



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1088
Vienna, 4 February 2016**

**EU Statement on Developments in the former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia**

The European Union recalls the great importance it attaches to the full implementation of the 2 June 2015 political agreement and its 15 July 2015 Protocol (the “Przino agreement”) between the four main political parties in order to overcome the ongoing political crisis and address key challenges facing the country. We welcome the steps towards implementing the Przino agreement, for instance the appointment of the Special Prosecutor, changes to the government, amendment of the electoral code, decision regarding the State Election Commission, as well as the former Prime Minister’s resignation. However, a lot of significant work remains to be done, including in relation to the parliamentary inquiry and oversight committees.

The Przino Agreement committed the signatories to structural reforms, including in relation to the elections, such as measures to provide greater media freedom, a revised voters’ list, and implementation of all OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. Implementation of these reforms is necessary if conditions are in place conducive to holding credible elections on the 24th of April.

The European Union, together with the United States, has reiterated the necessity of credible elections and set out a number of criteria it will use to assess their preparation. The European Union has also recalled its commitment to offering continued technical and other assistance to support institutions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in creating conditions that will make credible elections possible.

We encourage the interim government to swiftly implement structural reforms as set out in the Urgent Reform Priorities to which the four parties committed themselves. We urge all parties and state institutions to support the State Election Commission.

We also stress that all political parties agreed to the appointment of the Special Prosecutor and now need to demonstrate constructive cooperation with her and her team, and to refrain from attacks on this independent body.

It is the responsibility of the Parliament, the government, and the country's political leaders to make the decisions required for returning their nation to its European path. We continue to encourage all parties, citizens, and civil society organisations to participate in credible elections and their monitoring, and to show the flexibility needed for the consensual approach which is the only way to deliver a sustainable resolution to the political crisis and long-term stability to the country. Such participation is the best way to strengthen democratic processes.

Lastly, we call on party leaders to refrain from intimidation of public officials whose job it is to create the conditions for credible elections; they have a difficult job to do. Such rhetoric is unhelpful and undermines voters' faith that the necessary conditions can indeed be established.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

* Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.