

Petro Poroshenko wins in the first round of the Presidential election in Ukraine

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Results
1st round

Petro Poroshenko, an independent candidate supported by the Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR) led by Vitaly Klichko (who was elected Mayor of Kiev on 25th May), was elected in the first round of the presidential election in Ukraine on 25th May. He won 55.9% of the vote and took the lead over former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko (Panukrainian Union-Motherland –Batkivshchyna) who won 12.9% of the vote. The latter said she was prepared to help *“the new authorities to take Ukraine forward on the path to Europe.”*

Oleh Lyashko (Radical Party) came third with 8% of the vote, ahead of independent Serhii Tyhipko, who won under 5% of the vote. The presidential election heralded the defeat of the nationalist candidates: Oleh Tyahnybok (Svoboda) won 1.3% and Dmytro Yarosh (Right Sector, Pravy Sektor), 0.9%.

Around 2 million Ukrainians were prevented from voting by the separatist forces in the country’s East and notably in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. The authorities in Kiev had set up polling stations so that voters in Crimea could go to ballot if they so wished.

The presidential election followed the relinquishment of his post by former Head of State Viktor Yanukovych (Regions Party) and the vote in the Verkhovna Rada on 22nd February - the only chamber in Parliament - regarding the impeachment of the President of the Republic by 328 votes. The next day Oleksandr

Turchynov (Panukrainian Union-Motherland, Batkivshchyna), Yulia Tymoshenko’s righthand man and former head of the secret services and former Deputy Prime Minister (2007-2010), was appointed as interim president and Arseny Yatsenyuk interim Prime Minister.

The Presidential Election Results 25th May 2014 in Ukraine

Candidates	% of votes cast
Petro Poroshenko (independent)	55,9
Yulia Tymoshenko (Panukrainian Union-Motherland, Batkivshchyna)	12,9
Oleh Lyashko (Radical Party)	8
Serhii Tihipko (independent)	5

Source : Agence France-Presse

Three months after the end of the events that led to 82 deaths and over 2000 injured the Ukrainians (at least three quarters of them, since the inhabitants in the east were prevented from going to ballot) mainly voted in support of a European Ukraine. Indeed Pyotr Poroshenko, who was standing as an independent candidate of consensus is a firm defender of his country’s rapprochement with the European Union. *“I want to take the country towards ‘European integration’”, he stressed. “My first trip will be to the Donbass” indicated Petro Poroshenko. He said that his*

priority was to “bring the war to an end.” “The first thing I have to do is to bring peace to all Ukrainian citizens. Those with arms must leave the streets of the towns and villages,” he declared. The new President wants to suspend negotiations with the separatists until they give up their arms. “There is no greater priority than security,” repeats Petro Poroshenko. He hopes to introduce a new, modern, efficient army which will defend the sovereignty and integrity of the State. He has promised to raise soldiers’ wages (up to 1,800 € monthly) and to provide modern military equipment.

He also said that he would bring back the Crimean Peninsula into the Ukrainian fold and bring the rebellion to an end in the country's East.

However the presidential election may not lead bring the separatists to lay down their arms. Fighting has continued over the last few days. Russian President Vladimir Putin officially asked his military forces to return to their permanent bases but NATO maintains that it has noted no sign of withdrawal on the part of the Russian troops.

Petro Poroshenko would like to run the country as he has run his businesses by aligning the average wage with that paid at Roshen ie 7000 hryvnias (436€). *"If we can do it for 45,000 employees we can do it for 45 million Ukrainians,"* he maintained. He has promised a great deal but rarely, if ever, spoken of undertaking the vital structural reform necessary in Ukraine – which were committed to by the interim government led by Arseny Yatsenyuk.

This election will help to restore the legitimate authority of the government in Kiev. Oleksandr Turchynov encouraged the Ukrainians to turn out to vote *"to give the country legitimate government."* *"We shall not be deprived of our freedom and our independence and we shall not let Ukraine become a part of the post-Soviet empire,"* he declared. *"The activities undertaken by the Russians to make this election fail are themselves doomed to failure. We shall have a legitimate Head of State,"* stressed Arseny Yatsenyuk.

The Presidential election has united a country which is riddled with tension and separatist threats. The Interior Minister Yuri Lutsenko declared that a victory in the first round by Petro Poroshenko *"would be a major 'carte blanche' for dialogue with Vladimir Putin and would mean the end of division for the country."*

Two days before the election Russian President Vladimir Putin maintained that Moscow would *"respect the choice of the Ukrainian people"* and that he *"would work with the new Ukrainian authorities"*. Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev chose to travel to Crimea on 25th May – the Ukrainian region that was annexed to Russian after the referendum on 16th March last (contested by the West). He distributed Russian passports to its citizens.

Founder of the Ukrprominvest and the most important manufacturer of confectionary in Ukraine, 59 year old Petro Poroshenko is nicknamed the "King of Chocolate". His fortune lies at around 1.5 billion \$ according to the American magazine Forbes which maintains that he is one of the 10 richest men in the country. Mr Poroshenko owns the TV channel Kanal 5 the use of which he offered to the demonstrators during the uprising that rocked Ukraine during the autumn and winter last year. He is also the only oligarch to have openly supported the demonstrators in the Maidan. He travelled to Crimea in a bid to negotiate with the pro-Russian troops as they laid siege to the regional parliament after the flight of Viktor Yanukovich. Petro Poroshenko played an active role in the Orange Revolution in 2004 which brought Viktor Yushchenko to office, but was also one of the founders of the Regions Party led by Viktor Yanukovich. Former Foreign Minister (2009-2010), he was appointed Economy Minister in 2012 and elected to parliament where he sat as an independent MP.

The extent of Petro Poroshenko's victory is of size, and he will be able to use his legitimacy and the strong support of the people to govern a Ukraine that has fallen victim to separatist tension and which is also on the verge of bankruptcy. The President of the Republic – who said he would keep Arseny Yatsenyuk as the head of government – says he will convene early general elections at the end of 2014.

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