Council conclusions on Albania

3101st FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 20 June 2011

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The EU has closely followed the 2011 municipal elections and notes that they were generally conducted in a transparent and competitive manner, albeit with procedural difficulties. However the situation in Tirana is a matter of concern. The EU deplores the deterioration of the political situation and increased tensions that followed the elections and conduct of the process.

2. The EU, while noting the decisions by the Electoral College, underlines that it is essential that the election process, including the appeals procedure and the declaration of the final results by the CEC, is completed transparently, independently and in full compliance with the existing legal framework. It is also essential for all parties to recognise the supremacy of the Rule of Law over any other interests. The EU calls on all political leaders to support finalisation of the election process calmly, constructively and with a focus on the European future of the country. The EU will closely follow the assessment of the process by the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission.

3. The EU urges the Government and the opposition, in collaboration with civil society, to agree on a thorough electoral reform, addressing all recommendations by OSCE-ODIHR in 2007, 2009 and 2011 before the next elections are called. The EU notes the intention of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to ask the Venice Commission for an opinion on how to avoid similar situations in future elections."
4. The EU calls on the Government and the opposition to urgently restore the political dialogue and overcome the long-standing political stalemate. Such a dialogue is indispensable for the normal functioning of any democratic society and its institutions, including the effective functioning of the Parliament, as well as for the advancement of the country's European integration. The EU urges the Albanian authorities to renew and strengthen efforts on the reform agenda and its implementation. These are essential in order to achieve the necessary degree of compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, including the twelve key priorities identified in the European Commission's 9 November 2010 Opinion on Albania's application for membership. Only upon fulfilling the above will Albania be able to move forward towards the EU, in line with Council conclusions of December 2010.

5. The EU remains committed to the European perspective of Albania and will continue to support the country's efforts in this process.