



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**INFORMATION SHEET
REQUEST FOR SHORT-TERM OBSERVERS**

**EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
17 November 2019**

Following an official invitation from the Belarusian authorities, based on the findings and conclusions of the Needs Assessment Mission deployed from 26 to 30 August 2019, and in accordance with its mandate, ODIHR has established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the early parliamentary elections scheduled for 17 November 2019. Corien Jonker has been appointed Head of the ODIHR EOM. The mission consists of 11 core team members based in Minsk, and 30 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed throughout the country. The core team and LTOs come from a total of 23 OSCE participating States.

ODIHR requests participating States to second 400 short-term observers (STOs) to observe voting, counting, and the tabulation of results. STOs will deploy 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 must be obtained at the nearest embassy or consulate of the Republic of Belarus prior to arrival. Only in exceptional cases can visas be issued on arrival at the airport in Minsk.

To facilitate accreditation of observers through the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the issuance of visas (if required), the ODIHR online mission registration form must be completed **no later than 29 October 2019**.

STOs are required to arrive in Minsk **by Tuesday 12 November** (at the latest) and depart (at the earliest) on **Tuesday 19 November**. The STO schedule is provided below.

Observers should strictly abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Election 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. 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, debriefings, and reporting will be in English and all interpreters will work in national 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.

STOs are requested to familiarize themselves with the ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, available online at 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 Election 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 is situated in Minsk:

Hotel Belarus

15 Storozhovskaya street, 220002 Minsk

tel.: +375 29 660 5848

e-mail: office@odihr.by

website: www.osce.org/odihr/elections/belarus/429278

1. Deployment Timetable

STOs will deploy according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, 12 November	Last date for arrival in Minsk
Wednesday, 13 November	STO briefing (entire day)
Thursday, 14 November	STO briefing (morning); Deployment to the areas of observation of the STOs
Friday, 15 November	Familiarization with areas of observation; observation of early voting
Saturday, 16 November	Familiarization with areas of observation; observation of early voting
Sunday, 17 November	Election day
Monday, 18 November	Regional debriefing of STOs; STOs return to Minsk; STO debriefing; STO reception
Tuesday, 19 November	STO repatriation

STOs are kindly requested to adhere to the deployment timetable. STOs who cannot arrive in time for the briefing or who wish to depart prior to the debriefing will not be accepted by ODIHR.

a) Briefing

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

- code of conduct and professional working environment;
- legislative framework;

- overview of the country, campaign and the media situation;
- early voting, voting, counting, and tabulation procedures;
- observation forms;
- security situation;
- logistical and financial arrangements.

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

b) Deployment

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

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 approximately two 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 STOs are organized by the EOM under the direction of:

Kyle Bowers, Operations Expert

e-mail: kyle.bowers@odihr.by; mobile phone: +375 29 660 7450

b) Transportation/Accommodation

All STOs will be met at the Minsk international airport by an ODIHR EOM representative upon their arrival and transported to their accommodation. Transport and accommodation in Minsk and in the areas of observation will be arranged by the EOM. **Due to possibly limited availability of accommodation in Minsk and the observation areas, STOs should be aware that double occupancy per room of observers of the same gender is possible, and relatively modest conditions may be expected in some of the observation areas.**

IMPORTANT: Hotels in Minsk generally require all guests arriving/departing in the early morning hours to pay full or at least partial hotel rates for the nights involved.

For safety reasons 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.

Should any of the observers choose not to stay in the accommodation arranged by the ODIHR EOM, the seconding States must indicate this while registering online. **If ODIHR is not notified well in advance, STOs or the respective OSCE seconding State will be charged for the cost, regardless of whether the accommodation provided is used.** It should be noted that the EOM cannot provide airport transfers and

in-city transportation for STOs who choose to stay outside the designated accommodation.

STOs may deploy from Minsk to the regions by bus, car or train.

In respect of in-country travel organized by ODIHR, please note that STOs will be required to complete and sign the standard OSCE Liability Release Form.

The ODIHR EOM will make necessary arrangements for the STOs to return to Minsk on Monday, 18 November, and will arrange accommodation in Minsk. The EOM will arrange transfers to the airport for departures for all STOs.

Furthermore, some observers may depart by plane from Minsk in the early hours of the night after the STO debriefing on 18 November. If the observer does **not** want ODIHR to organize a hotel room reservation in Minsk for the night of 18/19 November, please indicate this clearly during registration.

c) Security

STOs must adhere to the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Election 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 laws.

A memo on security details for the STOs will be provided to the observers upon arrival. STOs who choose not to 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;
- torch/flashlight with spare battery;
- all necessary medication (case specific);
- warm clothing (including for sleeping);
- 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 Minsk.

e) Communication

Each STO will be provided with a mobile phone and a local SIM card with credit for work related usage. Please note that using mobile phones for international calls and SMSs should be avoided. Such usage is very expensive and will quickly deplete allocated phone credit.

f) Time zone/Flight bookings

There is one time zone in Belarus. Local time in Belarus for election day will be UTC/GMT +3 hours. Due to the limited number of scheduled flights to Minsk, 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 each STO team with finding a driver/car and an interpreter. Even in cases where one team member speaks national languages, it will be necessary for that team to have an interpreter in order that both members of the team can have full access to complete and equal 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:

Operational/Transportation Cost	Euro (EUR)
Airport transfers	30
In-City transportation (to and from STO briefing/debriefing)	20
In-Country transportation (to and from deployment area)	100
Communication (SIM card/mobile phone/e-pen use)	75
Briefing costs (briefing, debriefing, briefing pack, meals)	220
Estimated cost to be incurred by ODIHR on behalf of STOs	445 EUR
Driver/Car (EUR 40 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	200
Fuel (EUR 15 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	75
Interpreter (EUR 40 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer)*	200
Accommodation (7 nights @ maximum EUR 120/per night)	840
Meals & incidentals (approx. EUR 40 per day @ maximum 8 days)	320
Accommodation and meals for Interpreter if needed (EUR 40 per night @ maximum 4 nights per observer)*	160
Accommodation and meals for Driver if needed (EUR 40 per night @ maximum 4 nights per observer)*	160
Costs paid directly by the observers	1,955 EUR
Total cost per observer:	2,400 EUR

* 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 2,400** (two thousand four hundred Euro), including **EUR 1,955** (one thousand nine hundred fifty five Euro) which the seconding States should supply to each observer in cash prior to their departure to Minsk. **The ODIHR EOM is not able to validate or certify documents related to costs paid directly by the observers (receipts, invoices, contracts, etc).**

EUR 445 (four hundred forty five 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, Russian Ruble (RUB), and US Dollar (USD) are widely exchangeable locally, although other currencies can also be exchanged. While there are cash machines (ATMs) in Minsk, they do not dispense Euro and might not be available in some areas of deployment. Hotels outside Minsk may not accept credit cards or foreign currency. STOs should be prepared to pay hotel bills outside Minsk in cash and upon check-in. Traveler's checks are not accepted. The local currency is the Belarusian Ruble (BYN). As of 19 October 2019, the exchange rate is approximately 1 EUR = 2.26 BYN, 1 RUB = 0.032 BYN, and 1 USD = 2.05 BYN.

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 the Republic of Belarus prior to arrival. Visas can be issued on arrival at Minsk international airport only in exceptional circumstances. It is strongly recommended to obtain visa before departure.

b) Insurance

STOs should ensure that they arrive with adequate health, accidental/life disability, emergency/medical evacuation, property, theft, and accident insurance, as this will not be provided by ODIHR. **STOs must have or obtain health/accident insurance that is valid in Belarus and bring a copy of the insurance policy with them, as well as two copies of the data page of their passport and the visa (if applicable). No insurance will be provided by ODIHR.**

6. Registration and Accreditation Process

After receiving this Information Sheet, all OSCE participating States considering secondment are requested to inform ODIHR regarding the number of STOs to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: sylwia.zwolinska@odihhr.pl, anna.krzysztofik@odihhr.pl no later than 25 October 2019.

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 25 October 2019; 17:00 (Warsaw Time).

The seconding States which have not requested access to the Election Expert Database as a national Focal Point yet (Note Verbale 218/2017, 5 June 2017) or require additional guidance for the observers' registration process should contact Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl, anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl.

For the purposes of timely accreditation of STOs with the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Belarus, the online mission registration form must be completed and supporting documents attached by the end of **29 October 2019**.

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, anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl) no later than 29 October 2019.

IN ORDER TO MAKE ALL LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS ON TIME, NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY ODIHR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER 29 OCTOBER 2019.

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 Election 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.

Specific information on the EOM is available on the EOM website: www.osce.org/odihr/elections/belarus/429278

All STOs will receive by e-mail a copy of the ODIHR EOM Observer Guide before their departure to Minsk.

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; and
- Become familiar with the ODIHR election observation methodology for observing election day, as reflected in the relevant ODIHR publications; and
- 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.