

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**Delegation of Canada to the OSCE
Statement on Municipal Elections in the
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
548th Plenary Permanent Council
17 March 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

Canada has reviewed with interest the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on the March 13 municipal elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by the International Election Observer Mission.

We welcome the observations that the municipal elections were conducted in accordance with most OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards. These elections have a particular significance due to the new powers and responsibilities that mayors will assume under the new law on decentralization.

Canada shares the concern of other OSCE participating States that the International Election Observation Mission also observed serious irregularities in a number of municipalities. These irregularities undermined the universality and equality of the vote and violated the secrecy of the ballot.

Canada places great value on the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The Law on Decentralization and the Law on Territorial Organization are significant developments in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and for the promotion of the ethnic reconciliation necessary for the long-term stability of the country. Canada calls on the Macedonian Government to make all necessary efforts to address the issues highlighted by the International Election Observation Mission in advance of the second round of the municipal elections to be held on March 27, 2005.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.