Joint Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Stefan Füle on Albania

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, and Stefan Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, made today the following statement:

"We take note of yesterday's publication by the CEC of results of the mayoral election in Tirana. However we also note that the legal soundness of the decision of the CEC to count the so-called misplaced ballots is a matter of concern.

The electoral process is not yet finished. The European Union will be closely following the completion of the appeals procedures and the publication of the final results as well as the assessment of the process by the OSCE/ODIHR elections' observation mission.

The EU expects the appeals procedure to be fair, transparent, carried out independently and in full compliance with the existing legal framework.

Consensual and solid legal solutions should be found on issues which are not explicitly covered in the law and require interpretation. To this end, parties should enter immediately into a dialogue in order to agree on a common understanding on how to address the issue of the 'misplaced' ballots. To ask for independent external advice on the disputed decision of the CEC might be one option to be considered.

The country's interest and the continuation of European integration should prevail ahead of party interests. The political leaders should live up to the European and democratic aspirations of the Albanian citizens".