

**Presentation
of the Deputy Chairman of the Central Election Commission
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**Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the
Russian Federation on December, 2, 2007
and elections of the president of the Russian Federation
on March, 2, 2008 – the main results and conclusions**

First of all, the main results of the federal election campaigns, held in the Russian Federation are the following. The elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the fifth convocation in 2007 and the elections of the president of the Russian Federation in 2008 were held in constitutional terms in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and international electoral standards, with society and citizens having positive attitude towards these events. The elections are summarized in terms established by legislation, election results are officially published. The elected bodies of state power of the Russian Federation are formed, legitimate and act in accordance with the constitutional powers.

The election campaigns were held on the basis of the renewed federal election laws and, most importantly, with the use of the electoral formula, new for the parliament elections for the Russian Federation, which included the following: switching over to extremely proportional electoral system; raising up to 7% the so called election threshold, having passed which parties can participate in distribution of seats in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly; division (in accordance with the fixed borders of territories) of the federal lists of candidates into regional groups, being carried out by parties - the number of regional groups couldn't be less than 80 and more than 153; and also a number of other forming of party lists requirements.

Furthermore, the important innovation has taken place in the election, namely, abolition of the "voter turnout" requirement for the elections to be considered valid, as well as abolition of the "Against all candidates" and "Against all federal lists of candidates" option in the ballot. There are some other

innovations, including the ones in the presidential election law of the Russian Federation, which I will not specify, because they have already been much discussed in detail.

The election results have become a serious examination of effectiveness of changes, made in the Law of the Russian Federation. Today, we have the right to assert, that in the whole these changes proved their value.

According to vote returns of the parliamentary elections, four party lists from 11 registered federal lists of candidates, nominated by parties, passed the 7% election threshold and were admitted to distribution of mandates.

Federal lists of the All-Russian Political Party “United Russia”, the Political Party “Communist Party of the Russian Federation”, Political Party “Liberal-Democratic party of Russia” got more seats in the State Duma of the fifth convocation, than in the previous one. I suppose, such result indicates of stability of the certain segments of political preferences of the Russians. Simultaneously, the Political Party “Fair Russia: Motherland, Pensioners, Life” entered federal parliament for the first time.

It should be also said, that after the raising up of the election threshold for the parties to enter the State Duma, the political space of the Russian Federation wasn't compressed, as it was forecasted by some experts; but the renewal of political structure actually takes place. Growth of competitiveness between parties, as consequence of permanently held elections, undoubtedly, strengthens the political system.

According to the results of parliamentary campaign, the parties, which didn't pass the 7% threshold, although they had an experience in political struggle, have become outsiders. These parties are the following ones: the Political Party “Union of Rightist Forces”, the Political Party “Russian United Democratic Party ‘Yabloko’”, “Patriots of Russia” and some others. In our opinion, such result should be considered as a serious indicator of necessity of inner-party reforms and unifying processes, of urgency of continuous and consecutive party work at the local level. Such processes have already appeared nowadays.

Switching over to proportional electoral system on parliamentary elections led to much more organized campaign, running within the legal environment, including in the field of election campaigning. Positive role was played by both the corporate liability of a party for its candidates and the quite good readiness for election of the majority of its participants.

Even taking into consideration the complexity of requirements to forming of regional groups of candidates, parties were able to approach the corresponding decisions making without assistance and quite reasonably.

Federal lists of candidates, nominated by 11 parties, contained different number of regional groups – from 83 to 109.

The general number of presented regional groups is 1004. The general number of candidates in registered federal lists is 4558 persons.

However, by no means all possibilities, conditioned by “reorganization” of federal lists, were used to the fullest extent. Particularly, the majority of parties didn’t use their right to form the maximum number of regional groups of candidates. One of the reasons was ignoring the division of territories of certain subjects of the Russian Federation, for example, Moscow, into parts. Certain parties didn’t judge it expedient to put to one or another regional group votes of people, being out of the Russian Federation, given for their federal list. Furthermore, there are only several party lists where the number of candidates hardly approached the permissible upper limit of 600 persons. But this is a self-sufficient choice of the parties-participants of the parliamentary election campaign.

Although, the practice of regionalization of federal lists of candidates has certain disadvantages, experience got in the federal election can be to the full extent in demand in elections of deputies of regional parliaments, in other words, in the subjects of the Russian Federation where the similar tasks are faced and the peculiarities, connected, for example, with uneven population density, take place.

High legitimacy and growth of representativeness of the elected deputy corps is confirmed by the fact that nearly 92% of the voters, participated in the

voting in the parliamentary election, gave their votes for the four parties, which emerged the winner. This result is one of the highest in Europe and the highest in Russia since 1993. The composition of the State Duma of the fourth convocation was based on a little bit more than 70 % of the voters, participated in the voting, and in 1995 it was based on only 50% of the voters.

Thus, Russia took one more step towards forming of the effective political system; this step is stipulated by the real balance of political forces and is based on the free expression of the voters' will.

For organizers of the election the results of election campaigns are also the basis for building up relations with political parties: contacts are becoming regular and systematic; practically all points are discussed to reach mutually acceptable decisions.

Competitiveness, necessary for any election was the main feature of the presidential election campaign in March, 2008. 109 persons appealed to the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation on questions of nomination and registration of candidates for the office of President of the Russian Federation. Documents for registration were submitted by 15 candidates, four from whom were nominated by political parties and 11 were self-nominators.

Four candidates, nominated by political parties (Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Gennady Zyuganov, Dmitry Medvedev), as well as by self-nomination (Andrey Bogdanov) were entered in the ballot. The election resulted in the election of Dmitry Medvedev, whose candidacy was supported by the majority of voters, as President of the Russian Federation. It should be noted that political parties adequately measured up their chances, felt their role in the state and society, made real contribution to the forming of presidential power in Russia.

Special attention during preparation for the voting day was given by the election organizers to the work with lists of voters, taking into account that presence in the corresponding list is one of the main parts of the system of guarantees of electoral rights of citizens.

Faults, connected with this problem, often gave and till now give rise to fair complaints both on the part of voters and political parties and candidates.

Preparation for the listing of voters began in advance; there were the voter registration institute, being used; there were the corresponding recommendations being developed and directed to the regions; there was information, contained in the lists of voters in the regional and local election, held earlier, being taken into consideration; there were possibilities of adjustment of the lists by voters themselves, being used; there were the data, got in the just finished parliamentary election, being efficiently corrected during the presidential campaign.

The measures taken appeared to be rather effective, because the number of appeals on this question decreased, and the number of voters, who couldn't find their names in the lists, was considerably lower than in 2003-2004. In the presidential election in 2008 we obtained the unique result: there was less than 1 % of such voters, i.e. below the limits of international standards.

The election results have clearly shown that political activity of the Russians, although having suffered ups and downs for the last 15 years, has the tendency to grow. The turnout of 64% in the parliamentary election in 2007 exceeded the maximum of 62% in 1999.

Positive dynamics becomes also evident while analyzing the voters' activity in the presidential election in 2008, where 69.8 % of voters, included in the lists for the moment of the voting end took part. This number is more than 5 % higher than in 2004 and more than 1 % higher than in 2000.

Rather high activity of Russian voters in the federal election didn't confirm the fears of those who forecasted deformation of the electoral system of Russia and almost a large-scale ignoring the voting by electorate after the exclusion of the "Against all" option and abolition of the minimum turnout.

Such, frankly speaking, good results we connect, besides other reasons, with information-explanatory work, permanently carried out by the election organizers, and having reached peak while preparing for federal campaigns. Information support of the election was in the center of attention of the election commissions of

all levels, the bodies of state power and the local government bodies, political parties; it was carried out in many directions, with the use of practically all forms of the Mass Media and in front of different audiences.

High activity in the election was shown by youth; this was also contributed by the active educational work as well as purposeful obvious campaigning and various forms of activation of youth participation in the election process.

The task, no less important than the one, mentioned above, was to create necessary and sterling conditions for realization of suffrage of different groups of citizens, including servicemen; citizens, being afloat, in railway stations and airports in the voting day; physically challenged citizens.

Many decisions were made for the first time in the history of the elections in Russia. For example, there were electoral precincts being opened or there were precincts being equipped by special places for voting of people, not having domiciliary registration within the Russian Federation. More than 23 thousand of Russian citizens of the given category voted in the parliamentary election, and more than 37 thousand people in the presidential election.

While preparing for the election the positive public attention was caused by the work of election commissions on giving possibility to participate in the voting to physically challenged citizens. But the main thing in this connection is that exactly these categories of voters got attention and support, so highly appreciated by them. Such initiatives should be undoubtedly developed then.

The peculiarity of the election in Russia was the fact that it was held under severe control of society. For example, the parliamentary election witnessed about 2 million of observers from political parties, being present at precincts. Nevertheless, the results of the both campaigns indicate that this institutional setting is far from being perfect and requires, for example, strengthening of vocational training of observers.

In the run-up to the elections and during the Election Day the voter hotline, organized by a number of the public institutes together with the Central Election Commission, was working. The number of calls received and the measures, taken

on the citizens' addresses, confirmed its high efficiency as the public instrument for structural interaction between society, the election organizers, the bodies of state power and local government.

The work of the State Automated System SAS "Vybory" is positively appreciated, as well. Due to its technical feasibilities openness of the election process was provided, conditions for the giving of the reliable and full information about the elections, including TV, radio, Internet, mobile communication, were created. When the data collecting, handling and giving there were no facts of loss or corruption of the voting data being fixed.

The audience of the SAS technical feasibilities users has greatly increased. The SAS also helped to activate the citizens' interest to the elections. We hope that credit to the electoral system has increased as well. Thus, in the period from the 2nd to the 3-d of December, 2007 through the web-sites of the CEC and the election commissions of the subjects of the Russian Federation the Internet users got 6 million pages, containing the election data, the number, four times bigger than in the parliamentary elections in December, 2003. And in the period from 2nd to the 3-d of March, 2008 the Internet users got more than 2.5 million of pages; the internet portal load during this period was inquiries per second. There was no information openness of the election, use of the modern software and technical feasibilities of such scope in our country earlier, and this is an important part of the election process, which, undoubtedly, will be developed then.

The ballot handling complexes and the ones for electronic voting, installed in several regions of the country also proved themselves to work good in the whole. However, taking into account some failures in their work, although permissible for the experiment and in the whole insignificant, the technical part of the voting will be improved.

During the election period and when its sizing up there was the Information Center, functioning in the CEC. The voting data and the data on its preliminary results for the Russian and foreign mass media, representatives of political parties and other guests were displayed in the indicator board of the Center.

The accreditation for the coverage of the Parliamentary Election was obtained by approx 1.5 thousand journalists from Russia and 34 other countries; the presidential election was covered by more than two thousand foreign and Russian journalists from almost 300 foreign and Russian mass media. Such record number of the mass media representatives was accredited in Russia for the first time.

During the presidential election the work of the International Information Center also can be noted as experimental. The main task of the Center was to organize interaction with international observers. The experience at work with the Mass Media and missions of international observers not only confirmed its suitability, but also is in essence invaluable and, certainly, will be in demand in the future.

According to Russian traditions, after the regular cycle of federal election campaigns the correction of certain legislative regulations takes place. The worldwide practice is the same – in most of countries after the election the legislation changes in a varying degree.

The practice of the voting organization also needed certain correction. For example, the situation, to some extent unexpected to us, occurred during the election. Thus, the Russian citizens' interest towards the federal election and the work on activation of their participation in the voting led to the following: in a number of electoral precincts, in particular, where the turnout exceeded 60 % there appeared ballot queues. Furthermore, there were cases, when in connection with the increased work content the members of precinct election commissions weren't able to hold the voting outside the poll, stipulated by the election legislation.

In this connection the decision to increase the number of the electoral precinct members, having a casting vote (certainly, within the limits prescribed by law), or to "diminish" precincts in the districts, where by experience of the previous campaigns was high turnout, seems to be reasonable.

After holding of early voting and voting in remote areas and in areas difficult of access the decision to optimize correlation between the spent funds

(which are about 10 % of the election budget) and the number of citizens, having voted, who are in average 0.2-0.3 % of voters, having participated in the election, for example, by using distance voting. Such experiment will be carried out in the local elections in October, 12 in the current year.

Thus, we not only summarize and make conclusions, but also realize new goals. Undoubtedly, the experience got during preparation for and holding of the elections, will be used by the Russian election organizers. We hope, our experience will be also useful in other countries.

Today, we have the right to say, that there no inessential details in the election; establishing of permanent interaction between all participants of the election process allows avoiding many sharp contradictions and conflicts; attention to information providing of the elections, development of the technical base of the votes tally make the election process more up-to-date; it's very important to give permanent attention to the training of the election organizers, especially in the basic level of the electoral system – in precinct election commissions.