopol) SMCs operating illegally on the territory of Ukraine will be casting their votes for 225 candidates in one nationwide constituency of the Russian Federation.

In view of these important omissions, the UWC considers that the Interim Report can be construed as a *de facto* recognition by the EOM that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol are part of the Russian Federation, which disregards the clear position of international organizations, parliamentary assemblies, and the overwhelming majority of national governments.

Particularly, the Interim Report contradicts the [United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/262](#), titled “Territorial integrity of Ukraine”, which “Affirms its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders; [...] Calls upon all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol on the basis of the above-mentioned referendum [16 March 2014] and to refrain from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing any such altered status.”

In addition, the stance of the EOM is inconsistent with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly position which stated in the [Helsinki Declaration](#) that “the referendum held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol on 16 March 2014 had no legal validity, reiterates its call on the Russian Federation to reverse its unlawful annexation of this region, and calls on participating States to refrain

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from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing the unlawful annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.”

The UWC strongly supports the [Appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to foreign parliaments, parliamentary assemblies and international organizations on holding elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation on the territory of the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea](#) which calls for the non-recognition of the results of any so-called elections on the illegally occupied Ukrainian territory of Crimea.

As a result, the UWC urges you to take appropriate measures without delay to clarify the position of the OSCE/ODIHR, including:

- issuing an amended Interim Report unequivocally presenting the current and actual status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;
- abstaining from sending EOM observers to the 19th, 20th, 21st and 219th (Sevastopol) SMCs; and
- ensuring that the OSCE/ODIHR Final Report and all subsequent statements by related OSCE structures includes statements that re-affirm the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and the illegitimacy of any elections held on the occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as part of the elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

Your unequivocal public position concerning the OSCE/ODIHR EOM stance on the matter and timely response to this letter will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS



Eugene Czolij
President

c.c. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier
OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Christine Muttonen
OSCE/ODIHR Head of EOM to the Russian Federation Ambassador Jan Petersen

The UWC is the international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora representing the interests of over 20 million Ukrainians. The UWC has a network of member organizations and ties with Ukrainians in 50 countries. Founded in 1967, the UWC was recognized in 2003 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a non-governmental organization with special consultative status.

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