



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

PRESS RELEASE

Re-runs held free of violence, but overall process falls short of some key commitments, say observers in Skopje

SKOPJE, 16 June 2008 - Yesterday's re-run elections gave voters in areas affected by serious irregularities on 1 June the opportunity to express their will in a secure and generally calmer environment, which represents considerable improvement over the 1 June election.

Despite the efforts made by state institutions to ensure successful re-runs, cases of tensions and intimidation remained evident in the run up to and on 15 June. Notably, many of those responsible for previously committed election related offenses and violence remain to be held accountable.

Significant improvements in security for the re-run elections enabled most people to freely cast their vote, but this does not alter the assessment that while well administered, certain key OSCE and CoE commitments were not met in the overall parliamentary election process. This statement should be read in the context of the international election observation mission (IEOM) statement of 2 June.

"Yesterday's elections showed remarkable improvement with regard to the key issue of security. I hope and expect that this indicates that the country is willing to address the range of democratic challenges that remain. This is crucial when it comes to fulfilling the country's wishes to participate on an equal footing with other democratic countries. Hopefully this re-run marks that they are back on track," said OSCE PA Vice President Pia Christmas-Moller, Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers.

"In a multi-ethnic society, the authorities and political stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure genuine conditions for citizens to freely express their will throughout the country regardless of their ethnic origins. The secure and generally calmer atmosphere on the day of re-runs, only two weeks after violent incidents and electoral irregularities, makes it clear that the tragic events of 1 June could have been avoided. The PACE, in the framework of its monitoring mechanisms, will closely follow the further developments and remains ready to assist the country in its continuing democratic development," said Mevlut Cavusoglu, Head of the PACE delegation...

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