



**STATEMENT BY REBECCA HARMS, HEAD OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT DELEGATION**

TO THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE

Second round, 21 April 2019

Kiev, Monday 22 April 2019

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me welcome all of you today on behalf of the European Parliament delegation, and thank you for your interest in our observation of this crucial vote for Ukraine.

First of all we would like to congratulate the citizens of Ukraine for their deep commitment to democracy, demonstrated in competitive elections in which they had a free choice. We also welcome the statesmanship demonstrated by the incumbent in accepting the democratic choice of Ukrainians on election night, even after the heated campaign.

Yesterday's vote is first and foremost a victory of the Ukrainian people. The election was conducted in a peaceful and orderly fashion, paving the way for a democratic transition of power in the in the Presidency. Ukrainians showed up at the polling stations in large numbers to decide on the future of their country. No acts of violence have been observed and reported. This is all the more crucial to underline given the very specific situation in which these elections took place.

I sincerely regret that many Ukrainians could not vote because Russia has illegally annexed Crimea and the aggression continues in Eastern Ukraine. The election took place against the backdrop of the war, which is devastating eastern Ukraine. It has been launched by Russian President Putin and the objective is to destabilise Ukraine.

Tragically there have been:

- 13.000 deaths,
- hundreds of thousands of wounded,
- over one and a half million Internally Displaced Persons,
- one million refugees and
- 3.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

The consequences of the war have demanded a huge amount of effort of Ukrainian people. The corrosive anti-Ukrainian propaganda coming from Russia was again a prominent feature during the campaign. This propaganda targeted the country and its leadership ahead of the vote and before the important decisions the authorities will have to take in the coming months on the future of Ukraine.

The European Parliament encourages and supports the incoming president in continuing, and strengthening reform efforts, particularly in fighting corruption and poverty. We are confident that the incoming president is fully aware of his responsibilities. In carrying out these reforms he can fully rely on the support of the European Union. As the President of the European Council, Mr Tusk, said yesterday the president-elect of Ukraine can count on the European Union strong support on the “country’s reform path and its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity”.

The reform agenda should be carried in close cooperation and good faith with all other state institutions, notably the Verkhovna Rada. Ukrainian citizens have given the new president a strong mandate with an overwhelming vote. This result could also read as a serious reform appeal to the Verkhovna Rada.

In support of the reform agenda of the Rada, the European Parliament, which my colleagues and myself represent today, stands ready to continue its work in the area of capacity building and in promoting a culture of consensus through the Jean Monnet Dialogue Process.

The European path of Ukraine is enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution. It is the path charted by the Revolution of Dignity and the way most of the Ukrainians want to go for their freedom and a decent, good life. The European Union and the European Parliament will firmly support Ukraine in this endeavour.

Thank you!

The European Parliament delegation was composed of 5 Members (Head of Delegation Rebecca Harms - Greens/EFA, Germany; Laima Liucija Andrikiene - EPP, Lithuania; José Inácio Faria - EPP, Portugal; Ana Gomes - S&D, Portugal; Valentinas Mazuronis - ALDE, Lithuania). It was integrated into the International Election Observation Mission led by the OSCE-ODIHR.