

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

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN UKRAINE ON 21 APRIL 2019**

**PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS**

**Kyiv, Ukraine, 22 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 249 short-term observers (STOs) with the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC). They come from 18 countries, namely Australia, Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, 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 88 STOs with the CEC.

Together, the missions of the UWC and the UCCA registered 337 STOs with the CEC.

The UWC and the UCCA missions monitored the electoral process in 19 oblasts of Ukraine, namely, Cherkaska, Chernihivska, Chernivetska, Dnipropetrovska, Donetska, Ivano-Frankivska, Khersonska, Kyivska, Lvivska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, Poltavska, Sumska, Ternopil'ska, Vinnytska, Volyn'ska, Zakarpatska, Zaporizka and Zhytomyrska.

In addition, the UWC and the UCCA missions monitored the voting in Ukraine's diplomatic missions in 25 countries, namely Argentina, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, 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 the 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. The difficulty for elderly and physically disabled people to access polling stations located on second and third floors remains an issue. These isolated irregularities did not impact the election results.

The biggest obstacle of this election was the brutal hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which is ongoing for over 5 years and includes military aggression in Eastern Ukraine and the illegal occupation of Crimea. In view of that, Ukrainian citizens could not vote in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation in the Donbas and Crimea.

Therefore, the governing authorities of Ukraine helped ensure that internally displaced persons from the Donbas and Crimea could vote in the election by simplifying the procedure for changing a voter's election precinct.

Due to risks and threats to the election and the impossibility of guaranteeing the security of voters in the Russian Federation, the CEC decided not to open any election precincts in that country.

However, the citizens of Ukraine residing in the Russian Federation could exercise their constitutional right to vote in diplomatic missions of Ukraine located in Finland, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

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. The law enforcement agencies of Ukraine also successfully protected the electoral process, despite the ongoing hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Voters were able to express their will on election day. The CEC statistics confirm a voter turnout surpassing 62 %. This means that Ukrainian voters have a high level of trust in the electoral system, which is another important step in the development of democracy in Ukraine.

**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 to the electoral process, and in particular to:

- 1) provide for the debate of Presidential candidates to be held at least one week prior to voting day, and not a few hours before the "day of silence";
- 2) legislate the repeal of the "day of silence" as an outdated procedure, which in particular does not take into account the significant role of social media that has no boundaries;
- 3) stipulate that judicial contestation of decisions of election commissions will be completed in such a manner so that the CEC could fulfill its mandate in accordance with the electoral law;
- 4) ensure equal conditions for candidates for the Presidency of Ukraine in the media space, which would include equal time and uniform representation of candidates.

The UWC Mission expresses its gratitude to the Ukrainian people for their hospitality during its work, particularly on 21 April 2019, the day of monitoring of the second round of the 2019 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 in 15 languages 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.

The UWC Mission will be presenting its Media-Monitoring Interim Report during a press conference on 24 April 2019, 10:00, at the Ukraine Crisis Media Centre.



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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 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.