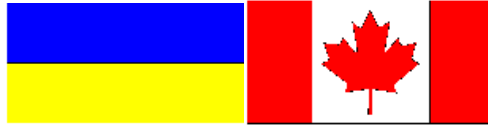


# Repeat Second Round Election Observer Mission to Ukraine. December 2004.

OSCE Team: 2319. TEC 25. Dnipropetrovsk. ©



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**Note:** Complete information about the OSCE analysis of the recent Ukrainian presidential can be found at the OSCE's web site at: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine/>. As well, the final report from the Canada Corps can be found at <http://www.canadobserv.org/>.

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Shortly after the second round of the Ukrainian presidential election was officially made invalid by the Supreme Court of Ukraine the government of Canada announced that it would send 500 Canadians to be election observers for the repeat second round election. Approximately 100 of these Canadians would be assigned to the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) while the remaining 400 would be part of the Canada Corps mission to Ukraine. I was one of the Canadians chosen to be an OSCE observer. After receiving a day and a half of training in Ottawa the observer group left on two charter flights for Kyiv on the evening of December 22. Unfortunately our 4:00 pm charter flight was delayed until 4:00 am the morning of December 23! Shortly after our flight landed in Kyiv we were separated into OSCE and Canada Corps teams and bussed to our assigned hotels. From this point I did not see any other Canada Corps members until the return to Ottawa flight on December 29. On December 23 a one-day OSCE election orientation session was held at the Ukrainian Aviation University in Kyiv.

One of the most important rules that we were told to observe in both the Ottawa and Kyiv training sessions was the rule of impartiality. In fact we were told that “we shouldn’t give a damn” who wins the election as long as it is carried out in fair and open manner. We were not to take sides in the election nor were we to be seen to be favouring one side or the other. That meant, among other things, to avoid wearing partisan colours of the two candidates such as white, light blue or orange.

The OSCE in Ukraine supplied the STOs (short term observers) with an election kit that required each two-person OSCE team to record various important observations on Election Day. Some teams were also assigned to monitor the activities of the Territorial Election Commissions (or TECs) and that meant staying there overnight often until noon the next day. I was part of an OSCE group that was assigned to the city of Dnipropetrovsk. We travelled there via the overnight train on the same evening as our OSCE orientation session in Kyiv. I was teamed with Aurore Chaigneau, a law professor from Paris.

The city of Dnipropetrovsk was founded in 1787 by Count Potemkin on the order of Catherine the Great on the site of a kozak fortress. The founding took place a short time

after the Kozaks and Russians had together fought against the Turks who were in possession of the Black Sea area. After the peace treaty the Russians took control of the rich farmland in the area. To this day the local people still take pride in their kozak heritage. The original name of the town was Ekaterinoslav, but in 1926 the growing city was renamed Dnipropetrovsk in honour of Grigoriy Petrovsky who was the first leader of the Ukrainian Soviet republic. The region has a population of 3.7 million and the main industries are heavy machinery, chemicals, food products as well as rockets. Leonid Brezhnev, Ukrainian President Kuchma as well as his son-in-law are from the Dnipropetrovsk region.



Street scenes in downtown Dnipropetrovsk.

For the many rich citizens there are many expensive shops and high quality restaurants situated around the city's main street Karl Marx Prospekt. The main square of the city is Lenin Square with contains a very large statue of Lenin. The square as well as many parts of the city is being transformed by the additions of many new modern structures. Construction cranes dot the skyline. The McDonald's restaurant is a very popular spot on the square as are the huge outdoor electronic advertising billboards, which display "loud" rock videos and an assortment of commercial messages to the delight of the young people who frequent the area. The city also has a very good streetcar/tram line that runs on dedicated "right of ways" and on very wide treed boulevards in the centre of the city. The tramlines also extend across the Dnipro River to the suburban and peri-urban areas. These trams lines and wide boulevards are a legacy of soviet city planning and most Canadian cities would love to have them. However, while the centre of the city appears to be booming the peripheral areas show signs of decay with poorly lit roads, and another problem are the disappearing manhole covers that are stolen and sold for scrap metal. Consequently, walking on the poorly lit streets is hazardous at night since the pedestrians must not only avoid the many speeding automobiles but also the many open manholes. For this reason various objects such as tires, large rocks and tree branches are placed in the manholes to warn both drivers and pedestrians of the unexpected hazards.

On the day before the December 26 vote our OSCE team consisting of Aurore, our driver, our interpreter and myself visited our assigned polling stations to let the polling

station personnel know we were coming the next day. I dressed in proper business attire wearing an OSCE armband and with election observer accreditation clearly visible. Having worked in Ukraine before I know the importance of presenting oneself as a competent professional.

At 7:30 on Election Day we went to our first polling station. We asked permission to take pictures and videos at every poll even though the election law allowed it. Throughout the day every polling station played loud, fun style (even disco) music and there were also bake sales in the lobbies of the schools. The idea here is that Election Day can be a fun day as well. With the exception of one nervous and agitated polling commissioner we were treated extremely well in our visits to the polling stations. Most of these visits were also recorded on my digital video camera.



OSCE Election observers Aurore Chaigneau (middle), Michael Kostiuk (right) and a polling commissioner (left) in polling station 10, Dnipropetrovsk.



Checking names on the voter's list. Dnipropetrovsk.

Our OSCE team recorded the opening of two polling stations, observed and made written reports of 18 polling stations as well as observing the closing of polling station 6 in TEC 25. A copy of the vote protocol was obtained from polling station 6 after the vote count. The vote protocol contains the official results of the vote and is signed by the polling commissioners. Two of the polling stations also had specific problems that required the completion of a special comments form. After observing the vote count we faxed our completed reports for the day's events back to Kyiv at 1:30 am the next morning. We then had a debriefing session with the LTO (long term Observer) for the region at 2:30 am. Hard copies of polling station reports and the Protocol were dropped off at the OSCE desk when we returned to Kyiv on December 28.

Since there are 33,000 polling stations in Ukraine an accurate impression of the voting scene cannot be determined from just a few visits to polling stations throughout the day. That is why the true analysis and commentary of the accuracy and fairness of the election should only come from the headquarters of the various observer groups, which in my case are the OSCE and the Canada Corps.

However, one of the issues that did stand out in our visits was the problem of access that older and disabled people have in getting to the polling stations. All of the polling stations that our OSCE team visited were located in schools. And many of the polls were located on the second or even third floors of these schools. As well, in a winter election, night comes early and the suburban and rural streets often have no streetlights and it is dangerous to walk in these conditions. That is why some older people (in my opinion) did not get out to vote. Many of the manholes have also been stolen for scrap metal making night time walking a hazard to say the least. Perhaps having the election in the late spring or early fall would allow more people the ability to get to the polls. As well, moving the polls to the first floors and installing ramps at the entrance to the schools would help older and disabled people gain better access to their polling stations.

The common language in the region is Russian although most people understand Ukrainian. Ukrainian is also the language of instruction in Ukrainian schools. According to the OSCE the political situation in the region is somewhat complex. This is partly due to the fact that Yanukovich originates from neighbouring Donetsk, which is a regional rival to Dnipropetrovsk. Consequently, Yushchenko is supported by some elements of the Dnipropetrovsk business community who are in competition with businesses in the Donetsk region. In the "first" second round election Yanukovich received 60.94 %, Yushchenko received 31.02% and 6.39% voted for "against all". There is also a large student population attending the city's 26 universities and postsecondary institutions and it is presumed that many are opposition supporters. There was even a small "Orange Revolution" protest-tent city situated near the Lenin statue.

Therefore, the vote split is not so much Ukrainian versus Russian as it is region against region and between the younger (who do not know communism) and the older generations (who are still thinking about the long-term linkages to Moscow). It is also not so much about whether there needs to be change in Ukraine but rather, what degree of change is needed and how quickly it should occur which is the real and ongoing issue.



## Problems with Some Polling Booths

There is no standard for the material used in polling booths. Therefore, the booths may be made of metal, wood, cloth or some other material. In this case the cloth material is so thin it is transparent. I.e. no privacy of voting.



The above view shows two election observers sitting beside a voting booth.  
Polling Station 1, TEC 25



This is a close-up of the same polling booth (A pair of hands can be seen holding a white pen and the ballot on a table). Since the material is so thin/transparent a person sitting beside the booth can easily see inside the booth. In this case a voter appears to be “voting” for the third choice, which is “none of the above candidates”.

## Results of Voting in Ukraine Elections 26.12.2004

Final Results On: 11.01.2005 00:00:05

The Elections for President of Ukraine. Repeat voting on 26 December 2004

- The percent of protocols in Ukraine that have been processed 100.00
- The number of voters who participated in voting 29,068,971
- The percent of voters of the voters who voted against all 2.34
- The number of votes cast for each candidate (Percentage and actual number)
- Viktor A. Yuschenko 51.99 15,115,712
- Viktor F. Yanukovych 44.20 12,848,528

Data courtesy of Ukraine's Central Election Committee.

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Internet Source: [www.michaelkostiuk.com](http://www.michaelkostiuk.com)

<http://web.ncf.ca/fd978/ukraine2004/kostiukukraine2004election.pdf>

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Canadian OSCE STO Election Monitor.  
OSCE Team: 2319. TEC 25. Dnipropetrovsk  
Repeat Second Round Ukrainian Presidential Election.  
Canadem member number: 5207.

45 Viscount Avenue  
Ottawa, ON  
Canada  
K1Z7M8  
613-728-5409  
[michael@michaelkostiuk.com](mailto:michael@michaelkostiuk.com)