



**UKRAINIAN WORLD CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION MISSION TO  
UKRAINE'S 2019 ELECTIONS**

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN UKRAINE ON 31 MARCH 2019**

**PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS**

**Kyiv, Ukraine, 1 April 2019** - The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) International Observation Mission to Ukraine's 2019 Elections (UWC Mission) is the third largest international observation mission to the Presidential Election in Ukraine after the observation missions of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODIHR OSCE) and the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO).

The UWC Mission has registered 219 short-term observers (STOs) with the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC). They came from 16 countries, namely Australia, Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

The UWC Mission has also closely cooperated with the observation mission of its member organization - Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), which registered 78 STOs with the CEC.

Together, the missions of the UWC and its member organization UCCA registered 297 STOs with the CEC.

The UWC and UCCA missions monitored the electoral process in 18 oblasts of Ukraine, namely Cherkasska, Chernivetska, Dnipropetrovska, Donetska, Ivano-Frankivska, Khersonska, Khmelnytska, Kirovohradska, Kyivska, Lvivska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, Poltavska, Ternopilska, Vinnytska, Volynska, Zakarpatska and Zhytomyrska.

In addition, the UWC and UCCA missions monitored the voting in Ukraine's diplomatic missions in 25 countries, namely Argentina, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

The UWC and UCCA missions are the only international missions monitoring the electoral process in Ukraine's diplomatic missions around the world.

The conclusions of the UWC Mission are based upon direct observations by its STOs and meetings held with high-level officials from state institutions, media, civil society and the international community.

The UWC Mission has analyzed the Presidential Election in light of Ukraine's international commitments to democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, and free and fair elections.

UWC STOs recorded very few irregularities in certain polling stations, namely:

- lack of space at polling stations for information on all candidates;
- delays in opening certain polling stations;
- improper set-up of polling stations where Precinct Election Commission Members had no direct visibility of ballot boxes; and
- difficulty for elderly and physically disabled people to access polling stations located on second and third floors.

These isolated irregularities did not impact the election results.

The governing authorities of Ukraine made considerable efforts to ensure that the election would be transparent and conducted on the highest level without the misuse of administrative resources for the support of any one candidate. Voters were able to express their will on election day. The CEC statistics confirm a voter turnout surpassing 60%.

**On the basis of the monitoring results of the UWC Mission, the 2019 Presidential Election in Ukraine has met international standards for the conduct of democratic elections.**

These preliminary observations are 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 upon completion of the electoral process.

The UWC Mission expresses its gratitude to the Ukrainian people for their hospitality during its work, particularly on 31 March 2019, the day of monitoring of the Presidential Election in Ukraine.

**Long-term media-monitoring.** Since 4 March 2019, the UWC Mission's 122 long-term observers (LTOs) have been monitoring media for evidence of disinformation with respect to Ukraine generally, and the Presidential Election specifically, in 28 countries, namely: Australia, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Estonia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Ukraine.

UWC LTOs are reviewing media reports for objectivity and balance in coverage, misleading or confusing information, emotionally charged articles inciting hatred or shock, and other characteristic tendencies. They are also closely monitoring coverage for specific narratives that include, among other, that: a) the elections will be rigged and will not represent the will of the Ukrainian people; b) the Ukrainian state is incapable of holding fair, transparent, and democratic elections; c) there are no candidates in Ukraine who are worthy of assuming the presidency; and d) Ukraine is essentially a failed state.

Although the work of the UWC LTOs is ongoing and will be presented in the Final Report upon conclusion of the electoral process, the UWC Mission is able to confirm that disinformation is a widespread tool in the arsenal of the Russian Federation's hybrid aggression that is not confined to use solely in Ukraine. Disinformation has been found throughout the world, in varied media outlets, and

featuring a range of narratives - some election related, others related to Ukraine's capabilities as an independent state.

Some of the methods and narratives uncovered by UWC LTOs at the time of writing this report include:

- Articles written by Russian Federation sources including *TASS*, *Russia Today* and *Sputnik*, are echoed by other media outlets undermining the legitimacy of Ukraine's electoral process;
- Articles undermining the Ukrainian state and its leadership specifically focused on a narrative painting Ukraine as a chaotic place and distorting the view of Ukraine in the eyes of the international community. Common descriptions include “the country is out of control”, “the leadership is unreliable”, and “the population bitterly divided”; and
- Advertorials by representatives of the Russian Federation abroad published in local media spreading disinformation about Ukraine and the election.



Eugene Czolij  
Head of UWC Mission



Peter Sztyk  
Chief Observer of UWC Mission

### Contact information in Kyiv

Volodymyr Kistianyk  
Ukrainian World Congress International  
Observation Mission to Ukraine's 2019 Elections  
3 Provulok Lypskyi, Suite 6  
Kyiv, Ukraine 01021  
Tel: +38 097 752 51 77  
E-mail: [elections@ukrainianworldcongress.org](mailto:elections@ukrainianworldcongress.org)

### 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 a network of member organizations and ties with Ukrainians in 62 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 and obtained in 2018 participatory status as an international non-governmental organization with the Council of Europe. Since 1999, the UWC has deployed election observation missions to monitor all Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Ukraine.