



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 977
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EU statement on the municipal elections in Kosovo*

The European Union welcomes the municipal elections in Kosovo that have taken place on November 3 and the run-off on December 1 as the first ones to be held in a uniform way in all municipalities in Kosovo. In this context, the EU is pleased with the successful and overall calm and smooth voting process and would like to congratulate voters for their participation.

This electoral process has been a crucial moment in Kosovo's future and an important element in the implementation of the April Agreement, the process of normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina and the enhancement of democratic institutions in Kosovo.

Based on the 19 April Agreement the OSCE, with its mission in Kosovo and the Secretariat, has played an active and highly valuable role in the facilitation of these elections in northern Kosovo. These efforts again highlight the important contribution that the Organisation can make to regional peace and security.

In the North of Kosovo, the combined presence of Kosovo Police, EULEX and KFOR has proven to be an efficient tool to secure the process, enabling the Central Electoral Commission and the OSCE to perform their respective roles.

In this context, the EU welcomes the intention of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to swiftly start its work with the democratically legitimised municipal structures in northern Kosovo and to implement successful approaches, such as on local and municipal safety committees and community policing.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

The EU has attached great importance to the peaceful, free and fair conduct of these elections in line with international standards and as a consequence, also deployed an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) headed by Chief Observer Roberto Gualtieri in order to provide a fair assessment of the electoral process. We reiterate that electoral reform in Kosovo is a key priority and therefore, expect that the recommendations of the EOM will be issued shortly so that they can be taken into account in the context of the swift completion of the important electoral reform to prepare for the legislative elections in 2014.

The EU underlines the importance of solving the remaining implementation issues of the April Agreement in the EU-facilitated dialogue in a timely manner.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.