



Skopje, 21 February 2016

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

When we met with political leaders and election stakeholders on 15 January in Skopje, we agreed that the international community would be closely monitoring the preparation for and conduct of the early parliamentary elections currently scheduled for 24 April under their political agreement.

Early elections, as envisioned in the "Przino" Agreement, are intended as a key step in a reform process that would restore citizens' faith in electoral processes, ensure fair competition of ideas and political perspectives, and move the country beyond the political crisis. This strategic purpose remains more valid than ever.

Over the last month, in close coordination with relevant actors and experts, at international and local level, as well as the political parties themselves, we have been carefully monitoring progress and advising on a number of issues. These issues were spelled out clearly and publicly in a letter that we sent to you on 28 January. We indicated that we would give our assessment on the implementation of the Przino commitments before the dissolution of the Parliament, in case it needed to consider adjusting the timing of the elections.

We note that the work of the State Electoral Commission to date and the findings of all relevant experts indicate that at this stage the necessary conditions for organising credible elections on 24 April are currently not in place, although some progress has been achieved. Equally, an agreement has not yet been reached on media reforms, to ensure a more level playing field. We are also concerned at initial reports of pressure and intimidation of voters and others.

All this is very much regrettable.

We strongly encourage all political leaders, majority and opposition alike, and institutions to remain fully committed to the June/July Agreement including the steps taken under the Agreement so far. If elections cannot be held at the foreseen date, political parties are expected to work to take the necessary measures to allow holding credible elections at the earliest possible date, and with full respect to the responsibilities and ongoing preparatory work of the State Electoral Commission. We understand that the party leaders have mentioned 5 June as a possible alternative. Serious efforts by all stakeholders are now required to ensure the conditions conducive to a credible electoral process in which all citizens and parties should freely participate.

The political leaders have the responsibility to take the necessary steps to put their country back onto the Euro-Atlantic path, by implementing the political agreement and the Urgent Reform Priorities, in the interests of the country's citizens. We will continue to follow and measure progress very closely.

Yours sincerely,



Aivo Orav

Ambassador, EU Delegation



Jess L. Baily

Ambassador, U.S. Embassy

H.E. Mr. Emil Dimitriev

Prime Minister

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