



# Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

31/2021

## NOTE VERBALE

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) presents its compliments to the Foreign Ministries and Delegations of the OSCE participating States and has the honour to state the following:

Following an invitation to observe the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Bulgaria scheduled for 4 April 2021, and in accordance with its mandate, ODIHR is preparing to deploy a Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) for these elections. The ODIHR LEOM is planning to commence its activities in Sofia on 3 March 2021.

Due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel and health restrictions, ODIHR has decided to limit its mission in the Republic of Bulgaria to long-term observation, and will not be requesting the participating States to second short-term observers for election day observation.

ODIHR relies upon the co-operation of participating States in seconding 14 long-term observers. Long-term observers should arrive in Bulgaria on 8 March 2021. A briefing session is planned for 9 March, after which the long-term observers will be deployed to their observation areas on 10 March. The long-term observers should plan to remain in the country until 10 April 2021.

The attached information sheet provides further details. The involvement of long-term observers will permit observation of the administrative preparations for the elections, the campaign, adjudication of complaints, and the media.

In the interest of a broad and balanced representation among participating States in election observation activities, ODIHR requests that any individual participating State nominates only up to 15 per cent of the total number of observers requested.

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 long-term observers.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Foreign Ministries and Delegations of the OSCE participating States the assurances of its highest consideration.

Warsaw, 11 February 2021



To  
The Foreign Ministries and Delegations of the OSCE participating States



## Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

### INFORMATION SHEET REQUEST FOR LONG-TERM OBSERVERS

#### PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN BULGARIA 4 April 2021

#### 1. REQUEST FOR LONG-TERM OBSERVERS

ODIHR requests the co-operation of the OSCE participating States in seconding **a total of 14** experienced long-term observers (LTOs) to permit the observation of the administrative preparations for the elections, the campaign, adjudication of complaints, and the media. The LTOs should arrive in Sofia on 8 March 2020 to be deployed according to the following schedule:

8 March	Arrival in Sofia
9 March	Briefing session
10 March	Deployment to observation areas
10 April	Departure

The special expertise required includes election administration, election-related legal affairs or comparative election observation experience (English language essential). The LTOs shall perform their duties as stipulated in the attached terms of reference.

ODIHR strongly encourages all observers to undertake the ODIHR comprehensive e-learning course for observers, available at: [www.odihrobserver.org](http://www.odihrobserver.org).

#### 2. REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION PROCESS

After receiving this information sheet, all OSCE participating States considering secondment are requested to inform ODIHR on the number of LTOs (to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: [sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl](mailto:sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl), [anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl](mailto:anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl)) no later than 17 February 2021.

**To be nominated by the Seconding States, LTOs are required to create a personal account in the new 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 LTOs using the Election Expert Database as soon as possible and no later than 17 February 2021; 17:00 (Warsaw Time).

For the purposes of accreditation of LTOs with the Central Election Commission of Bulgaria the online mission registration form must be completed and supporting documents attached by the end of **19 February 2021**.

#### 3. INSURANCE

The seconding States should secure for their observers any insurance coverage, including adequate health, accident/disability and life insurance, as it will not be provided by ODIHR. The observers should have a copy of their insurance policy with them.

Each LTO team will be equipped by ODIHR with a laptop and mobile phones. LTOs may choose to bring their personal laptop and mobile phone. It should be noted, however, that ODIHR cannot take any responsibility for the observers' personal belongings, including computer and mobile telephone, in case of theft or any other incident. The seconding States may consider insuring personal belongings of observers.

#### **4. VISAS**

Visas, if required, should be arranged with the Embassy/Consulate of Bulgaria. For observers without an embassy in their country, please inform ODIHR in Warsaw (Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik) as soon as possible.

#### **5. FLIGHT BOOKINGS/ACCOMMODATION**

Hotel reservations will be organized for the LTOs by the ODIHR LEOM upon receipt of the online registration form. The LTOs will be met at Sofia airport by an ODIHR LEOM representative upon their arrival and transported to their accommodation.

Due to the limited number of scheduled flights to Sofia, ODIHR strongly encourages seconding States to make early flight bookings. To ensure operational flexibility, seconding States are advised to book changeable airline tickets.

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

#### **6. COSTS**

LTOs will be asked to cover directly their expenses for food and hotel accommodation; these costs may vary depending on personal preferences. However as an indication of possible costs an LTO may incur, please note that the OSCE Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for February is EUR 153.27 in Sofia. Costs, DSA included, may be less outside Sofia. ODIHR will provide each LTO team with a driver and an interpreter.

#### **7. CODE OF CONDUCT AND SECURITY**

The security and safety of observers is of the highest priority and will take precedence in LEOM management, including the deployment plan. The ODIHR LEOM will prioritize considerations related to the current COVID-19 pandemic in its planning and management. However, seconding States are required to ensure that their observers adhere to national rules and regulations related to entry, including with regard to potential requirements related to PCR testing and health insurance which covers treatment of COVID-19 in Bulgaria. Although ODIHR may provide some guidance, seconding States are responsible for determining the designation of their observers and purchasing any necessary insurance.

LTOs should strictly abide by the ODIHR Observer [Code of Conduct](#). The security and safety of observers is of the highest priority and will take precedence in EOM management. LTOs will receive a security briefing upon arrival and are requested to strictly comply with security instructions and deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM.

Observers should also familiarize themselves and abide with the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#).

ODIHR reserves the right to refuse any candidates to this observation mission who cannot undertake their activities in an impartial and objective manner and to withdraw accreditation in case of any serious breach of the ODIHR Observer Code of Conduct.

LTOs are kindly asked to refrain from commenting on mission-related issues, including via social media. In line with the ODIHR Observer Code of Conduct, 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.

## **8. OTHER INFORMATION**

Please note that all ODIHR election observation reports on prior elections in Bulgaria are available at the ODIHR website:

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria>

All observers should familiarize themselves with the contents of:

1. The ODIHR “Election Observation Handbook”, available at:  
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/68439>
2. The ODIHR “Handbook for Long-Term Election Observers” available at:  
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/24678>
3. The ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report available at:  
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria/476869>

## Terms of Reference

### LONG-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), the Long-term Observer (LTO) Co-ordinator and the ODIHR Election Department, the LTO is responsible for observing the entire electoral process and gaining an in-depth understanding of the overall administrative procedures and campaign environment in the area of deployment, as well as making the necessary preparations for the arrival of short-term observers (STOs)<sup>1</sup>.

#### Main Tasks:

##### Electoral Expertise

- Acquire detailed knowledge of the election law and all other relevant legislation and regulations;
- Acquire detailed knowledge of the electoral and political situation in the country;
- Become familiar with the ODIHR election observation methodology reflected in the relevant ODIHR publications; and
- Acquire knowledge of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.

##### Regional Issues

- Establish and maintain contact with the main authorities in charge of administering the elections in specific regions as well as with political parties and candidates, media representatives, and members of civil society;
- Attend and report on meetings of local election authorities, where possible;
- Attend and report on political rallies and campaign events, where possible;
- Attend and participate in any other relevant meetings with other electoral stakeholders to cover issues deemed necessary by the HoM, DHoM, and LTO Co-ordinator;
- Participate in selection of support staff according to the established procedures; and
- Manage local staff, including certifying and evaluating the results of their work;

##### Reporting

- Prepare weekly and spot reports based on observations, findings and assessment;

##### Co-ordinating Role

- Co-ordinate the deployment, preparations and activities of STOs (accommodation, cars, drivers, interpreters, briefing and de-briefing) in consultation with the DHoM, LTO Co-ordinator, and Operations Expert;
- Prepare regional briefing materials for STOs;
- Organize a regional briefing and debriefing session for STOs;
- Maintain regular contacts with STOs and provide them with instructions and guidance;
- Co-ordinate reporting by STOs and ensure that the mission is fully informed of trends and developments in the respective region;
- Abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Election Observers](#), the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Tasks related to STOs do not apply to Limited Election Observation Missions.

[Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#), the security instructions and deployment plan of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, as well as [data protection responsibilities](#) when processing the personal data of short-term observers and local staff.

**Requirements:**

- Experience in public administration, non-governmental organizations, and/or international organizations involved in observing and/or organizing electoral processes is most desirable;
- Previous experience or some knowledge of the current situation in the country or surrounding region is desirable;
- Command of English language is essential. LTOs 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 to work long hours and ability to deal with complex and demanding situations;
- Ability to work in a team and deal with difficult situations in a positive manner.

**Deliverables:**

- Regular reporting, including recommendations, on the conduct of the elections in the regions, as well as on any other issues covered during the mission;
- Participation in recruitment of local staff, including preparing and signing the interview report; and
- Certification and evaluation of work performed by local staff under direct supervision.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**  
ANNEX VI

**LIABILITY RELEASE FORM**

I, the undersigned, recognize that my participation in the event, named below, does not create an employment relationship between the OSCE and myself. The costs for my travel to, and participation in, the event are covered by the OSCE solely for my convenience and benefit. I accept all conditions of travel and further:

- a) release the OSCE and all of its officials, agents and consultants/experts from liability for loss, damage, injury, illness or death that may be sustained by me during such travel, and/or participation in the event, named below;
- b) agree for myself as well as for my dependants, heirs and estate to hold harmless the OSCE and its officials agents and consultants/experts from any claims or actions on account of any such loss, damage, injury, illness or death;
- c) agree to submit receipts and other relevant supporting documentation, evidencing that the funds have been used for the purpose for which they have been provided;
- d) agree to reimburse the OSCE any funds paid in advance, e.g. DSAs and a ticket cost, should I not be able to travel as originally planned.
- e) acknowledge that the proposed travel outlined in the ToR is to a region the WHO has designated as an area affected by COVID-19, agree to acquaint myself prior to travel with the latest information about the level of infection and preventative measures to take by consulting WHO's website, at time of offer to be found at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> and to keep abreast of local developments in this regard and adhere to the guidelines provided by ODIHR for the entire duration of the assignment.
- f) agree that in the event that potential restrictive measures are imposed by national, state or local authorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic the OSCE shall not be liable for any such restrictive measures and may take such action as it considers, in its sole discretion, to be appropriate or necessary in the circumstances, including but not limited to reducing the risk to the safety and security of the undersigned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of event

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date(s) of event

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature