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**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY,  
AMBASSADOR YUSUF BULUÇ**

**756<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
26 MARCH 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome the successful conduct of the first round of presidential and local elections in the Republic of Macedonia which were held on 22 March.

We concur with the positive, albeit preliminary, assessments of the international observers that the elections met international standards and enabled the free expression of the will of the Macedonian people. That these elections were conducted in an orderly and a peaceful manner, is a further evidence of the level of political maturity that Macedonia has attained.

We wish to express our confidence in the Macedonian authorities that the second round of the elections planned for 5 April will consolidate and surpass the present achievement and constitute yet another determined step forward in reinforcing Macedonian democracy.

Macedonian authorities are aware of the aspects of this important exercise that deserve to be addressed with greater care and attention, and they know that they owe it to their public and to their legitimate goal to integrate more closely with the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Thank you.