



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Parliamentary Elections in Serbia**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 28, 2016

The United States congratulates the people of Serbia on holding parliamentary elections on April 24.

As reported by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), we are encouraged that Serbia's early parliamentary elections offered voters a variety of choice, with Serbian citizens able to make their choice from among a large number of political parties. Fundamental freedoms were respected, turnout was relatively high, and election day procedures were generally conducted in accordance with the law, based on reports from international observers. Election day was calm and very well organized, and the Serbian election administration performed its duties efficiently, earning the trust of electoral stakeholders, according to ODIHR and PACE.

We are also pleased that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) assisted in collecting ballots at collection centers in Kosovo. As noted in the Mission's Spot Report on April 25, OMiK staff responded swiftly and effectively to early notices of procedural irregularities, including outdated voter lists.

The preliminary findings by ODIHR and PACE indicate that biased media coverage, an undue advantage for incumbents, and a blurring of the distinction between state and party activities prevented a level playing field for all contestants. We call on Serbia to redouble its efforts to implement previous recommendations by ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, and address any new concerns highlighted in their final report.

Finally, we note that the overwhelming proportion of voters cast their ballots for parties that clearly support Serbia's path toward further integration with Europe.

As a steadfast partner of Serbia, the United States looks forward to working with the Serbian government and continuing to build on the strong and improving relations between our two countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.