

UK STATEMENT – SESSION 15

I fully subscribe to the statement made by Germany on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom delegation would like to take the opportunity of this session to stress the importance that we attach to ODIHR's election observation work.

We consider their election observation as bywords for integrity, independence and impartiality. ODIHR's comprehensive, consistent and systematic methodology is rightly seen by many as the international standard setter. Along with the complimentary observation work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, ODIHR's election observation stands out as a signature activity of the OSCE.

My own country benefitted from ODIHR's professional advice when they observed the UK General Election in 2010. And it was encouraging to hear at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Democratic Elections and Election Observation held in Vienna in July that a large number of participating States share our view on the added value of ODIHR's elections work.

We are in the midst of an extremely busy period of elections. Recent elections in Belarus and only in the last few days in Georgia have once again demonstrated the crucial role that ODIHR plays in delivering a methodical, non-political and impartial assessment of election processes. ODIHR will in the coming weeks face the challenge of conducting large observation operations in both Ukraine and the United States. The fact that both these elections will be observed in large numbers by ODIHR is a reminder if it were needed that their approach is based solely on a transparent and systematic assessment of need, rather than, as some have suggested in the past, a biased approach to its work.

The United Kingdom believes that we should all be proud that ODIHR has developed such expertise and demonstrated international leadership in election observation. It is occasionally difficult to see the benefit of some OSCE activities. But we should celebrate the real difference that ODIHR's election observation continues to make to our common goal of democratic societies based on free elections and the rule of law.