



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1098
Vienna, 28 April 2016**

EU Statement on the elections in Serbia

The European Union welcomes that the general elections in Serbia on 24 April were held in a calm atmosphere. We look forward to the rapid formation of a new government committed to reforms, regional cooperation and reconciliation.

As High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn set out in their joint statement of 25 April, in these elections Serbian citizens showed strong support for their country's strategic objective to join the EU. They entrusted the winning Serbian Progressive Party and its leader, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, with a great responsibility. We look forward to working with the new government to consolidate Serbia's progress towards joining the EU.

We welcome the preliminary conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission: that the elections offered voters a variety of choices and respected fundamental freedoms, and that the election administration performed its duties efficiently and generally enjoyed the trust of electoral stakeholders.

However, we also note that in the preliminary conclusions there were some shortcomings identified, notably that there was biased media coverage, an undue advantage for incumbents, and a blurring of the distinction between state and party activities. We also note that a number of previous recommendations by ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission were found to have not yet been

addressed. We encourage Serbia to work with ODIHR and engage in substantive follow-up, in order to implement ODIHR's previous and final recommendations.

We welcome the peaceful and orderly participation of voters in Kosovo* in the Serbian parliamentary elections, and the responsible approach taken by all sides. We underline once again our appreciation for the role played by the OSCE in facilitating voting in those elections, which provided an additional opportunity for democratic participation in a challenging environment, and we commend the tremendous efforts of its staff in ensuring a credible and effective electoral process.

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

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

- This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.
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