

## IPA CIS Observers Participated in the Long-term and Short-term Monitoring of the Presidential Elections in the Russian Federation

In March 2018, the IPA CIS Observer Team performed the long-term and short-term monitoring of the presidential elections in the Russian Federation.

On 6 March, the IPA CIS international observers met with the representative of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation Siyabshakh Shapiev. The representative of the Central Election Commission informed the observers on the work of the Commission to verify voter lists, enhance the level of legal training of the members of the territorial and district election commissions and build the conditions enabling people with disabilities to vote. The meeting focused on the issues of security at polling stations on the election day and the strengthening of liability for violations of law in the process of preparation and holding of elections. The IPA CIS observers gave their feedback on visiting the settlements of the Leningrad, Pskov and Novgorod regions and the Republic of Karelia as part of the long-term monitoring mission.

The day before, the IIMDD IPA CIS expert group met with OSCE/ODIHR experts Alexander Folks and Alexandra Von Arks. The IIMDD experts answered the questions of the ODIHR representatives on the activity of the IIMDD IPA CIS on organizing the long-term observation of the elections, the nature and content of materials prepared for the members of the IPA CIS Observer Team. The ODIHR experts described their monitoring activities at the presidential elections in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region. The observers noted the open nature of the activities of the election commissions in the region and also stressed that they were provided with all the information about the election preparation process.

The short-term monitoring mission at the presidential elections in the Russian Federation started on 16 March 2018. The IPA CIS Observer Team consisted of 40 observers including MPs and representatives of supreme legislative bodies of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as experts of the four local branches of the IIMDD IPA CIS.

During short-term monitoring the IPA CIS observers met with Chair of the Committee of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev, First Deputy Speaker of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Ivan Melnikov, as well as the representatives of several campaign offices of the presidential candidates. The observers also visited the Election Commission of Moscow and met with its Chair Valentin Gorbunov. They were informed on the organization of the electoral campaign and holding the elections in the capital of Russian Federation, the process of es-

tablishment of territorial and district commission and the technological upgrade of the polling stations.



In St. Petersburg the observers also met with the representatives of electoral offices of the presidential candidates, as well as Vice Governor of St. Petersburg, Coordinator of Pre-Election Activities of St. Petersburg Executive Bodies Konstantin Serov and Chair of the Election Commission of St. Petersburg Viktor Pankevich who informed them in detail on the preparation for the elections in the city.

On the voting day, the IPA CIS international observers monitored the elections at the polling stations in Moscow, the Moscow region, St. Petersburg, in the settlements of the Astrakhan, Kurgan, Leningrad, Omsk and Orenburg regions, as well as at the foreign polling stations. In accordance with individual routes the observers visited in total more than 150 polling stations.

At the day of voting the Team Coordinator Ziyafet Asgarov met with Special Coordinator of the OSCE observers' short-term mission Michael Georg Link and Head of the OSCE PA delegation at the presidential elections in the Russian Federation Marietta Tidei. During the meeting they shared information on the work of their respective inter-





national observer teams during long-term monitoring and first impressions on the organization of voting process at the covered polling stations. Both parties stressed great political importance of the parliamentary cooperation in the field of election monitoring, as well as the need to harmonize the methodology of short-term and long-term monitoring.

The IPA CIS International Observer Team released an official report as a follow-up on the presidential elections in the

Russian Federation. The IPA CIS observers concluded that the elections of the President of the Russian Federation which took place on 18 March 2018 were consistent with national and international standards of democratic elections and demonstrated the commitment of the Russian Federation to its international obligations. According to the IPA CIS observers, the citizens of the Russian Federation were provided with the conditions ensuring free expression of will.

## IPA CIS Observers Made a Working Visit to the Azerbaijan Republic Within the Framework of the Long-term Monitoring of Preparation and Conduct of the Early Presidential Elections

Within the framework of the long-term monitoring of the early Presidential elections in the Azerbaijan Republic members of the observer team — Director of the IIMDD IPA CIS Dmitry Gladey and Head of the IIMDD expert group, Professor of the St. Petersburg State University Stanislav Tkachenko were on a visit to Azerbaijan on 27–28 March 2018.

On 27 March, the IPA CIS observers visited the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic where they met with the Chief of Staff Safa Mirzoev. In the course of the meeting the parties discussed the organization of the short-term and long-term monitoring of the upcoming Presidential elections by the IPA CIS International Observer Team. The same day, Dmitry Gladey and Stanislav Tkachenko held a meeting with the

Chairman of the Central Elections Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic Mazakhir Panakhov who shared about the





innovations in processing voter lists, the improvement of the monitoring and counting procedures, and about a new system for the training of members of electoral commissions at all levels.

The observers also visited the district electoral commission of Baku where they discussed the activities of the electoral commission at this stage of the elections including the issues of preparation of the voting stations and checking the lists of voters.



On 28 March, the observers visited the city of Khachmaz where they addressed the participants of the «Youth Elects and Gets Elected» seminar organized by the IIMDD IPA CIS Baku Office with the participation of the Milli Mejlis and the Central Elections Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The seminar brought together members of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic Eldaniz Salimov and Azer Badamov, Deputy Secretary General of the IPA CIS Council — Plenipotentiary Representative of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic Aidyn Jafarov, Head of the Executive Authority of the Khachmaz region Shamsaddin Khanbaev, representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan, and members of the Khachmaz district electoral commission.



After the seminar the observers visited Khachmaz city and country district voting stations. Chairs of the commissions told them about the preparation for the upcoming elections including the hosting of educational seminars and knowledge tests for the commissions' members and about the drafting of lists of voters for the election day.

## Essay Contests Organized with the Participation of the IIMDD IPA CIS Chisinau Branch Experts Took Place in the Republic of Moldova

The award ceremony on the results of Contests *Why Go to Elections* among 11<sup>th</sup>-year students of lyceums took place in Beltsy. The IIMDD IPA CIS Chisinau branch and the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Beltsy municipality initiated the Contest.



The Contests started on 1 February 2018 and was held in two stages:

— Stage I of the Contest (1–23 February 2018) included students essays, the marking of the essays by schools and the selection of the winner;

— Stage II included a presentation (till 14 March 2018) of the best essay from each lyceum to the IIMDD IPA CIS Chisinau branch.

10 lyceums of the Beltsy municipality took part in the Contest. In their essays schoolchildren shared their thoughts on why it is necessary to participate in elections and how to engage young people in this important process. The second stage defined the most interesting and memorable works of schoolchildren.

The finalists and their teachers were awarded with certificates of excellence. Winners and their teachers were awarded with laureate diplomas and valuable prizes.

