



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013
Warsaw, 1 October 2013**

EU statement – Working Session 12 DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND ELECTION OBSERVATION – SHARING BEST PRACTICES

The EU is of the firm belief that the conduct of democratic elections is a key-element for effective democratic governance. The monitoring of all OSCE participating States' compliance with the OSCE's election commitments is one of the most transparent and methodological ways of promoting and strengthening democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Therefore, the EU urges all participating states to continue to timely invite the ODIHR to observe their elections in accordance with their commitments and without restrictions. Only early invitations enable ODIHR to conduct a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) in a timely manner and provide ODIHR with sufficient time to prepare an observation activity.

Electoral observation remains a flagship activity of the OSCE. The CSCE/OSCE has founded, more than 20 years ago, the Office for Free Elections, which was transformed into the ODIHR in 1992. The EU reiterates its full support for the ODIHR's observation methodology, which has been followed by numerous international

actors for their own election observation activities, including by the EU.

Election observation should not be an end in itself, but should be viewed as part of a wider democracy promotion and support policy. ODIHR's recommendations should therefore be given due consideration and implementation as they contribute to improve democratic processes and to strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights. The EU calls on participating States to make good use of ODIHR's assistance in the framework of a follow-up to ODIHR's final election monitoring report, including with regard to possible election legislation projects, and to report on follow-up measures at the political level of the OSCE.

We regret the fact that ODIHR has been unable to conduct a number of recent election observation missions, either because of lack of financial resources, or due to a lack of seconded observers. We call on all OSCE participating States to continue to fully support ODIHR's election observation missions, including through the secondment of adequate personnel.

The EU welcomes the cooperation between the OSCE PA and ODIHR in past Election Observation Missions, in accordance with the Brussels Ministerial Decision 19/06 and the 1997 Cooperation Agreement. We believe that close cooperation and partnership between both institutions and their respective complementary

roles in the field of election observation is essential.

Election observation is also an essential part of the EU's own activities to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU has assisted ODIHR with electoral assistance projects and various instruments for financial and technical co-operation. In this context, the EU and its Member States are also supportive of election related measures extended by the ODIHR to OSCE Mediterranean Partners upon their request.

The EU reiterates its determination to continue to fully cooperate with the ODIHR and to support its broader range of efforts with regard to strengthening democratic institutions and processes.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as, the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.