



European Union Election Observation Mission

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EU Election Observation Mission's Preliminary Statement A positive step forward for democracy in Kosovo

Pristina, 5 November 2013 – The Municipal Assembly and Mayoral elections were of particular importance because they were the first to be held throughout Kosovo under Kosovo law. Although the process is not yet over, they represent a positive step forward for democracy.

In spite of attacks on three voting centres in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) evaluated the voting as good or satisfactory in the vast majority of observed polling stations.

“The 3rd November was a very important day for Kosovo. People have taken the opportunity to go out and vote, to express their democratic right and to choose their representatives. In most of Kosovo, Election Day passed calmly and peacefully. Of course, I condemn the attacks in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. These were not just attacks on the buildings of the polling stations. It was an attack on the fundamental right of the people to express their wishes through the ballot box. Nevertheless, the fact that people did go to vote demonstrates that those who wished to sabotage the process have failed”, said Roberto Gualtieri, Chief Observer while presenting the EU EOM's preliminary findings in Pristina.

The EU Observers have been present all over Kosovo for a month. They have observed all the aspects of the electoral process so far including the work of the election administration, the campaign activities of the candidates and political parties and the conduct of the media and have assessed that the legal framework provides a sound basis for democratic elections. The severe sanctions envisaged in the Criminal Code since 2012 may have contributed to deterring people from carrying out electoral violations.

In most municipalities, the technical preparations appeared to proceed without major obstacles. The election environment was calm and there was a lively campaign. The media provided extensive coverage of the campaign, enabling contenders to get their messages across to the public, thus providing voters with a variety of information.

Despite particular challenges in the North, with the help of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's facilitation role, the electoral bodies succeeded in organizing elections. However, the widespread prevalence of intimidation and pressure against political activists and voters was not conducive to a free campaign.

Some elements of the electoral process will require more attention from Kosovo in the future.



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There was low confidence in the accuracy of the voters lists particularly due to the allegedly frequent instances of deceased persons, as well as the many eligible voters residing abroad. The out-of-Kosovo registration process was cumbersome and neither voter-friendly nor inclusive, however an effort was made to increase the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the elections.

Women were significantly under-represented both in the electoral bodies and among the mayoral candidates.

“EU observers will remain in Kosovo until the end of the whole election process and will, in the coming days, monitor the complaints and appeals and the preparation for the second round”, added Roberto Gualtieri, Chief Observer.

A final report - with recommendations for future elections - will be published at the beginning of 2014.

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