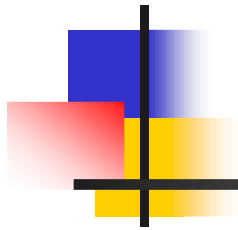


OSCE

(Organisation for Security and
Co-operation in Europe)



Election Assessment Mission

GENERAL ELECTION

5 MAY 2005



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Department for Constitutional Affairs

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Electoral Commission

The Mission



- 28 April – 7 May
- 11 Experts from 10 Countries
- FCO: DCA: EC: political parties, judiciary, media, returning officers and election staff
- London based, deployed mission members to Cardiff, Belfast, Glasgow and visited Birmingham, Edinburgh and a number of other sites
- Benefited from 2003 mission to assess elections for devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland



Executive Summary

- The election was administered in a professional manner
 - According to well-established procedures
 - Enjoying the overall trust of candidates and voters
 - Genuine choices in a competitive political environment



Legislative Framework

- In depth review of legislation
- Identify possible inconsistencies
- Consolidation in a single, integrated text
 - Enhance accessibility
 - Simplify implementation



Electoral System

- Delimitation of constituencies
- Considerable differences 30-40%
- Review by the Electoral Commission, in line with best practices concerning the equality of the vote.



Voter Registration

- A state-wide database for registered voters could be a useful tool to identify or prevent possible multiple registrations.
- Consideration could be given to review the legal framework for voter registration with a view to ensure consistency throughout the UK and emphasize individual voter registration



Ballots

- In order to ensure the secrecy of each ballot, consideration should be given to abolishing the printing of serial numbers on the ballots and replace them with other safeguards for the integrity of the voting process, such as presenting an identification document in order to receive a ballot.



Postal Voting

- Improvements should be considered in the legal framework to address concerns over the security and logistics of postal voting, and to ensure that postal voting materials are handled only by election officials.
- Recommend Northern Ireland model for consideration
- Out-of-country voting or absentee voting certificate



Observers

- The UK should adopt legislative provisions enabling international observers from OSCE participating States invited by the authorities, to attend all stages of the election process.
- Registered domestic non-partisan observer groups to monitor all stages of the election process.



Returning Officer

- Consideration could be given to establishing a greater degree of uniformity in administering elections by developing minimum standards for those aspects of the electoral process that are critical to its integrity.



Polling

- Proof of identity and signature at the polling station voting register before being given a ballot.
- Consideration could be given to permit voters, already queuing when the polling station closes, to receive and cast their ballot.
- Facility to record details of voters who find that they are marked as having applied for absentee voting without recognising this as a fact. More consideration should also be given to the active review of tendered ballots.



Any Questions
