



MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN KOSOVO*

17 OCTOBER 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Well-organised elections with vibrant online campaign but longstanding deficiencies in the legal framework remain unaddressed

PRISTINA, 19 October 2021 – The Chief Observer, Mr Lukas Mandl, Member of the European Parliament, presented today the preliminary findings of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) on the 17 October Municipal elections in Kosovo.

“These were well-organised elections and fundamental freedoms were respected during the campaign,” said Mr Mandl at a press conference in Pristina today. The EU EOM Chief Observer added that: *“Plurality of contestants offered voters a real choice except in the municipalities with Kosovo-Serb majority where political competition was limited. Unfortunately, women were underrepresented in mayoral races and generally in party structures.”*

Calm and orderly voting was assessed very positively by EU observers, although some concerns were noted regarding a significant number of cases of assisted voting and the rules for acceptance of expired IDs for voter identification were not systematically followed. In comparison, the counting of the ballots was somewhat less positively evaluated due to some inconsistencies in following procedures. Mr Mandl added that: *“The election process was efficiently organised by a professional election administration that was also perceived as independent and credible by election stakeholders.”*

“While traditional canvassing was low-key due to COVID-19 pandemic-related measures, a vibrant online campaign and broadcast media debates helped voters to make an informed choice,” said Mr Mandl.

“The longstanding deficiencies in the legal framework remain unaddressed as well as nearly all previous EU electoral recommendations. It is of crucial importance to finally tackle this problem,” said Mr Mandl, adding *“A lack of transparency in campaign finance is one of the key issues that must be addressed.”*

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Head of the delegation of the European Parliament said: *“I would like to thank you, the voters of Kosovo, for expressing your political convictions in such a democratic way. With your positive participation in the elections you have shown your attachment and trust in local institutions and democracy. We have observed a genuine debate amongst candidates and political parties proposing alternative policies. This is another, important step to consolidate Kosovo’s democracy.”*

The EU deployed more than 100 observers across Kosovo on election day from EU Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland. The EU EOM will remain in Kosovo to follow the process at the Count and Results Centre and the resolution of any complaints and appeals. The mission will also observe the second round of mayoral elections.

The EU EOM operates in Kosovo under a specific mandate and is independent of the EU institutions including the EU Office/EU Special Representative in Kosovo.

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