

United States Mission to the OSCE



Statement on Albanian Parliamentary Elections

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 6, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The United States congratulates the people of Albania for their active engagement in their parliamentary elections on April 25. We commend the Central Election Commission for holding a well-organized and appropriately transparent electoral process despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and the implementation of new technologies.

We note that this election saw the successful application of the new electoral code, the result of a compromise facilitated by the OSCE Presence in Albania and the Central Election Commission (CEC). Additionally, as noted in ODIHR's preliminary report, most International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) interlocutors lauded the new electronic voter identification system and saw the system as a way to mitigate the risk of double voting, family voting, and voter impersonation. The United States was also pleased to see all relevant parties participate in the elections, the first time this occurred since 2017.

Improvements to Albania's electoral code and the participation of a number of parties in the elections is democracy in action and shows Albania's commitment to its democratic development.

While there were many positive aspects of Albania's parliamentary elections, the United States notes the OSCE observation mission's finding that the ruling party derived significant advantage from its incumbency, including through its control of local administrations and from the misuse of administrative resources. We also note their finding that widespread practices of vote buying remained a problem, and we reinforce concerns over the leaking of sensitive personal data, including political preferences of voters. The United States reiterates that law enforcement and the judiciary should hold accountable any individual who violated the law and obstructed the people of Albania's right to vote in free and fair elections. We welcome the

Special Anti-Corruption Court's (SPAK) announcement of investigations of electoral crimes.

The United States looks forward to the final ODIHR report and encourages Albania to use this report to further improve Albania's electoral processes. The United States will continue to work with the Albanian government and the Albanian people to further strengthen our cooperation on democracy, defense, and trade.

Thank you, Madam Chair.