

Ukrainian Elections Continue to Meet International Standards

The Committee for Open Democracy (COD) observed the March 31, 2019 presidential election in Ukraine. This is the 23rd election observed by COD since its founding in 2010. Once again, COD is among the largest observer missions in Ukraine with 40 official observers accredited by the Central Election Commission. In the past COD has observed elections in Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Ukraine. Prior to the Russian occupation of Crimea, COD also was the first international organization to observe the Kuraltai elections for the Crimean Tatar Medzhlis. COD is a US nonprofit organization that includes observers from multiple countries. Currently the delegation of observers consists of Canadians, Lithuanians, Swedes, Americans, and British citizens.

COD observed the election in 6 locations including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Ottawa, Toronto, San Francisco, and with the bulk of observers in Nikopol. More than 100 polling stations were monitored, including most of the largest polling stations in Nikopol during the vote count.

Based upon our observations, this latest Ukrainian election continues to meet international standards.

The election was highly competitive with a record number of candidates (39 on the ballot).

Overall, the election commissioners did a professional job and took their responsibility seriously. The commissions were balanced in terms of candidate representation and gender. Overseas voting locations included disability access.

International, domestic, and candidate observers were abundant.

This election contrasts starkly with previous elections in Ukraine, such as in 1999, 2004 and 2010 which were marred by fraud and vote buying.

For example, incidents of vote buying did appear in the pre-election environment, but they were less than in previous years.

Incidents of pressure on state employees, factory workers, etc were not systematic and were isolated in most cases.

In summary, Ukraine continues on its European path by holding elections that meet international standards. COD will also observe the second round on April 21, and following that election will submit recommendations to the Central Election Commission.