



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 10 - 21 September 2018

EU statement – Working Session 1: Democratic institutions

Mr. Moderator,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Transparent, inclusive and accountable governance, including strong and effective democratic institutions and active participation of civil society in decision- and law-making processes, is the backbone of any modern democracy.

The EU is fully committed to supporting and promoting democratic standards and respect for rule of law, as well as human rights' protection mechanisms in all parts of the world. In particular, credible, inclusive and transparent elections are crucial for strengthening democracy and a precondition for pluralism in political life. They also guarantee accountability and encourage civic engagement, enhancing young people's participation in public life.

We need to perceive democracy as a system of values, rules and mechanisms that are interrelated and inseparable. Freedom of expression, freedom of media, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, right to a fair trial, freedom of religion and consciousness, and other fundamental freedoms and rights, enable building and maintaining healthy institutions, while strong democratic institutions guarantee respect/observance of human rights.

ODIHR plays a crucial role in building public confidence in the governance processes and thus strengthening democratic societies and accountable institutions across the OSCE area. We reiterate our full support to ODIHR's mandate and autonomy, as well as its internationally recognized election observation methodology. We remain committed to following up on the recommendations from ODIHR's Election Observation Missions (EOMs), legal assessments and the election standard handbooks. We also wish to thank ODIHR for organizing the annual Election Seminar, as well as the first meeting of national focal points for election observation in June this year.



EUROPEAN UNION

Our recommendations in relation to this session are the following:

- Participating States shall take all appropriate measures to establish /consolidate the legal framework for credible, inclusive and transparent elections; and to ensure that all public institutions implement it effectively.
- We encourage participating States to further enhance accountability and transparency of elections, and to provide a genuine possibility for active civic participation, including persons belonging to vulnerable and under-represented groups.
- We invite participating States to support and promote the involvement in public sphere of women, youth, persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as well as persons with disabilities.
- Participating States shall further engage in promoting political pluralism, and the highest standards of electoral campaigns.
- We encourage Participating States to strengthen local governments, and to ensure their effectiveness.
- We encourage them to cooperate with ODIHR EOMs, i.e. through extending early and unrestricted standing invitations, and to fully implement ODIHR recommendations.
- Participating States should refrain from imposing unnecessary limitations on activities of the civil society organizations, and pay special attention to protection of human rights defenders.
- Participating States should focus on tackling corruption with the aim to strengthen public institutions and promote equality.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.