



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Statement on Domestic Election Observers in Ukraine

As delivered by Acting Deputy Representative James Cox  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 8, 2004

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

In light of the ODHIR Needs Assessment Report, the United States firmly believes that the government of the Ukraine should allow for the presence of non-partisan domestic election observers in the Ukrainian Presidential elections being held this October.

We salute the tremendous amount of work undertaken by ODHIR to mobilize international observers for the Ukrainian election, yet we are convinced that there will not be enough foreign monitors to be effective without domestic support.

ODHIR is compiling an international force of 50 or so long term monitors and 600 short term monitors. Roughly 100 parliamentarians and other diplomatic OSCE personnel in Kiev could be recruited for the observation mission.

However, there will be over 30,000 voting sites throughout the Ukraine. In spite of the expected presence of many foreign observers, this election is and must belong to Ukrainians. It is their future which is being decided, and it is only right that they be involved on election day itself.

Furthermore, we are concerned with Ukrainian proposals to designate domestic observers as "journalists." We are concerned the potential is high for persons with the status of "journalists" rather than that of "official observer" that they will encounter difficulties in actually monitoring on election day, problems which we would regard extremely negatively.

We therefore feel that recruitment and training of a domestic observation force soon to work with ODHIR's international team would be in Ukraine's best interest, and we look forward to hearing from Ukraine in the near future concerning steps to permit such work to begin.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.