

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1098th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 April 2016

On the elections in Serbia

Mr. Chairperson,

We congratulate our Serbian colleagues on the successful holding of early parliamentary, regional and local elections on 24 April. We note the strong interest of the international community in the observation of the recently concluded electoral campaign. Russian representatives also played an active role in monitoring the elections as part of the groups of experts from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

We should like to draw attention, in particular, to the findings of the international observers from the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS, according to which “the organization and holding of the elections took place in accordance with national electoral laws and in compliance with international standards for the holding of democratic elections”. No substantial violations were found. The voting took place in a relaxed atmosphere.

We would consider it worthwhile to develop co-operation with international election observation missions, in particular, through the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the CIS. This could help to raise the general level of confidence in the experts’ assessments and in the effectiveness of international observation of national elections.

We note with satisfaction the co-ordinated and meticulous work of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in helping to organize the voting by inhabitants of the Serbian territory of Kosovo and Metohija in the parliamentary elections. The successful accomplishment of this important task has once again confirmed the importance of continuing the activity of the international presences in the territory, in the interests of all communities, in a status-neutral and impartial manner and in strict conformity with their mandates and with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

We note the Serbian people’s choice in favour of continuing the Serbian Government’s multipronged policy, among other things, with regard to strengthening the

strategic partnership with the Russian Federation. For our part, we confirm our abiding interest in continuing to work with the leadership of Serbia, a country with which we enjoy a cordial relationship, based on the positive results achieved earlier with respect to the entire agenda of Russian-Serbian relations.

Thank you for your attention.