



Permanent Council of 8 March 2012

Joint Statement on the Russian Presidential Elections

Thank you, Chairperson

I am speaking on behalf of Liechtenstein, Canada, and Switzerland.

With great interest we take note of the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the international election observation mission (ODIHR, PACE and OSCE PA) of 5 March 2012 on the election observation mission in Russia.

We appreciate the fact that Russia invited ODIHR to observe also its presidential elections, after the Duma elections last year. In a spirit of close cooperation, ODIHR, PACE and OSCE PA have done a credible, professional and substantial job. The preliminary report on the Russian presidential elections is the result of balanced considerations and serious assessment.

According to the ODIHR Preliminary Assessment Statement, there was significant civic engagement in these elections. We welcome this active engagement. While voting on the Election Day was assessed positively overall, we note with concern the identification of "procedural irregularities" that tainted the vote count in almost one-third of polling stations observed.

We hope that Russia will work transparently and constructively with its citizens and engage in a dialogue with ODIHR to address the challenges and structural problems that the OSCE election observer mission identified. Thus, a process of dialogue could be embarked upon.

Thank you, Chairperson