STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
ahead of Kosovo elections

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"The November 3 elections are a key moment in Kosovo’s future and are an important element in the implementation of the April Agreement and the process of normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

A lot of people have worked very hard to prepare these elections, both in Pristina and in Belgrade, and I commend their efforts. My special thanks go to the OSCE whose dedication to their facilitation role has been instrumental to getting us where we are today.

At the beginning of the Dialogue process there were two courageous Prime Ministers. They had the vision and the courage to reach the April Agreement and implement it. I call on them today to show the same vision and courage in order to ensure fair and inclusive elections.

The EU will be following closely the conduct of the elections. I urge both leaders to address any remaining challenges on election day.

Aside from the particular nature of the elections as part of the April Agreement implementation, this electoral process must also be a step forward in the consolidation of Kosovo’s democracy.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox_Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 – Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu
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On November 3 - just a few days after the opening of the negotiations on Stabilisation and Association Agreement - the EU expects free and fair electoral process from Kosovo.

My message to the people throughout Kosovo is: participate in the elections on Sunday. This is especially true for the Kosovo Serb community. I understand the concerns, particularly in the north, but participation is the best way to ensure that your voice is heard."