

Christmas-Møller cites violence in otherwise well-run elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Special Co-ordinator
Pia Christmas-Møller
at a polling station
in Skopje

In Skopje on 2 June, OSCE PA Vice-President Pia Christmas-Møller reported on behalf of the OSCE that the 1 June parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were well administered procedurally, but that key OSCE commitments were not met. Although political parties were permitted to campaign freely throughout most of the country, and voters were offered a variety of choices during a vigorously fought election campaign, the law was only enforced selectively and the authorities failed to prevent violence and intimidation in ethnic Albanian areas. Ms. Christmas-Møller, who was appointed by the Chairman-in-Office to lead the OSCE short-term observers, regretted that organized attempts to violently disrupt the electoral process in parts of the ethnic Albanian areas made it impossible for voters in many places to freely express their will.

“Violence and attempts to manipulate the campaign sadly cast a shadow over otherwise well-run elections that gave most voters a real choice between an array of political forces. The violence we noted in ethnic Albanian areas is an unacceptable breach of peace and peoples’ democratic rights,” she said.

On election day, one person was killed and several injured. Voting and counting was marred by numerous serious irregularities leading the State Election Commission to annul results in 22 polling stations in the north and west of the country. In the rest of the country there were far fewer irregularities, but the largest opposition party suffered from confusion resulting from an apparently deliberate attempt to manipulate voters by the activities of a party with similarly named candidates. The media generally enabled voters to make an informed choice, although public broadcasters showed bias in favour of the

governing parties.

The international election observation mission was a joint undertaking of the OSCE, comprising the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Thirteen OSCE parliamentarians participated in the observation mission, and were supported by three staff members from the PA’s Secretariat: Special Representative Andreas Nothelle, Presidential Advisor Andreas Baker, and Research/Publications Officer Nat Parry.

Deadlines Reminder

We kindly remind all Delegations that deadlines are approaching for the Seventeenth Annual Session to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 29 June to 3 July. Please make a note of the following dates:

- Sunday 8 June - Deadline for submission of Supplementary Items
- Sunday 15 June - Deadline for submission of amendments to Draft Resolutions
- Sunday 22 June - Deadline for submission of amendments to Supplementary Items

For Supplementary Items to be considered at the Annual Session, the Secretariat must receive them by midnight on Sunday 8 June **with the signatures of at least 20 Members representing at least four different countries**, according to the Rules of Procedure.

Please visit our website, www.oscepa.org, for additional practical information.