



PC.DEL/1115/04
11 November 2004

ENGLISH only

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The Netherlands Presidency of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 532
11 November 2004**

**EU Statement
in response to the outcome of the referendum
in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The European Union has taken note of the outcome of the recent referendum in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This outcome will enable the authorities to accelerate the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, an essential part of which is the decentralisation process, including the revision of municipal structures.

We welcome the preliminary assessment by the ODIHR Observation Mission that the referendum was generally consistent with OSCE and Council of Europe standards. The EU also commends the generally calm and orderly manner in which the referendum was conducted. The limited cases of reported procedural or other irregularities did not appear to challenge the overall integrity of the process.

The European Union stresses once again the importance it attaches to the full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The European Union remains convinced that, by implementing the wider reform agenda, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would strengthen its rapprochement to the European Union. All efforts should therefore now be geared towards progress in the European reform agenda.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process