

Canadem 2010 Second Round Presidential STO Mission.
Report from Michael Kostiuk. michael@michaelkostiuk.com. 613-728-5409

- Oblast: Mykolayiv.
- Division: South
- Observer Partner: Linda Diane Rubuliak
 - Team Leader: Trudy Hughes.



Canadem Team in
Mykolayiv, Ukraine.

Back Row:

Ronald Sorobey Michael Kostiuk

Front Row: Alexander Daschko,
Nellie Drozd, Trudy Hughes,
Kristina Bergeron, Oksana
Olifirovych, Izida Zorde, Ana
Lukatela

Missing: Linda Diane Rubuliak
who is taking this picture

The following is a summary of my visit to polling stations on February 7, 2010 in Electoral District 132. Mykolayiv, Ukraine.

There are also two maps attached to the end of this report that shows the location of Mykolayiv in Ukraine and a large-scale map that shows the location of smaller towns around Mykolayiv where our observation team visited Polling Stations or “PECs” on February 7, 2010.

Note: The polling stations in our area of observation were located in small agricultural towns and villages in the rural areas outside of the city of Mykolayiv. Due to the flat and mostly tree-less landscape of the steppes, blowing and drifting snow caused roads to be icy and difficult to drive upon. Many of the villages were located in partially isolated areas only accessible via farm-type roads. Our driver *refused* to drive on these roads since he said that only tractors and trucks can safely drive on those types of roads. Therefore, we had to constantly change our selection of polling stations to visit and sometimes this required a great deal of driving long distances between polling stations.

In retrospect, it would have been better to obtain larger vehicles such as an S.U.V. equipped with special tires to travel in this part of rural Ukraine in the winter. Our driver also informed us that winds tend to blow from East to West, and consequently the government will often close east-west roads while keeping north-south roads open.

During our two days of preliminary visits to various polling stations we often found that we were unable to drive to many of the polling stations since the east-west roads were closed. The driver was also not confident about driving on snow and ice covered roads since the winter conditions in this region is usually much milder than what occurred on our mission. We also gave our driver and interpreter time off in the middle of the day to go and vote. This delayed us for a while, but we felt obligated to let them exercise their right to vote.

As an aside I must say that since I am from Ottawa I could probably do a better job of driving in these winter conditions than our Ukrainian driver since we are accustomed to driving in winter conditions.

Polling stations (PECs) Visited on February 7, 2010, DEC 132 Mykolayiv Oblast

Nova Odesa Region of Mykolayiv:

1. PEC 130. Dec 132. Opening.

- We arrived around 7:30 am. The safe was already opened and the ballots had been removed. There was a quorum since all commission were present.
- One female commissioner was not wearing or displaying any accreditation.

See photo:



When we asked about this lack of accreditation and she left and came back in about 20 minutes. Apparently she had forgotten it at home and since the other commissioners knew who she was, the other commissioners did not consider it to be an issue.

The temperature inside the room was VERY cold. They brought in extra electric heaters to try and warm up the warm.

We checked all of the items indicted on our STO form.

No major issues to report.

#2. PEC 139, DEC 139

This poll was fairly large and everything was laid out properly.

The operations in the poll were well organized with only a few issues to report.

The extra and unused ballot box was placed in corner and it was NOT sealed.

Partial lack of privacy for voters. Since the blue and yellow material that was used to cover the polling was so transparent it was relatively easy to see through the material on the booths at each end of the polling booths. In this particular PEC a table lamp was placed on a small desk in each voting booth. This illuminated the interior of the booth and combined with the semi-transparent material of the voting booth created a condition where it was easy to view the person inside the booth. It was also easy to see whom the person was voting for if you know where the choices were located in the ballot. This was also an issue that I reported on in 2004 when I was an OSCE observer.

I mentioned this lack of privacy to the polling chairperson, but she did not consider it to be important.

Here is a photograph on the following page of a person “voting” inside one of the polling votes at this location.



3. PEC 137, DEC 132.

- No problems or issues to report.
- Very good signage in the polling area.
- Good layout of the polling area.
- Heavy material was placed around the voting booths to insure privacy of the voter. See photograph of this type of polling booth on the following page:



4. PEC 109. DEC 132.

- Everything looked fine in this area.
- No issues to report on.
- Semi transparent material was used on the voting booths but since there were no table lights placed inside the booth I could not clearly see who the person was voting for. Therefore, privacy of the voter was good in this location.

5. PEC 105. DEC 132.

- The poll was located in a small room on the second floor of a building in a tree plantation. Therefore, access to the Election Poll is very difficult for people with mobility issues.
- Very cold in the room. Use of portable electric heaters in the room.
- The room for the poll seemed too small for the purpose of an election. All three ballot boxes are placed in the middle of the room.
- One observer was sitting right behind the transparent ballots boxes and she was trying to see what were indicated in the ballots. See photograph of this Poll on the following page:



Canadem observer Linda Rubuliak and our interpreter are located on the right side of the following photograph. The observer who was trying to read the ballots in the box is sitting on the left side of the image.



6. PEC 104. DEC 132.

- Very good layout of the polling station.
- Well organized and well run.
- Almost complete level access to the poll from the outside.
- Voting booths appeared to have been built very quickly from spare wood, but they were adequate.
- No issues to report for this poll.

See photograph of this poll:



7. PEC 106. DEC 132.

- Good layout of the poll.
- Good ground level access.
- Voting booths were placed against the exterior windows, which could be a privacy issue.
- No issues to report here.
- We had brief “tea and cookie” break here with one of the commissioners who wanted to show use a medal that his son had won at the Beijing Para Olympics.

Ochakiv Region of Mykolayiv:

8. PEC 147. DEC 132.

- Many of the commissioners were NOT wearing proper accreditation badges. Instead they were wearing small badges that were made from a computer printer.

The chairperson was not wearing any badge and when I asked him about this he took it out of his pocket and pinned it on this jacket.

- 8 people who were not on the electoral list were allowed to vote. These people showed their passport which indicated their address and because of this confirmation of the residence they were allowed to vote. The commission said that these people were allowed to vote even though they were not on the list of electors to “avoid unpleasantness”.

9 PEC 148. DEC 132.

- Two large and one mobile were not being used and they were placed in a corner. These boxes did NOT have seals on them.
- This poll appeared to be well run and the layout was good.
- 17 people were allowed to vote that were not on the voters list. They were allowed to vote since their address was indicated on their passport. According to the chairperson on the commission, the Central Election Commission informed them that it was proper to add people to the list if the voter had a passport indicating their home address.

10. PEC 149. DEC 132

- Good Layout of the polling station.
- 35 people were added to the list of the electors based on the information shown on their passport.
- The mobile ballot box was not placed upside down as was done in other polling stations. It was sitting right side up on the top of a tall metal cabinet.
- 4 commissioners did NOT appear to be wearing any accreditation badges while they performing their duties.

11. PEC 146. DEC 132.

- Poll was in a large room.
- Almost level access
- 5 voting booths
- 2 large ballot boxes were placed in a corner of the room. Considering the size of the room they should have been placed in the middle of the room where it is in a location where it is easier to observe.
- 3 very well dressed men were standing near the desk of the chairperson of the commission. They were carrying small leather cases and all three were “*staring*” at Canadem observer Linda Rubuliak while she was interviewing the chairperson of the polling commission. I asked our interpreter to ask the commissioner who these 3 men were. The chairperson said that he did not know who they were. I then asked why these 3 men were in the polling station since they were not part of the commission, and they were not wearing any accreditation, but I received no answer. I then (through our interpreter) directly asked these 3 men why they were in the polling station and they said that they were there to see the chairperson. The

commissioner was not concerned about this and we left for our last poll of the day.

12. PEC 143. DEC 132.

- 30 people were added to the list of electors based on the address shown on their passports
- Polling area is in a small gymnasium of a school.
- No issues to report.

Poll Closing. PEC 143. DEC 132.

- Poll closed at 20:00
- We observed the closing of the poll and the vote count.
- There were several irregularities in this poll that were brought to our attention by one of the candidate's observers. This man claimed to be a lawyer and he was constantly citing examples of procedure from the Election Commission handbook.
- The corners of the unused ballots were cut off by use of scissors.
- Vote counting started at 21:17
- During the counting of the ballots this same lawyer told us that pens should not be on the tables when the ballots were being counted since the mere presence of a pen could mean that a ballot could be tampered with. His complaint was ignored by the commission.
- The police that were in the lobby of the school was also looking into the "*unlocked gym*" while the ballots were being counted.
- The driver of the mobile ballots was also in the room during the count.
- The driver and some of the members of the observers from the Press/Media were taking apart the ballot boxes and packing them into large cardboard boxes. They then removed the boxes containing the ballot boxes from the gymnasium during the count.
- A group of ballots that were sent out to "home" voters were rejected since the commissioner did not sign them.
- We received a copy of the protocol at the end of the voting. One of the female commissioners grabbed this protocol from me and would not give it back. I then had to ask for another protocol, which they gave me and it is attached to this report.
- This poll formally closed at 23:49.

Some photographs of the vote count is shown on the following page:



The following photograph shows the corners of unused ballots that cut off when the poll closed.



DEC 132 Observation

- We arrived at the DEC 132 at 0:45.
- We were warmly greeted and we were shown statistics on what was accomplished up to that point.
- 4 members from the OSCE were also in the room.
- We observed various Polling stations being brought into the room
- We did not see PEC 143 arrive at the DEC
- I paid both our driver and the interpreter for their services at 01:00
- Linda left to go back to the hotel at 01:30 and I stayed with the interpreter until 03:00.
- I did not observe PEC 143 arrive at this DEC
- One PEC reported that a school bus was used to transport voters their poll. The DEC commissioners took special note of this situation and told that PEC that people cannot be transported to a PEC with a school bus. The DEC commissioners did not accept the receipt of the ballots from that PEC and they took the members of that PEC delegation outside of the room to discuss the issue.
- I paid the interpreter 200 Hr from my own funds for his Extra time. I had the interpreter call a taxi to take me back to the hotel. I also gave our interpreter money to cover his taxi from the hotel to his home.

Maps Location Map for Mykolayiv Ukraine

Location Map for Mykolayiv Ukraine



Miller Cylindrical Projection

© Map created by Michael Kostiuk
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February 15 2010

**Election Observation Map for DEC 132 Mykolayiv Ukraine
Ukrainian Second Round Presidential Election 2010**



End of report for STO observation on February 7/8, 2010. Michael Kostiuk. 45 Viscount Avenue, Ottawa, ON. K1Z 7M8. michael@michaelkostiuk.com. 613-728-5409
Ottawa. February 10, 2010