



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**Statement on the invitation to ODIHR to observe the forthcoming  
Presidential Elections in Russia 2 March 2008**

As delivered by Ambassador Guttorm Vik  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
31 January 2008

Mr. Chairman

We have also taken note of the invitation issued by the Russian Federation to ODIHR to send a mission to observe the Presidential election, but must express our concern that the invitation came somewhat late, given that the election date was well-known in advance.

What worries us even more, however, are the very serious restrictions that have been placed on the observation mission from ODIHR, both in terms of limited numbers, and even more in terms of the severely limited time allowed for the presence of the observers. This departs from the well-established practice within the OSCE, which has proven its worth in a large number of election observations, some of which very recently. For the observation mission to arrive only three days before the elections would clearly not allow for “monitoring before, during and after the elections”, as the ODIHR was mandated to do by the 1994 Budapest summit.

Indeed, it is the methodology developed by ODIHR to monitor the whole electoral process, and in particular the conditions prevailing during the electoral campaign, which has been our organisation’s most valuable and valued contribution to the array of tools and methods for international election observation.

The restrictive conditions imposed in the invitation to ODIHR undermine the possibilities for conducting a meaningful election observation.

We therefore join the appeals we have just heard from the EU and from other delegations to the Russian Federation to remove the restrictions contained in the invitation to ODIHR and to facilitate the access of international observers to the remaining electoral process.

Thank you Mr. Chairman