



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Conduct of the July 3 Parliamentary Elections in Albania

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 7, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the commitment to democratic development shown by the people of Albania in the July 3rd parliamentary elections. We are encouraged that so many Albanians chose to exercise their right to vote for the leadership of their country.

We would like to commend the Central Election Committee for its largely professional and transparent efforts in conducting the election, and the police for their restrained behavior before and during the election process.

At the same time, it is clear that the election process suffered from certain technical problems, as noted in the International Election Observation Mission's preliminary conclusions.

Voters endured unacceptable overcrowding and delays in casting their votes, while polling stations in many cases incorrectly followed procedures designed to ensure the identity of voters and prevent multiple voting.

The issuance and use of birth certificates in the voter identification process was problematic, as well as the absence of a uniform country-wide address system and standardized personal identification documents.

We agree that the current election system will remain prone to abuse until Albania fully addresses these problems.

We urge that the process of certifying the results of the election be completed without delay.

The United States fully agrees that any disputes over the election results be referred to the relevant Albanian bodies and that their independent decisions be fully respected. We urge that all legal challenges be resolved expeditiously and fairly, and that these decisions be fully respected.

The United States would like to express its gratitude to the over 400 observers who participated in the OSCE-organized International Election Observation Mission.

Finally, we would also like to praise the efforts and dedication of the 120 men and women who work year round in the OSCE's Presence in Albania. We call upon Albania's political leadership to fully utilize their talents, energy, and commitment to help the country move further along the path of reform.

Thank you Mr. Chairman