

**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION  
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING  
Warsaw, 28 September to 9 October 2009**

**Working session 17: Democratic Institution**

**Thursday, 8 October 2009**

**Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria**

**S T A T E M E N T**

**in the exercise of the right to reply**

The Bulgarian Delegation carefully listened to the statement of the distinguished delegate from the United States which among others touched upon the 5 July 2009 parliamentary elections in our country.

In this respect we would like to refer to the final report the Limited Election Observation Mission of the OSCE/ODIHR which has evaluated these elections as “generally conducted in accordance with OSCE commitments”. The OSCE/ODIHR observers also acknowledged that “the parliamentary elections provided voters a broad choice in a visible and active election campaign demonstrating respect for fundamental freedoms.”

Let me also add that the participation in the above elections was very broad: the voter turnout was 60.2 per cent. The international observers concluded that the result of the elections reflected the will of the people.

As to the changes introduced in the Election Law we would like to draw attention that the public debate on this issue had started more than one year before the elections were held. However, we agree that the amendments to the Election Law could have been enacted earlier.

With respect to the phenomenon of vote-buying we would like to underscore that the latest amendments to the Penal Code which were enacted in April 2009 increased the criminal responsibility for vote-buying. During the period preceding the elections and on the day of the elections law

enforcement authorities were engaged in preventing and sanctioning cases of vote-buying,

The new Bulgarian Government which came to power after the 5 July 2009 parliamentary elections expressed its intention to amend the present election legislation.

Finally, we would like to assure you that the conclusions and recommendations of the final report of the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission will be carefully considered by the Bulgarian authorities in the process of drafting the new Election Code. Within this context we look forward to further strengthening the dialogue and close interaction with all interested Participating States and with the OSCE/ODIHR.