

# Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The Director

Warsaw, 29 January 2008

Mr. Vladimir Churov  
Chairman  
Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation  
Moscow

Dear Mr. Churov,

*Dear Chairman -*

Thank you for your letter dated yesterday inviting the ODIHR to observe the upcoming 2 March presidential elections in the Russian Federation. We would be pleased to accept an invitation to these important elections; however, for the ODIHR to attempt to conduct a meaningful observation activity in accordance with its mandate, even under these already very constrained circumstances, the timeframes laid out in your letter would necessitate modifications:

Given the impossibility of conducting a Needs Assessment Mission, the ODIHR would need to send an initial team of logistics and security personnel to the Russian Federation early next week to prepare for the deployment of a core team of some 20 experts before the end of that week. This would prepare the way for deployment of approximately 50 seconded observers the following week, giving the mission overall approximately three weeks to observe the later stages of the electoral process.

In order for the OSCE/ODIHR to proceed, it would therefore be necessary to receive accreditations, and, where applicable, visas, to allow for the timeframe indicated above, rather than on the dates indicated in your letter. Given the good professional cooperation between our two institutions over many years in the past, I hope that the ODIHR will be given the opportunity to engage with the Russian Federation through the deployment of a more meaningful election observation exercise. Looking forward to your support for our request and to staying in close contact with you on this important issue, I remain

*with my best regards,*

Yours Sincerely,

*C. Strohal*

Christian Strohal  
Ambassador

CC:

H.E. Ambassador Antti Turunen, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council  
H.E. Ambassador Aleksi Härkönen, Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force  
H.E. Ambassador Alexei Borodavkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE  
H.E. Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, OSCE Secretary General