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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Increased EU support for the OSCE's work in Ukraine

The European Union has increased its support for the work of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine. A EUR 10 million exceptional assistance package is supporting the OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation for the Presidential Elections in Ukraine on 25 May, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) as well as other confidence-building measures in Ukraine to be implemented by other organisations including civil society.

The package of support is funded under the EU's 'Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace' (IcSP). Following an initial allocation of EUR 5 Million, the EU has adopted a decision to increase the allocation to a total of EUR 10 million in exceptional financial support. This on-going EU support aims to increase public confidence in the preparation and organisation of the 25 May Presidential Elections as well as subsequent electoral cycle events. The EU funding has enabled the OSCE to deploy an additional 105 election observers from EU Member States and EU candidate and potential candidate countries. It also provides support to the SMM to enable it to reach its full capacity of 500 international monitors, thereby contributing to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security throughout Ukraine.

Furthermore, the package will support other related confidence-building measures in areas such as legal and constitutional reform, dialogue, mediation, electoral assistance and early-warning mechanisms, to be implemented by other organisations.

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In the context of implementing its commitments under the Geneva Joint Statement of 17 April, and building on EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 12 May, this assistance package aims to help bring about a successful outcome of the Presidential Elections in Ukraine on 25 May as well as further elections, alongside concrete steps to de-escalate tensions and restore security for all citizens while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Background

The package will be implemented over a maximum period of 18 months under Article 3 of IcSP which focuses on responding to situations of crisis or emerging crisis.

The allocation to OSCE for ODIHR election observation is EUR 1.5 million to bridge the gap between the number of requested observers and those already selected by OSCE participating states, while EUR 5 million is allocated to support the extension of SMM deployments to Kherson, Odessa, Lvov, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Chernivtsi and Luhansk, providing a valuable and neutral source of regular reporting of developments on the ground.

EUR 3.5 million is also allocated to support other organisations' activities related to confidence-building measures including legal and constitutional reform, dialogue, mediation, electoral assistance and early-warning mechanisms.

For more information:

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/index_en.htm

EU-Ukraine relations: http://eeas.europa.eu/ukraine/index_en.htm
