



INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Early Parliamentary Elections, 5 June 2011

STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Skopje, 6 June 2011 – This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is the result of a common endeavour involving the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Mr. Roberto Battelli (Slovenia), OSCE PA Treasurer and Head of the OSCE PA delegation, was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Coordinator to lead the short-term observer mission. Mr. Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco) headed the PACE delegation. Mr. Julian Peel Yates is the Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM).

The assessment was made to determine whether the elections complied with OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards, as well as with national legislation. This statement of preliminary findings and conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the election process. The final assessment of the elections will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the election process, including the tabulation and announcement of results, and the handling of possible post-election day complaints and appeals. The OSCE/ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some eight weeks after the completion of the election process. The OSCE PA will present its report on 6 July at its Standing Committee in Belgrade. The PACE delegation will present its report to the June 2011 session of the Assembly.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The 5 June early parliamentary elections were competitive, transparent, and well-administered throughout the country, although certain aspects require attention. On election day voters were able to freely express their choice in a peaceful atmosphere, despite some irresponsible claims of irregularities by political parties.

Freedoms of expression, movement, and assembly were respected and candidates were able to campaign freely. The elections took place against a background of parliamentary boycott and a significant level of mistrust between the parties of government and opposition, which was at times reflected in strong rhetoric during the campaign.

Even though all political parties committed themselves to democratic elections, free of intimidation, reciprocal allegations of voter intimidation and misuse of state resources persisted. Nonetheless, the general tenor of the campaign was peaceful and low-key countrywide.

The State Election Commission (SEC) operated in a largely collegial and efficient manner. Despite the tight timeframe for early elections, the SEC was able to complete most of the necessary preparations in a timely manner. Voting on politically sensitive issues was often along

party lines and the presence of the media during SEC sessions tended to amplify partisan divisions.

Although certain provisions were significantly amended two months before the elections and without opposition support, the revised Electoral Code provides a solid technical foundation for the conduct of democratic elections if implemented in a fair and impartial manner. However, gaps and ambiguities remain, especially related to provisions on complaints, out-of-country voting, and use of administrative resources.

The SEC expressed confidence that the voter lists were of high quality. However, longstanding concerns about the accuracy of the voter lists continued to be voiced by many interlocutors. For the first time, 7,258 citizens residing abroad took advantage of the opportunity to register for out-of-country voting.

A diverse and pluralistic choice of candidates was available to the electorate, including two large coalitions, one led by the ruling Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and one by the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), as well as 16 political parties.

While allegations of voter intimidation lacked sufficient substantiation, get-out-the-vote campaigns, in particular those of the governing party, often did not adequately separate party from state activities. Insufficient separation between the state and political parties is inconsistent with paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. Observers also assessed as credible allegations of pressure on civil servants to support the ruling coalition. In addition, they observed instances of misuse of administrative resources.

A wide range of media provided voters with diverse and extensive coverage of the campaign, enabling voters to make an informed choice. However, the majority of broadcasters followed partisan editorial policies and lacked critical analysis and assessment, frequently blending fact and editorial comment. OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring revealed the quantity and content of campaign coverage by the public television broadcaster significantly favoured the governing parties, which is contrary to legal obligations and the mandate of the public broadcaster.

Very few official complaints were filed with the SEC and none with the courts. The SEC failed to define the procedure for which they would handle complaints, resulting in inconsistent and untimely remedies. Interlocutors justified the absence of complaints in the courts by a lack of confidence in the complaints procedures and adjudicating bodies.

Electoral Code provisions for gender representation in candidate lists and election commissions were respected. The only exception was the SEC, where only one of seven members is a woman. While the visibility of women during the campaign remained relatively low, there was an increase in the number of women who were list carriers.

Political parties campaigned almost exclusively along ethnic lines, reflecting the existing ethnic polarization of society.

Election day was assessed as overwhelmingly positive, including early voting, by international observers with no significant differences between Macedonian and ethnic Albanian areas. Voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. Counting was assessed positively in nine out of ten counts observed. On election night, the SEC published detailed election results by polling station.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Background

Parliament voted to dissolve itself on 14 April and early parliamentary elections were called for 5 June, the second consecutive early parliamentary elections. The elections followed a protracted boycott of parliament by a majority of opposition parties, led by SDSM. The boycott started on 28 January in response to the freezing of bank accounts of four media outlets as part of a criminal investigation linked to the owner of *AI Television*, which is considered the media outlet most critical of the government. The opposition parties also stated that there was no opportunity for genuine political dialogue between themselves and the majority coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE.

A total of 123 Members of Parliament (MPs) were to be elected to serve four-year terms. 120 MPs were elected under a proportional representation system from six electoral districts and, for the first time, one MP was elected under a majoritarian system from each of the three new out-of-country districts of Europe and Africa, North and South America, and Australia and Asia. There is no threshold requirement for the election of the 120 in-country MPs. However, out-of-country candidates must surpass at least two per cent of the total registered voters in the respective district in order to be successful.

The elections were widely seen as an important test for the country in the context of the shared ambition on all sides of the political spectrum to promote their collective aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration.

Legal Framework

The Electoral Code (EC) is the primary law which regulates parliamentary elections. Certain provisions were significantly amended in April 2011 by a slim majority in parliament with opposition parties boycotting the vote.¹ Although the amendments were part of a long consultation process not all political parties participated.

In addition, altering the legal framework so close to an election is not consistent with the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and affects the timely and consistent implementation of the law. As most electoral deadlines were shortened by five days for early elections, questions were raised whether the necessary preparations and information outreach to electoral stakeholders could be implemented before the election.

This was especially relevant for out-of-country voting which was introduced for the first time in these elections. Many questions concerning the new procedures remained unaddressed including how out-of-country Election Board (EB) members would cast their vote. In addition, citizens who were abroad for election day but did not meet the three-month residency requirement for registration, as well as those who registered in diplomatic and consular offices where less than ten voters registered, were effectively disenfranchised.² The small number of voters who

¹ Extensive amendments to the EC were passed on 5 April (68 of 120 MPs). In addition, changes to the boundaries of two electoral districts were passed on 13 April.

² EC Article 2(17). Only those citizens who have at least three months' residence abroad fall under the definition of "temporarily abroad." According to Article 165(2) of the EC, a polling station can not be established if less than ten voters registered.

ultimately registered to vote abroad raises questions about the equality of the in-country and out-of-country votes.³

In a positive development, the transparency of campaign finance has been enhanced by a requirement for parties to submit interim reports on their campaign expenditures to the SEC, State Audit Office and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC). According to these institutions all reports were submitted on time. Although there is no deadline envisaged for verifying reports submitted prior to election day, the majority of reports were available for public scrutiny from 27 May. The SCPC also issued a timely assessment of submitted reports, in which it highlighted several shortcomings.

Election Administration

The elections were administered by a three-tiered election administration including the SEC, 84 Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), 2,976 in-country EBs, and 36 out-of-country EBs located in diplomatic and consular offices abroad.

The SEC President and two members are nominated by the parliamentary opposition parties while the Vice President and three members are nominated by the governing parties. The SEC operated in a largely collegial and efficient manner. In general, the SEC functioned transparently. SEC sessions were open to international and domestic observers and the media. However, several important decisions, including those concerning the design and printing of the ballots and the accreditation of some observers, were taken in working groups which were not public and had no formal vote.⁴ Voting on politically sensitive issues was often along party lines and the presence of the media tended to amplify partisan divisions. Despite delays in meeting some election-related deadlines, preparations for the elections proceeded on track.

MECs are professional bodies whose five members are randomly selected from civil servants. International observers reported that MECs functioned in a co-operative manner and made consensual decisions. However, all MECs informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that funds arrived late from the SEC, which resulted in some MEC Chairpersons using their own funds to support the functioning of the MECs.

In contrast, EBs were composed using a mixed professional-political model, with one member nominated by the governing political parties, one by the opposition parties, and three members randomly selected from civil servants.

The SEC instituted a compulsory training programme for all lower-level election commissions. Two training handbooks were adopted and published, which were used by the SEC as a substitute for regulations on the work of MECs and EBs.

The SEC launched a limited voter education programme ten days before election day consisting of TV spots, flyers and voting guidelines aimed at motivating voters to participate, explaining the voting process, and warning against election violations.

³ Article 22 of the Constitution and paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document provide for equality of the vote.

⁴ Article 24 of the EC requires that the work of all election commissions be conducted in public.

Voter Lists and Registration

The responsibility for updating and maintaining the voter lists (VL) rests, for the first time, with the SEC. The public inspection of extracts of the VL took place between 25 April and 4 May. The VL extracts were available for inspection at the SEC regional and local offices, through an internet-based search programme, and by emailing a dedicated office at the SEC.⁵ The SEC announced on 15 May that the final VL for these elections contained 1,821,122 in-country voters. A total of 7,258 people registered for out-of-country voting.⁶

Despite the fact that the SEC expressed confidence that the VL were of high quality, concerns about the accuracy of the VL were voiced by many interlocutors and are longstanding. With a total population of 2,050,671 concerns remain that the VL might be inflated.⁷ Repeated OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations that a thorough VL audit be conducted remain to be acted upon.

Candidate Registration

Parliamentary elections may be contested by candidates nominated by political parties, coalitions of political parties, or by independent candidates nominated by groups of voters. Two large coalitions, one led by VMRO-DPMNE and one by SDSM, as well as 16 political parties submitted candidate lists in a timely manner and competed in these elections. The VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition included 22 parties and the SDSM-led coalition 15 parties. Both coalitions included political representation from a range of smaller ethnic communities. All ethnic Albanian parties ran separately, including the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). Candidate lists from one party and one group of citizens failed to meet the requirements and were justifiably denied registration by the SEC.

The Campaign Environment

Although the elections took place against a background of parliamentary boycott and a significant level of mistrust between the parties of government and opposition, the general atmosphere of the campaign was calm and noticeably low-key, especially outside Skopje. Most electoral contestants used neutral language and urged their supporters to conduct themselves in a calm and non-violent manner; however, there were a number of instances of strong rhetoric and inflammatory language.

Several parties actively promoted themselves before the official start of the campaign. Parties were able to campaign freely and freedoms of expression, movement and assembly were generally respected.⁸

Inter-ethnic issues have been largely absent from the election campaign, as parties campaigned almost exclusively along ethnic lines. While issues of common concern such as economic development, poverty and unemployment, EU and NATO integration, and the name of the

⁵ According to information published on the SEC website 18,662 people checked their data at SEC regional offices during this period, of whom 42 people were newly registered, 842 deceased were deleted, 210 changes to personal data were requested by citizens, and 24 people who applied to be registered were rejected.

⁶ 4,653 in electoral district seven which covers Europe and Africa, 1,832 in electoral district eight which covers North and South America, and 773 in electoral district nine which covers Australia and Asia.

⁷ Total population for 2009, as estimated by the State Statistical Office.

See: www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto_en.aspx?id=2.

⁸ One exception included Skopje Centar mayor's prohibition of SDSM rally in central Skopje on 12 May.

country have been reflected in most political parties' platforms, they have been interpreted according to ethnic communities' interests.

Campaigning largely took the form of rallies and small gatherings around the country.⁹ While VMRO-DPMNE used billboards and posters in large numbers across the country,¹⁰ other electoral contestants decided not to and relied on small events, door-to-door campaigning, and social media, partially attributing this to a lack of financial resources.

Electoral contestants on a local level often engaged in constructive co-operation and adopted a respectful attitude towards each other. Examples include agreements on allocation of free space for posters and co-ordination of rally schedules, as well as a football match between the activists of DUI and DPA in Lipkovo. The atmosphere in the ethnic Albanian political arena was generally calm, seemingly aided by an agreement between DUI and DPA committing to peaceful and democratic elections.

A number of incidents of damage to party offices, mostly of a minor nature, were reported to the OSCE/ODIHR EOM and to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA). The MoIA reported 28 cases of damage to campaign offices.¹¹ A number of these were exaggerated in an apparent attempt to attract media attention.

During the pre-election period, the OSCE/ODIHR long-term observers received a number of allegations that party activists had requested civil servants to list a certain number of voters who would vote for the ruling party. According to these allegations, pressure had been used to achieve this. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM is in possession of two emails which show that requests were made by a VMRO-DPMNE party activist to local mayors and heads of educational institutions before the elections were called.¹² These emails and other observations made by OSCE/ODIHR long-term observers of misuse of state resources give credibility to the allegations. In addition, the Minister of Internal Affairs accessed the criminal records of some SDSM authorized representatives who were to observe on election day and supplied this information to the SEC, with a request that they not be accredited. On 19 May, the Prime Minister issued an open letter in which he appealed to heads of state institutions and civil servants to "guarantee the freedom of elections." The letter, however, also referred to "attacks from our political competitors" and "each ungrounded attack from the opposition." All of this demonstrates an insufficient separation between state and party, contrary to the commitment in paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

Although not raised as an issue in the campaign, even by the opposition, Article 9 of the EC requires that "authorized officials" of the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Defence temporarily cease their government duties once they have been confirmed as candidates. When raised with VMRO-DPMNE, they agreed that the Ministers were "authorized officials" as stated in Article 9. However, their interpretation was that the article does not cover Ministers as, according to the Law on Civil Servants and the Labour Law, they are members of the government and not employed by their respective ministry.

⁹ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed 73 rallies throughout the country.

¹⁰ This is also reflected in the first campaign finance reports of the parties. VMRO-DPMNE declared expenses for commercial propaganda at MKD 85.9 million while SDSM spent MKD 9.9 million in total.

¹¹ Windows of campaign offices of DUI, PCER, VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, the Union of the Roma in Macedonia, and United for Macedonia have been broken on number of instances in Bitola, Kavadarci, Kicevo, Kumanovo, Radovis, Prilep, Skopje and Tetovo.

¹² The OSCE/ODIHR EOM is also in possession of copies of the requested lists of names.

The Media

A wide range of media provided voters with diverse and extensive coverage of the campaign enabling voters to make an informed choice. However, the majority of broadcasters followed partisan editorial policies and lacked critical analysis and assessment, frequently blending fact and editorial comment.

Coverage of the election campaign is regulated by the EC and the Law on Broadcasting Activity (LBA). The Broadcasting Council (BC), the main regulatory body for the broadcast media, adopted separate rulebooks for media coverage of both the pre-campaign period and the campaign period. The BC is also obliged to monitor broadcast media and react to identified irregularities. BC monitoring revealed a lack of balance in the news coverage of most broadcast media outlets. During the official campaign period, the BC initiated nine misdemeanour charges against eight TV stations for infringing the rules for presenting advertisements and public opinion polls. In addition, two misdemeanour charges were pressed against the public broadcaster *MTV-1* and private station *AI Television* for breaching the campaign silence.

The public broadcaster *MTV-1* complied with its legal obligations to allocate free airtime to political parties with 13 parties taking advantage of this opportunity. Both *MTV-1* and *MTV-2* created a special programme, “Election Chronicle,” to cover the election activities of the contestants. However, the free airtime and “Election Chronicle” were usually aired outside prime time, significantly limiting their potential audience.

The results of OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring showed significant bias in terms of quantity and content of coverage of monitored broadcasters. Contrary to legal obligations and its public mandate, *MTV-1* coverage of the campaign favoured the government and strongly criticized the opposition.¹³ While the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition received some 20 per cent of mostly positive and neutral coverage, the SDSM-led coalition received some 19 per cent of coverage, largely negative in tone. *MTV-2* allocated 19 per cent of its news coverage to the governing DUI. *MTV-1* and *MTV-2* allocated 35 and 23 per cent, respectively, to government officials. This coverage often failed to distinguish between their roles as candidate and government official.¹⁴

AI Television, the most popular TV channel, dedicated 20 per cent of mostly neutral coverage to SDSM, and 30 per cent of overwhelmingly critical coverage to the ruling party. In contrast, private TV channels *Sitel* and *Kanal 5* allocated 38 and 32 per cent, respectively, of mostly positive coverage to the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition, while the SDSM-led coalition received 32 and 29 per cent, respectively, of almost entirely negative coverage. *TV Telma* adopted a more balanced approach, although coverage was mostly critical of the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition. *Alsat-M*'s coverage of the main electoral contestants was predominantly neutral. *Sitel* and *Kanal 5* also merged the coverage of government officials with party candidates holding official posts.

Despite initial plans, *MTV-1* did not organize electoral debates. However, *MTV-2* hosted some 5 debates between ethnic Albanian parties. Several private TV channels also held debates between political parties. VMRO-DPMNE decided not to participate in any debates broadcast during the election campaign.

¹³ Article 6 of the Rulebook for Equal Access to the Media Presentation during the Election Campaign (Media Rulebook); EC Article 75(5); LBA Article 80.

¹⁴ As required by Article 15 of the Media Rulebook.

Only a few parties made extensive use of paid political advertisements. The VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition was the only electoral contestant to advertise on *Kanal 5* and *Sitel*. A number of advertisements of the SDSM-led coalition and other opposition parties were aired on *AI Television*, *Alsat-M* and *Telma*.

The print media presented a variety of views. While *Dnevnik* and *Nova Makedonija* generally provided a balanced picture of the campaign, they were more critical of the SDSM-led coalition. In contrast, *Vreme* was very critical of the ruling coalition. A similar trend was observed in the Albanian language media. While *Koha* focused on the activities of the governing DUI and strongly criticized New Democracy (ND), *Lajm*, in contrast, was mostly critical of government activities and DUI.

Complaints and Appeals

The EC provides various legal avenues for protecting electoral rights. However, there is limited access to effective remedies and recourse to appeal before election day, largely due to a narrow reading of the competencies of the complaint and appeal bodies. A number of judges in the Basic Courts indicated to the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that they were unfamiliar with their role in regard to protection of candidates' rights during the election campaign.¹⁵

Prior to election day, there were three official complaints filed with the SEC and none with the courts. The SEC failed to define the procedure for which they would handle complaints, resulting in inconsistent and untimely remedies. Out of the two complaints discussed in session before election day, the SEC upheld one by recommending a misdemeanour procedure for publishing opinion polls outside the legal deadline. Interlocutors justified the absence of complaints in the courts by a lack of confidence in the complaints procedures and adjudicating bodies.

The State Prosecutor launched an investigation into an alleged case of voter intimidation by VMRO-DPMNE on 11 May.¹⁶ On 25 May, some 20 civil servants who were included on the lists were invited to give evidence. The majority did not appear for interview, those who did denied that they had been pressured to vote for VMRO-DPMNE, according to the State Prosecutor. Based on these interviews, the State Prosecutor, on 3 June, stated that there was insufficient evidence to proceed. Another investigation into this issue was dismissed by the local prosecutor in Bitola on 19 May after conducting two interviews and concluding that there was insufficient evidence to proceed.

Participation of Women

Both men and women were well represented in election commissions and the 30 per cent threshold required by the EC was met. In 84 MECs about half of the members were women and 40 per cent were chaired by women. Election day observation showed that 47 per cent of the EB chairpersons were women. The only exception was the SEC, where only one of seven members was a woman.

According to the EC, one in each consecutive three places on candidate lists should be reserved for the less represented gender so as to ensure that both genders are represented throughout the lists. All electoral contestants met this requirement. Out of 1,679 parliamentary candidates, 566 were women (33.7 per cent).

¹⁵ Basic Courts in Bitola, Skopje, Stip and Veles.

¹⁶ *AI Television* reported that VMRO-DPMNE had ordered heads of sectors in state institutions to submit lists of at least 15 persons who would give their support to the party in return for employment or other benefits.

Compared to previous parliamentary elections, there has been an increase of women who were the list carriers from 6 in 2008 to 15 in 2011. Women were active in campaigning and present in the media. However, their visibility was less than that of men, especially in rural areas.

Participation of Ethnic Communities

Ethnic identity is one of the key elements influencing the formation of political parties. As a result, the political scene is largely polarized along ethnic lines, with the main Macedonian and ethnic Albanian parties competing within their own ethnic electorate. Two new Albanian political parties, ND and National Democratic Revival, competed for the first time in parliamentary elections, which increased the fragmentation of the ethnic Albanian political arena. Smaller communities are all represented by ethnically based political parties which have joined pre-election coalitions with the largest parties in order to stand a better chance to articulate and defend their interests. The principle of equitable representation was generally adhered to by election commissions.

Domestic Observers

The EC provides for domestic and international election observation at all levels of the election administration. Several thousand civil society domestic observers were accredited for these elections. The largest observer group was MOST, with large numbers also deployed by the Association for Humanitarian Activities SINGERGIJA and Education Plus Macedonia. Domestic observers were present in 83 per cent of polling stations visited by observers. In addition, electoral contestants fielded authorized representatives to observe on election day and were present in 96 per cent of polling stations visited by observers.

Election Day

Overall, election day was calm and peaceful with only a limited number of technical irregularities noted. Preliminary figures announced by the SEC put voter turnout at 61 per cent. The SEC started announcing results on election night and posted them on its website by electoral district, municipality, and polling station.

Early voting took place on 4 June for homebound voters, prisoners, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and out-of-country voters. The overall assessment was positive in 54 of the 55 cases observed in-country. There were problems with some prisoners not being included on the VL and a few instances where the secrecy of the vote was not respected in homebound voting.

International observers assessed the opening of polling stations as positive in 114 of the 116 polling stations visited. Observers noted that 26 of the polling stations visited did not open on time. However, the delays noted were short and did not affect the rights of voters.

The voting process was assessed as good or very good in 97 per cent of polling stations visited with no significant differences noted between Macedonian and ethnic Albanian areas. The performance of the EBs was assessed as good or very good in 94 per cent of polling stations and their understanding of voting procedures was assessed as positive in 94 per cent of observations. Voting premises were assessed as inadequate and overcrowded in one out of twenty observations.

Procedural irregularities noted during the voting process included: 115 cases of problems with the secrecy of the vote (10 per cent), mainly due to the layout of the polling station; 38 cases of ballot boxes not sealed properly (3 per cent); and 173 cases of family voting (15 per cent).

Vote counting was assessed as good or very good in 100 of the 114 EBs observed. In 42 of the EBs where the count was observed, copies of the results protocol were not publicly posted. Vote tabulation in the MECs was assessed as good or very good in 98 per cent of those observed.

*The English version of this report is the only official document.
Unofficial translations are provided in Macedonian and Albanian.*

MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Skopje, 6 June 2011 – The OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM) opened in Skopje on 4 May, with 15 experts in the capital and 20 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. The OSCE PA conducted a pre-election visit on 14 May, and the PACE pre-election delegation visited Skopje on 17-18 May.

On election day, some 288 short-term observers were deployed, including a 45-member delegation from the OSCE PA, and a 15-member delegation from PACE. In total, there were observers from 41 OSCE participating States. Voting was observed in almost 1,200 polling stations out of a total of 2,976. Counting was observed in 114 polling stations. The tabulation process was observed in 80 out of 84 MECs.

The institutions represented wish to thank the authorities for the invitations to observe the elections, the State Election Commission for its co-operation and for providing accreditation documents, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other authorities for their assistance and co-operation. The institutions also wish to express appreciation to the OSCE Mission to Skopje and other international institutions for their co-operation and support.

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