



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Presidential Election in Georgia

As delivered by Acting Political Counselor Lane Darnell Bahl
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 13, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States congratulates Salome Zourabichvili on her election as president of Georgia.

We welcome the assessment by the OSCE/ODIHR International Election Observation Mission that Georgia's presidential run-off was competitive and that candidates were able to campaign freely. We have concerns, however, that misuse of state resources for partisan campaigning and other developments led to an "undue advantage" for the ruling party and blurred the line between it and the state. Some domestic observers also noted these concerns. These actions are not consistent with Georgia's commitment to free and fair elections, and we urge Georgian authorities to address the shortcomings raised by the observation mission raised.

The United States supports Georgia's democratic and economic development, territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and Western integration.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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