

# ELECTIONWATCH

## UKRAINE



### Ukraine Post-Election Watch: February 2010 Presidential Runoff Election

The 2010 presidential election was the first held in Ukraine since the events known as the Orange Revolution. The first round was held on January 17, 2010. Because no candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote, a second round was held on February 7, 2010, between Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and opposition leader and head of the Party of Regions Victor Yanukovich. Seven days after the election, the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC) declared Yanukovich the winner by a margin of 3.48 percent.

### Election Results

After the first round of voting, the International Republican Institute's (IRI) election observation mission, along with several other international observation organizations, found that the election generally met international standards. IRI's preliminary statement noted that despite a late amendment to the election law, which underscored the need for a comprehensive review of the legal framework, the election was nonetheless held in an open and transparent manner that allowed both candidates the opportunity to debate issues.

In the runoff on February 7, 2010, Yanukovich received 48.95 percent and Tymoshenko received 45.47 percent, a difference of approximately 900,000 votes. Refusing to concede the election, Tymoshenko argued that sufficient fraud had taken place to have altered the outcome. She filed suit in the Higher Administrative Court after the CEC officially declared Yanukovich the winner. However, after the court denied several of her requests to introduce witnesses and evidence she deemed necessary to make her case, Tymoshenko abruptly withdrew her suit, effectively conceding the election. President Yanukovich's inauguration was held on February 25, 2010.

### Election Impact

While Tymoshenko failed to achieve her desire to become president of Ukraine, she nonetheless remains prime minister. President Yanukovich has asked for Tymoshenko's resignation, but she has refused. Yanukovich and his supporters in parliament have indicated they will attempt to gather enough votes in parliament to pass a resolution of no confidence in the government, thus requiring Tymoshenko to step aside as prime minister. This would require that a significant number of members of either her bloc or the bloc supporting President Yushchenko throw their support behind the no confidence vote.

If the no confidence vote passes, then a new coalition must be formed in order to avoid early parliamentary elections. According to the Ukrainian constitution, the ruling coalition appoints the prime minister. Consequently, Yanukovich would be in a position to select the

prime minister.

## IRI in Ukraine

IRI's work in Ukraine began in 1994. Since that time, IRI has aided in the development of democratic political parties at the national and regional levels, and in regional-based networks of youth and women political activists. IRI has sponsored Ukrainian nongovernmental organizations to assist them in efforts to become self-sustainable. IRI has also provided a series of training programs for local elected officials from across the country to equip them with the technical skills necessary to fulfill their roles as elected representatives.



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