



Permanent Mission of Belgium  
to the OSCE

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ENGLISH only

Statement by Belgium at the Permanent Council meeting on 25 October 2007

Chairman,

On 19 October 2007 the ODIHR issued the Final Report on its assessment of the federal elections conducted in Belgium on 10 June 2007.

Belgium had invited the ODIHR to observe its elections on 8 February 2007, that is three full months ahead of time and as soon as the election date was established in conformity with the applicable procedures.

As I informed the Permanent Council at the time, a peculiarity of the 10 June parliamentary elections was that electronic equipment to collect and count votes would be used in an even larger proportion than before, up to 45% of the votes cast as it turned out.

The ODIHR had announced that it would focus on this aspect of the voting process as electronic voting is spreading around the world and as the ODIHR is attentive to develop its expertise in this field. In the future, the ODIHR wants to be able to advise on the integrity of this type of voting in the same way as it does today on traditional methods.

Chairman,

We are not disappointed. The ODIHR has in its report identified issues that Belgium should look at. These include, amongst others, the potential vulnerability of the system, the organization of the supervision and command of the e-voting system and the relationship between the election administration and the vendors of the electronic software and hardware.

The ODIHR also commented on other aspects of our election system. The report is detailed and well-documented.

Chairman,

The Belgian authorities welcome this report as a very useful help in their desire to hold in the country elections that truly reflect the will of the people in regard of the leaders by whom they wish to be governed. We consider the work done by a body of professionals, who have accumulated expertise through the observation of dozens of elections all through the OSCE area, as a unique service that will assist us in improving our procedures to our own benefit. The report will be a most useful instrument in the hand of the

authorities, the parliament, and the civil society in my country, when they will review Belgium's electoral system and negotiate adaptations and amendments. The OSCE commitments of the country are foremost on our mind, but in fact, there is no contradiction with what we want for ourselves.

Frankly, Chairman, when thinking about this, when seeing for ourselves the benefits that can be derived from full, transparent, open and unreserved cooperation with the ODIHR, we can only encourage other participating States to view election observation as an opportunity, just as we do.

Thank you, Chairman.