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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**Delegation of Canada to the OSCE on behalf of
Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland
Response to Russia's Statement on the ODIHR
As delivered by Chargée d'affaires a.i. Karine Asselin, to the
662nd Plenary Meeting of the Permanent Council
26 April 2007**

Canada takes the floor on this issue, also on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

ODIHR is the focal institution of the OSCE in the human dimension and we appreciate the extensive work undertaken by Ambassador Strohal and his dedicated staff.

We believe the institution can make a difference in assisting participating States to implement their human dimension commitments. In this respect, an overarching principle is to safeguard the autonomy of ODIHR in all areas of its mandate in order to ensure the highest quality, objectivity, and impartiality in its activities. This is crucial in maintaining effective implementation, monitoring, and strengthening of Human Dimension commitments for the benefit of the entire OSCE region.

Last year we welcomed the report delivered by ODIHR, on 10 November, and its inclusion in the Brussels Ministerial Council Decision No. 19/06. This decision tasked ODIHR, through its Director, to submit reports, as appropriate, on the improvements and recommendations concerning election related activities for review by the Permanent Council.

We are satisfied with ODIHR's efforts to fully comply with this task, and we look forward to the forthcoming meeting on 8 May on election-related issues and the presentation of the new "*Handbook for Long-Term Election Observers*."

We take this opportunity to reiterate our strong support for ODIHR, and we look forward to the customary productive relationship with Ambassador Strohal and his team in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.