



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1182
Vienna, 19 April 2018**

EU Statement on the Presidential Elections in Montenegro

On Sunday, April 15, the people of Montenegro voted in presidential elections in an orderly manner. The elections were observed by local and international observers, accredited by the State Electoral Commission.

The OSCE/ODIHR observers' mission assessed in their preliminary statement that fundamental freedoms were respected and that the legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections. Although media provided candidates with a platform to present their views, the observers' mission noted the lack of analytical reporting and the absence of the frontrunner in the televised debates reduced voters' opportunity to make an informed choice and the governing party candidate had an institutional advantage.

We welcome a general willingness of Montenegro to engage in electoral reform and improve the process, but also note that OSCE/ODIHR reported about some shortcomings. We are confident that these will be followed up by competent authorities.

We would also like to reiterate our call to the opposition to return to parliament as the country needs to adopt important reforms, which require broad support.

We look forward to further cooperation with Montenegro in advancing EU-related reforms.

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 ICELAND, 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.