



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

INFORMATION SHEET REQUEST FOR SHORT-TERM OBSERVERS

EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA 19 April 2026

Following an official invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Bulgaria to observe the 19 April early Parliamentary Elections, and in accordance with its mandate, ODIHR has established an Election Observation Mission (EOM). Dunja Mijatović is the Head of the ODIHR EOM. The mission consists of 12 core team members based in Sofia and 14 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed throughout the country. The core team and LTOs come from a wide variety of OSCE participating States per the standard methodology.

ODIHR requests participating States to second 200 (two hundred) short-term observers (STOs) to observe voting, counting, and the tabulation of results. STOs will be deployed in multinational teams under a deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. In the interest of a broad and balanced representation among participating States, ODIHR requests that individual participating States nominate only up to 15 percent of the total number of requested STOs.

To ensure a better gender balance in its activities, ODIHR strongly encourages the OSCE participating States to second equal numbers of women and men as short-term observers.

Seconding States should confirm visa requirements for their STOs. If required, visas should be obtained at the nearest embassy or consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria prior to arrival.

To facilitate the accreditation of observers through the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the issuance of visas (if required), the ODIHR online mission registration form must be completed **no later than 1 April 2026**.

STOs are required to arrive (at the latest) in Sofia by Wednesday, 15 April, and depart (at the earliest) on Wednesday, 22 April. The STO schedule is provided below.

Observers should strictly abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#) and the deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. Observers should also familiarize themselves with the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#). The security and safety of observers are of the highest priority and will take precedence in EOM management, including the deployment plan. All observers will receive security and Code of Conduct briefings upon arrival and are required to operate in accordance with security guidelines. The seconding States are required to ensure that their observers adhere to national rules and regulations related to entry, including with regard to potential requirements related to health insurance.

The working language of the EOM is English. All briefings and reporting will be in English, and all interpreters will work in local language(s)/English. All STOs must therefore have a good working knowledge of both written and spoken English.

ODIHR strongly encourages all observers to undertake the ODIHR comprehensive e-learning course for observers, available at www.odihrobserver.org.

STOs are requested to familiarize themselves with the ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, available online at www.osce.org/odihr/elections/68439.

STOs are kindly asked to refrain from commenting on mission-related issues via social media. In line with the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#), media communications regarding the electoral process and the substance of observations should be made only by the Head of Mission, ODIHR Spokesperson, or other responsible ODIHR officials.

A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET IS AVAILABLE ON THE ODIHR WEBSITE AND SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL SECONDED STOs.

The ODIHR EOM Office located in Sofia:

Mladost 1
Ul. Dimitar Mollov 8
1750 Sofia, Bulgaria

Office telephone: +359 87 990 3325

emails: info.office@odihr.bg

Website: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria>

1. Deployment Timetable

STOs will be deployed according to the following schedule:

Wed	15 April	STO arrival
Thu	16 April	STO briefing
Fri	17 April	STO deployment
Sat	18 April	Familiarization with areas of observation
Sun	19 April	Election Day
Mon	20 April	Observation of tabulation; STO regional de-briefing
Tue	21 April	STO return to Sofia; return of equipment; general de-briefing;
Wed	22 April	STO departure

STOs are kindly requested to adhere to the deployment timetable and attend the STO briefing.

a) Briefing

Before deployment, STOs will receive a briefing, which will, among other, include:

- code of conduct and professional working environment;
- overview of the country, political, campaign, and the media environment;
- voting, counting, and tabulation procedures;
- observation forms;
- security advisory;
- logistical and financial arrangements.

STOs will also be provided with briefing materials, which will include all necessary electoral and logistical information, as well as observation forms to complete during the observation of voting, counting, and tabulation.

b) Deployment

The ODIHR EOM will develop a deployment plan. STOs should strictly abide by the deployment plan and security instructions. STOs should not request special treatment regarding deployment locations.

In respect of in-country travel organized by ODIHR, please note that **STOs are required to complete the standard OSCE Liability Release Form** and attach it to the online mission registration form by **1 April 2026**.

c) Debriefing

A debriefing for STOs will be organized in Sofia after the elections. This will provide an opportunity for STOs to discuss their main findings and share their conclusions with other observers and EOM members.

2. Logistics and Security

a) Contact details

All logistical arrangements for the STOs will be organized by the EOM under the direction of:

Igor Bulić, Operations Expert

e-mail: igor.bulic@odihhr.bg

mobile phone: +359 87 990 6033

b) Transportation/Accommodation

All STOs will be met at Vasil Levski Sofia Airport by an ODIHR EOM representative upon their arrival and transported to their accommodation. Transport and accommodation in Sofia and in the areas of observation will be arranged by the EOM.

IMPORTANT: Hotels in Sofia may require guests arriving/departing in the early morning hours to pay the full overnight rate.

For safety and security reasons, and to prevent logistical problems with transportation, observers are expected to use the accommodation arranged for them by the ODIHR EOM. The EOM will also make all arrangements for in-country travel to deployment areas and for on-site drivers, cars, and interpreters.

If ODIHR is not duly notified in advance, STOs or the respective OSCE seconding State will be charged for the cost, regardless of whether the accommodation provided is used. The EOM cannot provide airport transfers and in-city transportation for STOs who do not stay in the designated accommodation.

STOs will deploy from Sofia to the regions by bus or car. STO deployment will be planned in accordance with national regulations and EOM's safety and security guidelines.

The ODIHR EOM will make necessary arrangements for the STOs to return to Sofia on 21 April and will arrange accommodation in Sofia. The EOM will arrange transfers to the airport for all STOs from ODIHR-designated accommodation on 22 April.

c) Security

STOs must adhere to the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#), as outlined in the ODIHR Election Observation Handbook, and the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#).

A memo on security details for the STOs will be provided to all observers. STOs who do not stay in accommodation provided by the ODIHR EOM will not be covered by the mission's security arrangements.

d) Luggage/Essential Items

Due to potential modest conditions in the regions, STOs are advised to bring with them the following items:

- appropriate attire for election day observation: business casual is recommended;
- torch/flashlight with spare battery;
- all necessary medication (case-specific);
- electricity converters (if needed) – European-style plug.

The ODIHR EOM strongly recommends that STOs, when traveling by air, put essential items into their hand luggage, in case of the late arrival of their luggage in Sofia.

e) Communication

Each STO will be provided with a smartphone and a local SIM card with credit, for work-related usage. Please note that using mobile phones for international calls and SMSs should be avoided. Such usage is very expensive and will quickly deplete allocated phone credit.

f) Time zone/Flight bookings

The Republic of Bulgaria is a one-time-zone country. The standard time is Eastern European Time (EET; UTC+02:00). Daylight saving time, which moves one hour ahead to UTC+03:00, is observed from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October, in line with most EU member states.

Due to the limited number of scheduled flights to Sofia, the ODIHR EOM strongly encourages seconding States to make early flight bookings. To ensure operational flexibility (e.g., in case of bad weather conditions), seconding States are advised to book changeable airline tickets.

3. Interpreters and Drivers

All observers will be organized in multinational teams of two persons under a deployment plan prepared by the ODIHR EOM. The ODIHR EOM will assist STO teams by finding drivers/cars and interpreters. Even in cases where one team member speaks the local languages, it will be necessary for that team to have an interpreter so that both members of the team can have full access to complete and equal information as they carry out their observation duties.

4 Costs

It is projected that, while in the country, **each STO** will incur the following costs, although some STOs may not require the full amount indicated below:

Operational/Transportation Cost	EUR
Airport transfers and in-city Transportation (to and from STO briefing/de-briefing)	55
In-country transportation (to and from deployment area)	115
Communication (SIM card/mobile phone)	25
Briefing costs (briefing, debriefing, briefing pack, meals, shipment)	205
Estimated cost to be incurred by ODIHR on behalf of STOs	400 EUR
Driver/car (EUR 50 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer) *	250
Fuel (EUR 20 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer) *	100
Interpreter (EUR 50 per day @ maximum 5 days per observer) *	250
Accommodation (maximum 7 nights @ max EUR 160/per night)	1,120
Meals & Incidentals (approx. EUR 40 per day @ max 7 days)	280
Accommodation and meals for interpreter if needed (EUR 60 per night @ 4 nights per observer) *	240
Accommodation and meals for Driver if needed (EUR 60 per night @ 4 nights per observer) *	240
Costs paid directly by the observers	2,480 EUR
Total cost per observer:	2,880 EUR

* The two members of each STO team will share equally the cost of drivers and interpreters. The amount above, therefore, represents half of these costs (i.e., for each STO).

The total cost per observer is estimated at **EUR 2,880** (two thousand eight hundred and eighty Euros), including **EUR 2,480** (two thousand four hundred and eighty Euros), which the seconding States should supply to each observer in cash prior to their departure to Sofia. **The ODIHR EOM is not able to validate or certify documents related to costs paid directly by the observers (receipts, invoices, contracts, etc.).**

EUR 400 (four hundred Euros) is the projected cost per each STO to be incurred by ODIHR. After closure of the EOM, each seconding State will be billed by ODIHR on the basis of total actual expenses incurred and the number of seconded STOs. Payment instructions will be provided to the seconding States with the final invoice.

All the above costs should be paid in local currency (EUR). USD is widely exchangeable locally, although other currencies can also be exchanged. There are cash machines (ATMs) in Sofia,

all of which dispense Euros exclusively. Hotels in Bulgaria do not accept foreign currency and are able to exchange the currency at their rate, which is slightly lower than the market rate. On rare occasions, STOs should be prepared to pay hotel bills outside Sofia in cash and upon check-in. Traveler's cheques may not be used.

5 Visas and Insurance

a. Visa

Seconding States should confirm visa requirements for their STOs. If required, visas must be obtained at the nearest embassy or consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria prior to arrival.

b. Insurance

STOs should ensure that they arrive with adequate health, accidental/life disability, emergency/medical evacuation, property, theft, and accident insurance, as this will not be provided by ODIHR. **STOs must have a copy of their insurance policy with them, as well as two copies of the data page of their passport and the visa (if applicable).**

6 Registration and Accreditation Process

After receiving this Information Sheet, all OSCE participating States considering secondment are requested to inform ODIHR on the number of STOs (to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl, anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl) no later than 25 March 2026.

To be nominated by the seconding States, STOs are required to create a personal account in the Election Expert Database, fully complete their profile, and share it with their national focal point. The seconding States are requested to submit the names of proposed STOs using the Election Expert Database as soon as possible and no later than **25 March 2026; 16:00 (Warsaw Time)**.

After the nomination deadline, ODIHR will consider the overall number of nominations received and confirm the final numbers it is able to receive from each seconding State and, subsequently, enable the focal point to proceed with the online registration.

In respect of in-country travel organized by ODIHR, please note that STOs are required to complete the standard OSCE Liability Release Form and attach it to the online mission registration form by **1 April 2026**.

The seconding States that have not requested access to the Election Expert Database as a national Focal Point yet, or require additional guidance on the observers' registration process should contact Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik; e-mail: sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl or anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl.

An official cover letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the seconding State or designated national focal point should be sent together with the list of STO names to the attention of Sylwia Zwolinska or Anna Krzysztofik (e-mail: sylwia.zwolinska@odihr.pl or anna.krzysztofik@odihr.pl) by **1 April 2026**.

<p style="text-align: center;">IN ORDER TO MAKE ALL LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS ON TIME, NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY ODIHR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER 1 April 2026.</p>

STOs must not have any concurrent commitments that could produce a conflict of interest with the ODIHR EOM.

ODIHR reserves the right to reject any candidate who is not capable of undertaking his/her activities in an impartial and objective manner, and to withdraw accreditation in case of any serious breach of the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Observers](#).

7 Other Information

Please note that all ODIHR election observation interim reports, preliminary statements, final reports, and reviews of election laws are available at the ODIHR website: odihr.osce.org

Specific information on the EOM is available on the EOM website: www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria

All STOs will receive by email a copy of the ODIHR EOM Observer Guide before their departure to Sofia.

Terms of Reference

SHORT-TERM OBSERVER

Background:

ODIHR is the leading agency in Europe in the field of election observation. It co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of numerous observation missions with thousands of observers every year to assess the compliance of elections in OSCE participating States in line with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into all elements of an electoral process, and permits making concrete recommendations to further improve electoral processes.

Objective:

Under the guidance of the Head of Mission (HoM) and in close co-ordination with the Deputy Head of Mission (DHoM), assigned Long-term Observers (LTOs), and the ODIHR Election Department, the short-term observers (STOs) are deployed in multinational teams of two and are responsible for observing election day procedures in their assigned areas and reporting their findings accurately and efficiently to the mission headquarters.

Main Tasks:

Electoral Expertise

- Acquire detailed knowledge of the election law and procedures concerning election day;
- Acquire detailed knowledge of the electoral and political situation in the country; and
- Become familiar with the ODIHR election observation methodology for observing election day, as reflected in the relevant ODIHR publications; and
- Acquire knowledge of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.
- Attend and report on meetings of local election authorities, where requested;
- Attend and report on political rallies and campaign events, where requested;
- Attend and participate in any other relevant meetings with other election stakeholders necessary to cover issues deemed necessary by the HoM, DHoM, and LTOs;
- Supervise the local support staff;
- Abide by the [Code of Conduct for ODIHR Election Observers](#), the [Guide on the OSCE Policy against Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#), and security instructions and deployment plan of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, as well as [data protection responsibilities](#) when processing the personal data of local staff.

Reporting

- Prepare and submit regular reports to assess the close of the campaign, voting, counting, and the tabulation of results.

Requirements:

- Experience in public administration, non-governmental organizations, and/or international organizations, preferably involved in observing and/or organizing election processes, is desirable.
- Knowledge of the country and surrounding region is desirable but not essential.
- Command of English language is essential. STOs must be prepared to read briefing materials, attend briefing and de-briefing sessions, understand procedural instructions, and complete forms accurately, all in English. Knowledge of local languages is desirable but not essential.
- Willingness and ability to work long hours in conditions which are sometimes difficult.
- Ability to work in a team and deal with difficult situations in a positive manner.

Deliverables:

- Regular reporting on the conduct of the elections in the area of deployment, as well as on any other issues covered during the mission.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
ANNEX VI

LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

I, the undersigned, recognize that my participation in the event, named below, does not create an employment relationship between the OSCE and myself. The costs for my travel to, and participation in, the event are covered by the OSCE solely for my convenience and benefit. I accept all conditions of travel and further:

- a) release the OSCE and all of its officials, agents and consultants/experts from liability for loss, damage, injury, illness or death that may be sustained by me during such travel, and/or participation in the event, named below;
- b) agree for myself as well as for my dependants, heirs and estate to hold harmless the OSCE and its officials agents and consultants/experts from any claims or actions on account of any such loss, damage, injury, illness or death;
- c) agree to submit receipts and other relevant supporting documentation, evidencing that the funds have been used for the purpose for which they have been provided;
- d) agree to reimburse the OSCE any funds paid in advance, e.g. DSAs and a ticket cost, should I not be able to travel as originally planned.

Name of event

Name of participant

Date(s) of event

Signature of participant

Venue of event

Date of Signature