

# OSCE/ODIHR

## Election Observation to the 2023 Parliamentary Elections in Poland



Following an invitation from the Polish authorities and based on the findings of a pre-election needs assessment mission, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has sent an observation mission to the forthcoming parliamentary elections taking place on 15 October 2023. This is the sixth time since 2007 that ODIHR is observing an election in Poland; most recently, ODIHR observed the 2020 presidential elections.

### First steps

ODIHR carries out pre-election Needs Assessment Missions (NAMs) in all OSCE participating States holding national elections. The NAM is a fact-finding visit that assesses election preparations and recommends whether to deploy an election observation mission. The NAM for the parliamentary elections in Poland took place from 18 to 24 May 2023.

During the NAM, the ODIHR team met a range of representatives from the government, public and private media, civil society, political parties and the election administration. These meetings allowed a thorough assessment of preparations for the elections as well as of any potential challenges. The NAM looked at the legal framework and technical preparations and considered the concerns of key political stakeholders.

The NAM report was published on 10 July 2023 and is available on the [ODIHR website](#).

### Observation format

In line with the outcome of the pre-election needs assessment, ODIHR has deployed a Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) to Poland. The LEOM format is used where concerns centre more on the pre-election environment, election preparations, the campaign, media coverage and the handling of election disputes, and fewer concerns are raised about the technical administration of the voting process on election day. In cases where the NAM receives expressions of a high level of public confidence in election-day activities, the value of observation is determined to lie primarily in the longer-term observation.

The observation mission to Poland will provide a comprehensive analysis of the entire election process for its compliance with commitments made by all OSCE states to hold democratic elections, with other international standards and with national legislation. A core team of analysts is deployed in Warsaw and long-term observers (LTOs) are sent across Poland's regions, but no short-term observers (STOs) will be deployed to monitor polling stations on election day.

## What will this ODIHR observation mission cover?

To provide a comprehensive analysis of the election process, the core team and LTOs will look at a wide range of activities including:

- Legal framework and the impact of recent amendments
- Election administration, including technical preparations, candidate registration, forming of election commissions, training of polling station staff, voter education and election day procedures
- Consolidation and management of the voter register
- Campaign environment and tone of campaign rhetoric used by parties and individual candidates, equal opportunities in the campaign and any misuse of administrative resources
- Campaign finance
- Coverage of elections by both the private and the public media; the latter has a legal obligation to offer impartial and unbiased coverage
- Complaints and appeals procedures
- Participation of citizen observers

As a national referendum is taking place on the same day as the election, the LEOM will look at the impact that holding the referendum has on the election process. This includes any effects on the election campaign, campaign finances and media coverage, as well as any impact it may have on voting procedures.

As with every election observation, the team will also make a thorough assessment of the implementation of recommendations from previous ODIHR election observation missions.

## The observation mission team

The LEOM to the 2023 Polish parliamentary elections is led by Douglas Wake and is composed of 11 core team experts from 8 OSCE states and 20 long-term observers from 12 states. The LTO teams are covering the election process across Poland from ten locations — Warsaw, Białystok, Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin and Wrocław — between 9 September and 19 October.

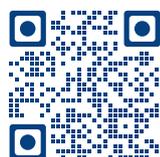
All mission members represent ODIHR in their work, are obliged to follow ODIHR's [election observation methodology](#) and are bound by ODIHR's [code of conduct](#) for election observers. ODIHR election observation is funded by all 57 OSCE participating States.

## Observation reports

A report of the observation mission's interim findings will be published on ODIHR's website some two weeks before election day. The day after the elections, a report of preliminary findings and conclusions will be published. The mission then compiles the collective observations into a final report, which also contains recommendations for the government and other institutions involved in the elections to improve the process in the future.

### Further Information

- Election observation in Poland: [www.osce.org/odihr/elections/poland](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/poland)
- ODIHR election observation infographic: [www.osce.org/odihr/elections/497934](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/497934)
- ODIHR election observation handbooks: [www.osce.org/odihr/elections/handbooks](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/handbooks)



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