



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 22, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The U.S is deeply concerned about the conduct of the election in Mukacheve. By all accounts, there was manifestly fraudulent manipulation of the voting results.

There were highly credible reports -- including by the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights -- of widespread and serious irregularities in the voting and counting process, as well as numerous instances of violence and intimidation of voters and observers.

We do not believe the results reported by the Territorial Election Commission accurately reflect the will of the voters of Mukacheve.

We have seen a very discouraging pattern of irregularities and fraud in recent local and parliamentary elections in Ukraine. We hope that such problems will not characterize the presidential election later this year.

We welcome the news that President Kuchma has ordered a full investigation of the Mukacheve election. We urge the authorities to take the necessary steps to ensure that the will of the voters is not overturned by gross electoral violations. A failure to address this issue in full would only embolden those in Ukraine who are determined to thwart the conduct of free and fair elections.

Thank you.