



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

### **Statement on Kosovo Elections**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 7, 2013

The United States joins others in congratulating the people of Kosovo who voted in Sunday's historic elections. We commend the Republic of Kosovo for the professional, orderly administration of municipal elections that have been transparent and credible in most areas. We are encouraged by preliminary reports of higher turnout than in previous municipal elections, including in minority communities.

The United States condemns the violence that took place at several polling centers in North Mitrovica late on election day, and looks to the relevant Kosovo authorities to investigate and bring those responsible to justice. Despite intimidation and violence aimed at blocking the democratic process, for the first time in many years the people of northern Kosovo have voted in Kosovo-administered elections, and have chosen their own local representatives.

We express our appreciation to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE Secretariat, and all other OSCE personnel from neighboring field missions for their role in helping the Government of Kosovo prepare and facilitate the election in northern Kosovo. We are particularly relieved that those OSCE staff working in the polling stations where the attacks occurred on Sunday evening were not injured.

We applaud the commitment of both the governments of Kosovo and Serbia, as well as the international community, to encourage voter participation and enable the people of Kosovo to democratically choose their leaders. The successful conduct of these elections is an important aspect of the implementation of the EU-facilitated Dialogue agreement to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia. We urge all parties to ensure that the next phase of the election process is conducted in a peaceful, free and fair manner.

We must not let the violence wrought by a few overshadow the significant achievement that these elections demonstrated -- that Kosovo is capable of conducting democratic elections consistent with international standards and its European aspirations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.