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**EMBASSY OF UKRAINE  
IN AUSTRALIA**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**On the early Presidential Elections in Ukraine**

Presidential elections conducted in the democratic and transparent way is the key element for the normalization of the situation in Ukraine. Support of our international partners is crucial. In spite of unprecedented number of security challenges to our country, there are practically all organizational and legal grounds for holding elections. Citizens of Ukraine who live in the occupied peninsula have an opportunity to vote in other parts of Ukraine. Russia undertakes all actions to disrupt elections and thus continue escalation. Current legislation foresees enough preconditions when results of the elections are set and President is elected.

Early presidential elections will take place on legislatively set date – 25 May 2014.

21 candidates for the post of the President of Ukraine are registered to take part in the elections. Candidates represent all regions of Ukraine and wide political spectrum.

114 polling stations were established in foreign electoral district.

Ukraine is interested in holding elections in a free, transparent and democratic manner, in full compliance with international standards with the maximum presence of international observers.

High number of international observers is expected to be present at the elections. As of 16 May 2014 Central Electoral Commission registered 1375 international observers: 1319 representing international organizations, 56 – countries. In particular, observers from Canada, Lithuania, USA, France, Japan, Turkey, OSCE ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Ukrainian World Congress, and Congressional Ukrainian Caucus have already been registered. Respective observation missions will be also sent by the European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, NATO and GUAM etc.

Long-term OSCE ODIHR electoral observation mission on monitoring early presidential elections in Ukraine started its work on 19 March. It is expected that over 900 short-term observers will be present at the polling stations.

The election of the President is one of the main preconditions for further development of Ukraine and is key step to normalization and stabilization of the situation in the country. Any calls to disrupt or to postpone the election should be regarded as attempts to prevent stabilization of the internal processes in Ukraine.

2014 Presidential campaign is conducted in times of social and political tensions, security challenges which Ukraine faces for the first time in its modern history. In spite of this enough legal and organizational ground for holding elections and its democratic manner is

not questioned. Preparations for the elections are conducted in accordance with calendar plans set by the Central Electoral Commission and are almost finished.

Current national legislation on the elections of the President of Ukraine envisions that the results of the elections are set in spite of the number of electoral polls/electoral precincts where voting didn't take place or wasn't organized.

All necessary actions to hold presidential elections on the territory of Ukraine are enforced except for the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Establishment of electoral commissions had almost been finalized. With the view to temporary occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, there are no district electoral commissions established there. In accordance with current legislation of Ukraine, elections on the temporarily occupied territory are neither organized nor hold. At the same time, citizens of Ukraine who live in the occupied peninsula, have opportunities to vote at the Presidential elections in Kherson region which neighbors Crimea, or at any polling station on the continental territory of Ukraine.

With the view to activity of armed terrorist groups, all necessary actions are undertaken and they are aimed to secure electoral process, members of the electoral commissions and electoral documentations, and to conduct elections on the whole territory of Ukraine.

With the view to the complex security situation in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, on May 15 the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine adopted amendments to the Law of Ukraine on the Elections of the President of Ukraine. These provisions envisage: strengthening, if necessary, the protection of ballots and other election documents during their transportation from the precinct and district electoral commissions to the electoral commissions of higher level; increasing the time specified by law for the transfer of the preliminary voter lists by the State Voter Register to the precinct electoral commissions; increasing protection of electoral commissions in their locations; possibility for regional administrations to change the location of the respective electoral commissions, if necessary.

In spite of difficult situation in both regions, the Law of Ukraine "On the Elections of the President of Ukraine" creates enough preconditions to set the results of the elections and the election of the President of Ukraine.

Ukraine highly appreciates unanimous support of the international community, including the vast majority of the UN Security Council members on specific importance of free and democratic presidential elections in Ukraine on 25 May 2014 for de-escalation of current situation in our country.

Russian Federation is the only country whose official representatives had numerously not recognized the elections of 25 May 2014 or questioned its legitimate outcomes. This country is interested in further escalation of the situation around Ukraine.

Russian Federation undertakes all actions to destabilize situation in our country and disrupt elections of the President of Ukraine. The decision of Russia to conduct military exercise next to our border right on the date of early presidential elections should also be regarded in similar tones.

Ukraine calls on all countries to support democratic and free elections of the President of Ukraine and strongly condemn Russian actions aimed to disrupt elections of the President of Ukraine.

20 May 2014

Canberra