



ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

PRESS RELEASE

Elections were competitive, transparent and well-administered, international observers in Skopje say

SKOPJE, 6 June 2011 – Yesterday’s early parliamentary elections were competitive, transparent and well-administered throughout the country, but certain aspects such as the blurring of the line between state and party require further attention, the international observers concluded in Skopje today.

On election day, voters were able to freely express their choice in a peaceful atmosphere, despite some irresponsible claims of irregularities by political parties. The voting and counting process was assessed as overwhelmingly positive, with no significant differences between Macedonian and ethnic Albanian areas.

“These elections have laid a cornerstone for a stable, democratic future,” said Roberto Battelli, the Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission. “The reality of election day has proven many of the pre-election allegations wrong and put the country on track to have a climate free of paranoia that undermines voters’ faith in the electoral process.”

“The PACE delegation congratulates the citizens of this country on expressing their will through free elections. While welcoming the diversity of opinions and media freedom, the delegation believes the media environment should be more dispassionate, tolerant and neutral and that the media should avoid becoming a propaganda tool serving the interests of the business world, the political parties or the government,” said Jean-Charles Gardetto, the Head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

“Citizen voters and members of electoral commissions at all levels deserve praise for their contribution to an overall peaceful, orderly and well managed electoral process,” said Julian Peel Yates, the Head of the long-term election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR).

The observers noted that fundamental freedoms were respected and candidates were able to campaign freely. The general tenor of the campaign was peaceful and low-key throughout the country.

Allegations of voter intimidation lacked sufficient substantiation, but get-out-the-vote campaigns, in particular those of the governing party, often did not adequately separate party from state activities. The observers also noted instances of misuse of administrative resources and assessed as credible allegations of pressure on civil servants to support the ruling coalition.

A wide range of media provided 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. Contrary to its legal obligations, public television significantly favoured the governing parties.

The observers highlighted the positive co-operation with the authorities at all levels throughout the process.

For further information contact:

Neil Simon, OSCE PA, +389 (0) 70997545 or +4560108380, neil@oscepa.dk

Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer, OSCE/ODIHR, +389 (0) 71 865578 or +48 603 683 122, jens.eschenbaecher@odihr.pl

Chemavon Chahbazian, PACE, +389 (0) 78 649 236 or +33 607 06 77 73, Chemavon.chahbazian@coe.int

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