

Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 619  
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**EU-Statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> July Parliamentary Elections in the former  
Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The EU has taken note of the preliminary assessment of the International Election Observation Mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The EU welcomes OSCE/ODIHR's conclusions that the 5 July Parliamentary elections were generally calm, orderly and largely met OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. In addition, the EU notes with satisfaction the overall improvement of the election process, as a result of the implementation of previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations.

However, the EU notes with concern the incidents of violence especially at the beginning of the electoral campaign and the other shortcomings and serious irregularities observed by the International Election Observation mission in certain constituencies. The EU stresses the need fully to investigate and address all such irregularities so that there is no recurrence in the future.

The EU looks forward to the rapid formation of the new government, and to it continuing the reform process in the country. It is especially important to proceed with decentralisation, police and judiciary reforms, the fight against corruption and organised crime, as well as with strengthening the rule of law and the implementation capacity of the administration.

The European Union will continue supporting the country's efforts to proceed with the EU-oriented reform agenda and encourages it to work constructively towards regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia <sup>1</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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<sup>1</sup> Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process