



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Royal Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

OSCE/ODIHR
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Your ref

Our ref
11/131-1 MAR

Date
19.01.2011

Invitation to observe electronic voting at elections to Municipal Electoral Committees and Electoral Counties 2011

Norway plans to carry out pilots on Internet voting at the 2011 elections in 10 municipalities. The Ministry would like to invite OSCE/ODHIR to follow the preparations and the conduct of electronic voting in these municipalities.

Election Day will be Monday 12 September 2011. Some municipalities will also allow voting on Sunday 11 September. All voters may cast votes in advance from 1 July till Friday 9 September. Abroad it is possible to cast votes from 1 July till Friday 2 September.

All voters in the pilot municipalities will be invited to vote over the Internet in uncontrolled environments (from home etc). The number of eligible voters are 160 000. In connection with the pilots, the Ministry has developed a new computer system for election administration. This system contains a module for electronic voting. The system also includes a module for electronic counting of paper ballots. The entire system is being used in the pilot municipalities.

Electronic voting poses new challenges and requires new approaches when it comes to election monitoring. We believe that it is important to follow the process from an early stage. At the moment we are in the middle of developing the system. We hope that the OSCE/ODHIR by following the project will be able to gain useful knowledge about Internet voting and how both preparation and the conduct of elections best can be observed.

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Several steps are taken in order to ensure *secrecy and transparency* of the system. Voters will be able to cast multiple votes with only the last vote being valid. Voters will be able to cancel their Internet vote by casting a paper ballot, either in advance or on Election Day. An electronic ballot is protected by an electronic double-envelope mechanism, in order to ensure the anonymity of the vote once cast. After an electronic ballot is cast, the system will ensure transparency by giving the voter coded confirmation by SMS of the content of the ballot (the code having been previously received by the voter via the regular postal service). This will allow the voter to know that the vote has been received as intended. Other steps to increase transparency include public ownership of the system, full transparency in the procurement of system components, open source code, a wide spectrum of reference groups, and third party quality assurance. High levels of public confidence in the election process are vital and must be ensured even in a system with the possibility to vote via the Internet.

For further information please contact project manager Mr. Henrik Nore.

Yours sincerely,

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Copy to:
The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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