



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1124
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EU Statement on the Presidential Elections in Uzbekistan

Presidential elections in the Republic of Uzbekistan took place on Sunday 4 December. The preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission underscore the need for comprehensive reform to address long-standing, systemic shortcomings, which we encourage Uzbekistan's authorities to effectively address. The European Union stands ready to assist in this process. The forthcoming recommendations contained within the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission's Final Report will provide a solid basis to improve the electoral framework.

We welcome the significant reforms in Uzbekistan that began in the run-up to the elections, in particular steps to improve the business climate, the judicial system, labour conditions, administrative accountability and the fight against corruption, as well as constructive steps towards neighbouring countries. The further continuation and deepening of these reforms will strengthen Uzbekistan's democratic governance and economic and social development.

Uzbekistan is a key partner country of the European Union in Central Asia, and we will work with the newly-elected President to step up our current engagement with the authorities and the people of Uzbekistan, based on our bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the EU's Central Asia Strategy. The European Union supports a stable, democratic and prosperous future of Uzbekistan.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY,

members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.