

PC.SHDM.DEL/24/12
16 July 2012

ENGLISH only



100 Vjet Pavarësi

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Statement of the Delegation of Albania at the Supplementary Human Dimension
Meeting on “Democratic elections and election observation”
Working Session III
As delivered by Mr. Artan Canaj, Deputy Head of Mission for the OSCE Affairs
13 July 2012

On behalf of the delegation of Albania, I wish to thank the Irish Chairmanship of the OSCE and the ODIHR for organizing this SHDM on such important topic as “Democratic elections and election observation”. We also thank the guest speakers for their insightful and comprehensive contributions to our discussions.

Let me use this opportunity to inform the audience and participating States on Albania’s successful cooperation with the ODIHR in following up the relevant election recommendations contained in the ODIHR 2009 and 2011 election reports.

During the past nine months ODIHR and Albanian election experts have closely worked together in the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform (Ad Hoc Committee), established by the Assembly of Albania in November 2011, with a view to amend the electoral code in line with the recommendations made by the ODIHR following its above-mentioned election observations mission in Albania.

The ad hoc committee successfully concluded its activities on 11 July 2012 adopting several key amendments to the electoral code, which take on board a significant number of comments and observations made by the ODIHR experts on, *inter alia*, vote counting, registration of electoral subjects; establishment and locations of voting centers, compilation of the voting lists, campaign financing, election of the CEC members and its chair, election campaign and media and voting procedures.

In particular:

On 24 April 2012, the Ad Hoc Committee discussed the Part IX of the Electoral Code on "Voting", Chapter I "The use of the Technology for Verification and the Registration of Voters (Integrated Electronic System), Chapter II" The procedures for the opening of

Voting" and Chapter III "Closure of Polls". The Ad Hoc Committee adopted all relevant articles of these chapters with the exception of a few points for which the experts were tasked to review or reformulate the relevant articles.

On 2 May 2012, the Ad Hoc Committee discussed on Part VIII of the Electoral Code, "Preparation of infrastructure for elections and the persons tasked for the counting of votes." The objective of this Chapter is the legal regulation of all elections infrastructure, the way of management, the preparation of election documents and the election results.

On 4 May 2012, the Ah Hoc Committee continued the review of the relevant articles of Part VIII "Preparation of infrastructure for elections and the persons tasked for the counting of votes." The members of the Ad Hoc Committee considered and approved the Articles of this Part.

On 14 May 2012, the Ah Hoc Committee discussed and approved the provisions of Part IV "The registration of electoral subjects", which reflects all the OSCE-ODIHR suggestions. During this meeting were also adopted the relevant provisions of Part VI "Election Campaign and Media" and Chapter II, "Financing of Electoral subjects".

The Ad Hoc Committee on the meeting held on 15 May 2012 discussed the approval of the final report to be sent to the plenary session for approval and the agreed legislative package in the form of the draft law.

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee agreed during the last meeting on 11 July on pending issues, on institutional arrangements in election administration, procedural regulations on IT application, election of CEC members, and the appeal process.

These new changes will bring for the first time in the electoral process the electronic technology for the good management of the electoral process, especially that for the identification of voters. This will help to increase the transparency and trust between political parties that will participate in the electoral process, since it was agreed that all these electronic devices will be administered by non-political personnel to avoid any misuse of these devices.

The Ad Hoc Committee approved, in its entirety, all necessary changes to the electoral code. The approved amendments and the Committee's report will be submitted to the Plenary for final endorsement before the summer recess of the Assembly of Albania.

The newly-introduced amendments of the electoral code provide a solid base for free, transparent and democratic elections in Albania. They will be tested during the forthcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held next summer in 2013.

The successful conclusion of this important process points out to the important and valuable work of the ODIHR in supporting participating States improve the implementation of their OSCE commitments in the field of electoral processes.

I thank you for your attention.