



MEPs in Kyiv: Ukraine's presidential election meets most international commitments

A delegation of eight MEPs confirmed on Monday that both rounds of presidential election in Ukraine met most of the country's international commitments. They were in Ukraine from 5 to 8 February to observe the second round of Ukrainian presidential elections on 7 February.

Paweł Kowal, (ECR, PL), chair of the delegation, said that “free elections were once again held in a country which overcame communism, got through the period of the Second World War and Soviet domination. It is worth bringing these facts to the attention of the international community which is watching Kiev today.”

He was accompanied by Alojz Peterle (EPP, SI), Algirdas Saudargas, (EPP, LT), Inese Vaidere, (EPP, LV), Kristian Vigenin (S&D, BG), Barbara Weiler (S&D, DE), Adina-Ioana Valean (ALDE, RO) and Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA, DE).

MEPs impressed with running of election, despite some issues

Alojz Peterle said: “We have visited 14 polling stations yesterday, urban and rural, and were impressed with the high level of attention to the rules and procedures. I think we can safely say that Ukraine has raised the level of electoral standards and can be a good example for many other countries. In addition, despite strong polarisation and electoral law changes between the first and the second round of elections, the elections were conducted peacefully and no major tension was felt in the voting stations.”

The EP delegation noted that the election process was carried out correctly but, as Ms Valean said, any functioning democracy also needs a wider, long term legal framework.

Accordingly to Mr Vigenin “this election clearly showed that Ukraine is consistently moving towards political stability and maturity. The next step should be to restart the long postponed reforms of the country for the benefit of Ukrainians.”

Ms Weiler (S&D, DE) emphasised that “it will not be possible to improve the election process in Ukraine without tackling the issue of rules for the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns”.

Ms Vaidere said “I commend Ukrainians on their dedication to democracy, as was visible in the polling stations that we have visited.” She said that “ballot boxes should not be completely clear as this can make it possible for other people in the polling station to see how a voter has voted” and pointed out that candidates still seem to look for holes in the election law in terms of political advertising: “we have noticed many posters on the streets indirectly and clearly promoting one candidate, which Ukrainian election law prohibits.”

Looking to Ukraine's future

Press release

Delegation chair Paweł Kowal said: "The door to Europe should be open to Ukraine. Orderly elections are an important signal for the European public opinion, that today Ukraine is a normal European country which has the right to make its European choice. I hope that this choice will be supported by the signing of the Association Agreement and the relaxation of visa requirements. I will be pursuing these goals as head of the EU-Ukraine delegation."

Rebecca HARMS (Greens/EFA, DE) called on both candidates to accept the result and - in case of doubt - to let the courts decide. "Ukrainian citizens are longing for reasonable and responsible politics, and not for the repetition of the 2004 protests," she said. "The polls showed," she added, "that the next president is facing a major task when it comes to uniting Ukraine. The split between east and west is to be overcome, and common efforts are necessary especially now in times of crisis."

Ms Harms also called on the Commissioner-designate for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle, to put special emphasis on Ukraine, and to support the democratic development in Ukraine.

Press Conference in Strasbourg

Mr Kowal will hold a press conference on the Ukrainian elections at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Wednesday 10 February at 1430.

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