



## Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

### INFORMATION SHEET REQUEST FOR SHORT-TERM OBSERVERS

#### EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA 2 April 2023

Following an official invitation from the Bulgarian authorities to observe the 2 April early parliamentary elections, and in accordance with its mandate, ODIHR is deploying an Election Observation Mission (EOM). The mission consists of 15 core team members based in Sofia and envisions 14 long-term observers (LTOs) to be deployed throughout the country. The core team and LTOs come from a wide variety of OSCE participating States as per ODIHR's standard methodology.

ODIHR requests participating States to second 200 (two hundred) short-term observers (STOs) to observe voting, counting, and the tabulation of results. STOs will be deployed in multinational teams of two, under a deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. In the interest of a broad and balanced representation among participating States, ODIHR requests that individual participating States nominate only up to 15 per cent of the total number of requested STOs.

To ensure a better gender balance in its activities, ODIHR strongly encourages the OSCE participating States to second equal numbers of women and men as short-term observers.

Seconding States should confirm visa requirements for their STOs. If required, visas should be obtained at the nearest embassy or consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria prior to arrival.

To facilitate accreditation of observers through the CEC and the issuance of visas (if required), the ODIHR online mission registration form must be completed **no later than 8 March 2023**.

STOs are required to arrive (at the latest) in Sofia by Wednesday, 29 March and depart (at the earliest) on Wednesday, 5 April. The STO schedule is provided below.

Observers should strictly abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#) and the deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. Observers should also familiarize themselves with the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#). The security and safety of observers is of the highest priority and will take precedence in EOM management, including the deployment plan. However, seconding States are required to ensure that their observers adhere to national rules and regulations related to entry, including with regard to potential requirements related to PCR testing and health insurance which covers the treatment of COVID-19 in Bulgaria. All observers will receive security and Code of Conduct briefings upon arrival and are required to operate in accordance with security guidelines.

The working language of the EOM is English. All briefings and reporting will be in English and all interpreters will work in local languages/English. All STOs must therefore have a good working knowledge of both written and spoken English.

ODIHR strongly encourages all observers to undertake the ODIHR comprehensive e-learning course for observers, available at [www.odihrobserver.org](http://www.odihrobserver.org).

STOs are requested to familiarize themselves with the ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, available online at [www.osce.org/odihr/elections/68439](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/68439).

STOs are kindly asked to refrain from commenting on mission related issues via social media. In line with the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#), media communications regarding the electoral process and the substance of observations should be made only by the Head of Mission, ODIHR Spokesperson, or other responsible ODIHR officials.

**A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET IS AVAILABLE ON THE ODIHR WEBSITE AND SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL SECONDED STOs.**

The ODIHR EOM Office will be located in Sofia and the exact address shared at a later date.

e-mail: [office@odihr.bg](mailto:office@odihr.bg)

website: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria>

## **1. Deployment Timetable**

STOs will be deployed according to the following schedule:

Wed	29 March	STO arrival
Thu	30 March	STO briefing day I
Fri	31 March	STO briefing day II; STO deployment
Sat	1 April	Familiarization with areas of observation
Sun	2 April	Election Day
Mon	3 April	Observation of tabulation
Tue	4 April	STO return to Sofia; return of equipment; De-briefing; PCR tests
Wed	5 April	STO Departure

**STOs are kindly reminded to adhere to the deployment timetable and attend the briefing.**

### **a) Briefing**

Before deployment, STOs will receive an in-depth briefing, which will include:

- code of conduct and professional working environment;
- overview of the country, political, campaign and the media environment;
- voting, counting, and tabulation procedures;
- observation forms;
- security advisory, including COVID-19 precautions;
- logistical and financial arrangements.

STOs will also be provided with briefing materials, which will include all necessary electoral and logistical information, as well as observation forms to complete during the observation of voting, counting, and tabulation.

**b) Deployment**

The ODIHR EOM will develop a deployment plan. STOs should strictly abide by the deployment plan and security instructions. STOs should not request special treatment with regard to deployment locations.

In respect of in-country travel organized by ODIHR, please note that **STOs are required to complete the standard OSCE Liability Release Form** and attach it to the on-line mission registration form by **8 March 2023**.

**c) Debriefing**

A debriefing for STOs will be organized after the elections. This will provide an opportunity for STOs to discuss their main findings and share their conclusions with other observers and EOM members.

The EOM will hold a press conference on the day after the elections to present its preliminary findings and conclusions. A comprehensive final report will be issued by ODIHR some months after the electoral process has been completed, taking into account findings of all observers.

**2. Logistics and Security**

**a) Contact details**

All logistical arrangements for the STOs will be organized by the EOM under the direction of:

Ruslan Ovezdurdyev, Operations Expert  
e-mail: ruslan.ovezdurdyev@odihhr.bg

**b) Transportation/Accommodation**

All STOs will be met at the Sofia International Airport by an ODIHR EOM representative and transported to their accommodation. Transport and accommodation in Sofia and in the areas of observation will be arranged by the EOM.

**IMPORTANT: Hotels in Sofia may require guests arriving/departing in the early morning hours to pay the full overnight rate.**

For safety reasons, particularly in the current health environment, and to prevent problems with transportation, observers are expected to use the accommodation arranged for them by the ODIHR EOM. The EOM will also make all arrangements for in-country travel to deployment areas and for on-site drivers, cars, and interpreters.

**If ODIHR is not duly notified in advance, STOs or the respective OSCE seconding State will be charged for the cost, regardless of whether the accommodation provided is used.** The EOM cannot provide airport transfers and in-city transportation for STOs who do not stay in the designated accommodation.

STOs will deploy from Sofia to the regions by bus or car. STO deployment will be planned in accordance with national regulations and the EOM's COVID-19 safety guidelines.

The ODIHR EOM will make necessary arrangements for the STOs to return to Sofia on 4 April and will arrange accommodation in Sofia. The EOM will arrange transfers to the airport for all STOs from ODIHR designated accommodation.

**c) Security**

STOs must adhere to the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#), as outlined in the ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, and the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#), as well as security instructions and national regulations related to the prevention of COVID-19.

A memo on security details for the STOs will be provided to all observers, including guidelines related to the procedures to promote the safe conduct of mission activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. STOs who do not stay in accommodation provided by the ODIHR EOM will not be covered by the mission's security arrangements.

**d) Luggage/Essential Items**

Due to potential modest conditions in the regions, STOs are advised to bring with them the following items:

- appropriate attire for election day observation, business casual is recommended;
- personal protection equipment such as face masks, and hand sanitizer (the ODIHR EOM will provide additional PPE with the STO briefing pack);
- torch/flashlight with spare battery;
- all necessary medication (case-specific);
- electricity converters (if needed), European style plug.

The ODIHR EOM strongly recommends that STOs, when travelling by air, put essential items into their hand luggage, in case of late arrival of their luggage in Sofia.

**e) Communication**

Each STO will be provided with a mobile phone and a local SIM card with credit for work-related usage. Within each team, one member will have use of a smartphone and the other member will have use of a traditional mobile phone. Please note that using phones for international calls and SMSs should be avoided. Such usage is very expensive and will quickly deplete the allocated phone credit.

**f) Time zone/Flight bookings**

Bulgaria has only one time zone. The local time in Bulgaria is GMT/UTC +3:00. The ODIHR EOM strongly encourages seconding States to make early flight bookings. To ensure operational flexibility, (e.g. in case of bad weather conditions), seconding States are advised to book changeable airline tickets.

**3. Interpreters and Drivers**

All observers will be organized in multinational teams of two people under a deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. The ODIHR EOM will assist STO teams by finding drivers/cars and interpreters. Even in cases where one team member speaks local languages, it will be necessary for that team to have an interpreter in order that both members of the team can have full and equal access to information as they carry out their observation duties.

**4. Costs**

It is projected that, while in country, **each STO** will incur the following costs, although some STOs may not require the full amount indicated below:

<b>Operational/Transportation cost</b>	<b>EUR</b>
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Airport transfers	<b>50</b>
In-country transportation (to and from deployment area)	<b>150</b>
Communication (SIM card/mobile phone/e-pen use)	<b>100</b>
Briefing costs (briefing, briefing pack, PPE, meals, shipment)	<b>250</b>
<b>Estimated cost to be incurred by ODIHR on behalf of STOs</b>	<b>550 EUR</b>
PCR test	<b>60</b>
Driver & car (EUR 35 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	<b>175</b>
Fuel (EUR 20 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	<b>100</b>
Interpreter (EUR 35 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	<b>175</b>
Accommodation (8 nights @ max EUR 150/per night)	<b>1200</b>
Meals & incidentals (EUR 50 per day @ maximum 7 days)	<b>350</b>
Accommodation and meals for interpreter if needed (EUR35 per night @ maximum 4 nights per observer)*	<b>140</b>
Accommodation and meals for driver if needed (EUR 35 per night @ maximum 4 nights per observer)*	<b>140</b>
<b>Costs paid directly by the observers</b>	<b>2,340 EUR</b>
<b>Total cost per observer:</b>	<b>2,890 EUR</b>

\* The two members of each STO team will share equally the cost of drivers and interpreters. The amount above therefore represents half of these costs (i.e. for each STO).

The total cost per observer is estimated at **EUR 2,890** (two thousand eight hundred and ninety Euro), including **EUR 2,340** (two thousand three hundred and forty Euro) which the seconding States should supply to each observer in cash prior to their departure to Sofia. **The ODIHR EOM is not able to validate or certify documents related to costs paid directly by the observers (receipts, invoices, contracts, etc.).**

**EUR 550** (five hundred and fifty Euro) is the projected cost per each STO to be incurred by ODIHR. After closure of the EOM, each seconding State will be billed by ODIHR on the basis of total actual expenses incurred and the number of seconded STOs. Payment instructions will be provided to the seconding States with the final invoice.

All of the above costs should be paid in local currency or Euro. The Euro is widely exchangeable locally, although other currencies can also be exchanged. Cash machines (ATMs) are widely available in Sofia and cities around Bulgaria but do not dispense Euro. Hotels in Bulgaria generally do not accept foreign currency for payment. Credit cards are accepted in most hotels and but STOs should be prepared to pay in cash in rare occasions in some smaller

towns. The local currency is the Bulgarian lev (BGN). The exchange rate is currently fixed at: 1 EUR = 1.95 BGN, 1 USD = 1.82 BGN and 1 GBP = 2.21 BGN.

## **5. Visas and Insurance**

### **a) Visa**

Seconding States should confirm visa requirements for their STOs. If required, visas must be obtained at the nearest embassy or consulate of Bulgaria prior to arrival. However, most OSCE participating states do not require visas prior to entry to the Republic of Bulgaria.

### **b) Insurance**

STOs should ensure that they arrive with adequate health (including COVID-19), accidental/life disability, emergency/medical evacuation, property, theft, and accident insurance, as this will not be provided by ODIHR. **STOs must have a copy of their insurance policy with them, as well as two copies of the data page of their passport and the visa (if applicable).**

### **c) COVID related requirements**

Currently, COVID-19 travel restrictions have been lifted in the Republic of Bulgaria and proof of vaccination, recovery from COVID-19 or a negative test result is not required for entry. Nonetheless, all focal points and STOs are advised to check entry requirements prior to departure as changes may occur with little notice. Keep in mind that airline and transit country requirements may differ, and they may require a PCR test and/or vaccination certificate to board the plane or for transit.

## **6. Registration and Accreditation Process**

After receiving this Information Sheet, all OSCE participating States considering secondment are requested to inform ODIHR on the number of STOs (to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: [sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl](mailto:sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl), [anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl](mailto:anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl)) no later than 1 March 2023.

**To be nominated by the seconding States, STOs are required to create a personal account in the Election Expert Database, fully complete their profile, and share it with their national focal point.** The seconding States are requested to submit the names of proposed STOs using the Election Expert Database as soon as possible and no later than 1 March 2023; 17:00 (Warsaw Time).

After the nomination deadline, ODIHR will consider the overall number of nominations received and confirm the final numbers it is in a position to receive from each seconding State and, subsequently, enable the focal point to proceed with the on-line registration.

In respect of in-country travel organized by ODIHR, please note that STOs are required to complete the standard OSCE Liability Release Form and attach it to the on-line mission registration form **by 8 March 2023**.

For the purposes of accreditation of STOs with the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Bulgaria, the online mission registration form must be completed and supporting documents attached by the end of **8 March 2023**.

The seconding States which have not requested access to the Election Expert Database as a national Focal Point yet or require additional guidance on the observers' registration process should contact Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: [sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl](mailto:sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl), [anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl](mailto:anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl).

An official cover letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the seconding State or designated national focal point should be sent together with the list of STO names to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik (e-mail: [sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl](mailto:sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl), [anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl](mailto:anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl)) by **8 March 2023**.

**IN ORDER TO MAKE ALL LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS ON TIME, NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY ODIHR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER 8 MARCH 2023.**

STOs must not have any concurrent commitments that could produce a conflict of interest with the ODIHR EOM.

ODIHR reserves the right to reject any candidate who is not capable of undertaking his/her activities in an impartial and objective manner, and to withdraw accreditation in case of any serious breach of the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#).

## **7. Other Information**

Please note that all ODIHR election observation interim reports, preliminary statements, final reports, election laws, and reviews of election laws are available at the ODIHR website: [www.osce.org/odihr/elections](http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections).

Specific information on the EOM is available on the EOM website: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria>

All STOs will receive by email a copy of the ODIHR EOM Observer Guide before their departure to Sofia.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **SHORT-TERM OBSERVER**

#### **Background:**

ODIHR is the leading agency in Europe in the field of election observation. It co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of numerous observation missions with thousands of observers every year to assess the compliance of elections in OSCE participating States in line with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into all elements of an electoral process, and permits making concrete recommendations to further improve electoral processes.

#### **Objective:**

Under the guidance of the Head of Mission (HoM) and in close co-ordination with the Deputy Head of Mission (DHoM), assigned Long-term Observers (LTOs), and the ODIHR Election Department, the short-term observers (STOs) are deployed in multinational teams of two and are responsible for observing election day procedures in their assigned areas and reporting their findings accurately and efficiently to the mission headquarters.

#### **Main Tasks:**

##### Electoral Expertise

- Acquire detailed knowledge of the election law and procedures concerning election day;
- Acquire detailed knowledge of the electoral and political situation in the country;
- Become familiar with the ODIHR election observation methodology for observing election day, as reflected in the relevant ODIHR publications;
- Acquire knowledge of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.
- Attend and report on meetings of local election authorities, where requested;
- Attend and report on political rallies and campaign events, where requested;
- Attend and participate in any other relevant meetings with other election stakeholders necessary to cover issues deemed necessary by the HoM, DHoM and LTOs;
- Supervise the local support staff;
- Abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Election Observers](#), the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#), and security instructions and deployment plan of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, as well as [data protection responsibilities](#) when processing the personal data of local staff.

##### Reporting

- Prepare and submit regular reports to assess the close of the campaign, voting, counting and the tabulation of results.

#### **Requirements:**

- Experience in public administration, non-governmental organizations, and/or international organizations, preferably involved in observing and/or organizing election processes, is desirable.
- Knowledge of the country and surrounding region is desirable but not essential.
- Command of English language is essential. STOs must be prepared to read briefing materials, attend briefing and de-briefing sessions, understand procedural instructions and complete forms accurately, all in English. Knowledge of local languages is desirable but not essential.
- Willingness and ability to work long hours in conditions which are sometimes difficult.
- Ability to work in a team and deal with difficult situations in a positive manner.

#### **Deliverables:**

- Regular reporting on the conduct of the elections in the area of deployment, as well as on any other issues covered during the mission.





## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

### LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

I, the undersigned, recognize that my participation in the event, named below, does not create an employment relationship between the OSCE and myself. The costs for my travel to, and participation in, the event are covered by the OSCE solely for my convenience and benefit. I accept all conditions of travel and further:

- a) release the OSCE and all of its officials, agents and consultants/experts from liability for loss, damage, injury, illness or death that may be sustained by me during such travel, and/or participation in the event, named below;
- b) agree for myself as well as for my dependants, heirs and estate to hold harmless the OSCE and its officials agents and consultants/experts from any claims or actions on account of any such loss, damage, injury, illness or death;
- c) agree to submit receipts and other relevant supporting documentation, evidencing that the funds have been used for the purpose for which they have been provided;
- d) agree to reimburse the OSCE all funds paid in advance, including but not limited to transportation costs, Daily Subsistence Allowances (DSAs) and Terminal Allowances (TAs) within fourteen (14) days of the cancellation should I not be able to travel as originally planned.
- e) Acknowledging that the proposed travel outlined in the ToR is to a region the WHO has designated as affected by COVID-19, agree to acquaint myself prior to travel with the latest information about the level of infection and preventative measures to take by consulting WHO's website at time of offer to be found at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> and to keep abreast of local developments in this regard and adhere to the guidelines provided by ODIHR for the duration of the assignment.
- f) agree that in the event that potential restrictive measures are imposed by state or local authorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic the OSCE shall not be liable for any such restrictive measures and may take such action as it considers, in its sole discretion, to be appropriate or necessary in the circumstances, including but not limited to reducing the risk to the safety and security of the undersigned

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Name of event

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Name of participant

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Date(s) of event

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Signature of participant

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Venue of event

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Date of Signature



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