



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 902 Vienna, 16 February 2012

EU statement on the presidential elections in Turkmenistan

The European Union took note of the published outcome of the presidential elections in Turkmenistan held on 12 February 2012, also reflected in the Spot report of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat of 13 February 2012.

The EU deeply regrets that the Turkmen authorities did not extend an invitation to the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to observe the presidential elections. This is in breach of the OSCE commitments undertaken by all participating States in the 1990 Copenhagen Document. The EU urges and expects Turkmenistan to fully implement all of their OSCE election-related commitments and to fully co-operate with ODIHR and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat in this respect.

We welcome the improvements introduced by the 2011 amendments to the legislation on presidential elections and call upon the authorities to remedy remaining serious shortcomings in this and other election-related legislation, including those identified by the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report. In particular, the EU expresses its strong concern regarding the serious lack of political pluralism.

The EU is concerned about reports regarding harassment of civil society activists in the run-up to the presidential elections. A vibrant civil society is essential for a full-fledged democratic society. In this regard, we strongly call on the Turkmen authorities to comply with their international commitments, including those undertaken within the OSCE, regarding freedom of assembly and association.

The EU hopes that the presidential elections will be followed by substantial internal reforms, to further strengthen the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The EU remains ready to assist Turkmenistan in this respect.

The acceding country CROATIA*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, 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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.