

WARSAW/COPENHAGEN, 8 January 2024 – It is deeply regrettable that the Belarusian authorities have decided not to invite observers for the country's forthcoming parliamentary elections from OSCE states through the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), leaders of both institutions said today, adding that the decision contradicts the principle of transparency, which is essential for holding genuinely democratic elections.



PRESS RELEASE

Decision not to invite OSCE observers to parliamentary elections contrary to Belarus' international commitments

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"We are profoundly concerned that the decision not to invite OSCE states through ODIHR to observe Belarus' parliamentary elections will prevent the country's citizens and institutions from benefiting from an impartial, transparent, and comprehensive assessment," said ODIHR Director Matteo Mecacci. "This is contrary to the commitments made by Belarus, and goes against both the letter and the spirit of collaboration on which the OSCE is based."

"The Belarusian government's decision to shirk its obligation to invite OSCE observers is concerning, and goes against the best interest of the Belarusian people," said OSCE PA President Pia Kauma. "I deeply regret that the Assembly is being denied the opportunity to contribute to democratic development through our observation processes, which we have done in Belarus since 1995, and urge for greater openness of the Belarusian authorities."

Elections are a central element of the democratic process, and ODIHR observes elections throughout the OSCE region using a comprehensive methodology that has been developed over many years and is used in the same way in every country. ODIHR already began engaging in consultations with Belarus in October 2023 to reach an agreement on the deployment of a pre-election needs assessment mission, an initial and crucial step in determining whether to deploy an election observation and in what format. Following the [2020 presidential election](#), the parliamentary elections on 25 February 2024 will be the second time that ODIHR is unable to observe elections in Belarus due to the lack of a timely invitation from the national authorities.

All OSCE states have repeatedly recognized the value of ODIHR's observation and the effectiveness of its comprehensive and objective methodology. They have also [committed](#) to inviting observers from other OSCE participating States and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to observe, as well as following up swiftly on ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations. Parliamentary observers from the OSCE PA put their political expertise and personal experience in electoral processes at the disposal of the OSCE through election observation work conducted across the OSCE region.

While ODIHR will not be able to observe the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the Office continues to watch the unfolding events in Belarus from all the areas covered by its mandate.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit:

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/561463>

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