



European Union Election Observation Mission

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EU Election Observation Mission's Preliminary Statement Positive trend confirmed in the second round

Pristina, 3 December 2013 – The second round of the Kosovo Mayoral elections took place calmly in most municipalities, confirming the positive trend observed on the first round.

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) evaluated the voting positively in almost all 330 observed polling stations. In general the integrity of the vote was sufficiently protected but there were also reports of ballot papers being photographed and cases of family voting. The counting was carried out quickly and without serious irregularities.

“I am pleased to see that the positive trend observed in the 3 November elections has been confirmed in this second round of voting. People were able to cast their ballots freely and without hindrance. With this election, Kosovo is making further progress along the democratic path. I hope that the encouraging developments we have seen during these elections will be maintained until the end of the process, and that they will be a firm foundation for Kosovo's future democratic development. The success of these elections also marks an important step in the implementation of the 19 April Agreement between Pristina and Belgrade”, said Roberto Gualtieri, Chief Observer, on the occasion of the release of the Mission's Preliminary Statement.

The EU Observers have been present throughout Kosovo for two months. Their Preliminary Statement covers developments since the first round of voting.

The overall political environment was calm although there were tensions and allegations of pressure on voters and of vote-buying in a few municipalities. All contestants were able to campaign freely and enjoyed access to media in order to convey their messages to the electorate. Similarly to the first round campaign, media coverage reflected the activity of the political entities, with the LDK being the most covered entity in the majority of monitored media in Albanian language. In the monitored Serbian-language TV channels, the political news coverage was dominated by G.I. ‘Srpska’.

EU observers have also identified some elements of the electoral process that should require more attention from Kosovo in the future.

More than half of ballots sent from out-of-Kosovo for the 3 November elections were rejected by the Central Election Commission for not containing a copy of a valid ID.

The tabulation process of the first round results was long and complex, and only limited information was made available regarding the accuracy of the election material and the tabulated results. This somewhat reduced the transparency of the process.

While conducted in an organised manner, the processing of electoral disputes by the Elections Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) was carried out in a formalistic manner, without initiating investigations or holding hearings. The majority of them were rejected. However observers highlight that deadlines for lodging complaints and for the ECAP to decide on them are tight, which makes the process rather challenging.

Recommendations to deal with such shortcomings will be included in the Mission's final report that will be published at the beginning of next year.

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*An electronic version of the Preliminary Statement is available on the Mission's website
www.eueom.eu/kosovo2013*