

High Representative/EU Special Representative Pays Tribute to Election Organisers, Congratulates Winners and Urges Focus on Reform Agenda

Yesterday's general election was a landmark event for Bosnia and Herzegovina that took place in a dignified and orderly manner. This is a tribute to the efforts and abilities of the election's organisers who, for the first time since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, were fully responsible for the poll. They did an excellent job.

In its preliminary conclusions, the International Election Observation Mission determined that: "The manner in which these elections were conducted was generally in line with international standards for democratic elections."

I was particularly pleased that turnout was substantially higher in absolute terms yesterday than at the last general election in 2002. This was in part thanks to the Passive Voter Registration (PVR) system. The CIPS Directorate and the Central Election Commission are to be congratulated for making PVR a success in so short a period.

The increased turnout also indicates that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina understood the significance of this poll.

Yesterday, the election ended. Now it is time to move on and to address the pressing issues before this country.

All political parties will need to accept the results to ensure that governments can be formed as soon as possible. At present, we only have preliminary election results. I would, nevertheless, like to congratulate those individuals and parties that have done well. I was also encouraged by the constructive tone various leaders struck.]

It is not for the international community, to decide who should form governments. That is a matter for the political parties and their representatives, and I have no intention of playing any role in this process.

All parties are aware of the reform agenda. Everyone knows what is required for this country to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union. The issue is not, therefore, who forms the governments but whether those governments can deliver what this country needs. A huge amount needs to be done.

This country has the potential to move ahead and I will do all that is in my power to assist.