



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1144  
Vienna, 4 May 2017**

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**EU statement on developments in the former Yugoslav  
Republic of Macedonia**

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The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms recent acts of violence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The deliberate attacks following the session on the election for the President of the Assembly on Members of Parliament in Skopje, an institution at the heart of democracy, and against journalists, are wholly unacceptable. We express serious concern that the police were not able to ensure the safety of Members of Parliament and journalists.

The European Union is convinced that political dialogue in and between the democratically elected institutions is the only way to overcome political crises and deep divisions. We call on all parties to refrain from violence, behave responsibly, act in line with democratic principles and procedures, and to honour the Constitution of the country. We remind all parties of the need to fully respect the OSCE principles and commitments, especially related to democracy and the rule of law.

With reference to the statement of ODIHR Director Link, on 28 April, the secure functioning of parliament is essential to provide for constructive and reasoned debate among elected representatives - debate which is sorely needed to preserve pluralism and address societal divisions. We also recall that the OSCE Secretary General Zannier has called for violence to stop immediately, and for law enforcement to ensure the safety of the members of Parliament and bring the organisers and perpetrators to justice. The European Union fully agrees with these views.

We recall that the results of the early parliamentary elections on 11 December 2016 are credible and must be respected in order to make way for a democratic, constructive dialogue to overcome the long-lasting political crisis, reestablish citizens' trust in the country's institutions and give new momentum to European integration. Democracy must run its course.

We now expect Parliament to work unhindered. All MPs, without exception, should play a constructive role rather than obstructing democratic processes. The EU expects the swift formation of a new government that commits strongly to European reforms and to implementing all parts of the Pržino Agreement and the Urgent Reform Priorities.

We join the Chairperson-in-Office in calling on all sides to refrain from any further escalation of tension or violence. We observe efforts to fuel inter-ethnic tensions, negative rhetoric or incitement to violence. We expect everyone to respect the outcome of democratic elections. We call upon the political leaders in the country to acknowledge their responsibility to the people, contribute to de-escalation and put an end to the long lasting political crisis.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and CANADA align themselves with this statement.

\* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.