



Plenary sitting

B9-0106/2024

5.2.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Serbia following the elections
(2024/2521(RSP))

Emmanuel Maurel
on behalf of The Left Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Serbia following the elections (2024/2521(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Serbia,
 - having regard to the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) international election observation mission (I-EOM) on the early parliamentary elections of 17 December 2023 in Serbia,
 - having regard to the statement on 19 December 2023 by European Parliament standing rapporteur for Serbia Vladimír Bilčík about the findings of Parliament's observer delegation,
 - having regard to Serbia's application for membership of the EU of 19 December 2009,
 - having regard to the EU's previous statements on Serbia, in particular the joint statement by High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi on the parliamentary elections of 19 December 2023,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 1 November 2023, the president of Serbia dissolved the Serbian parliament and scheduled early parliamentary elections for 17 December 2023, citing demands from the opposition for early elections;
- B. whereas, according to the preliminary conclusions of the I-EOM, the elections were technically well-administered and offered a choice of political alternatives;
- C. whereas the campaign was dominated by the decisive involvement of the president, which, together with the ruling party's systemic advantages, created unfair conditions;
- D. whereas fundamental freedoms were generally respected in the campaign but were marred by harsh rhetoric, strong bias in the media, pressure on public sector employees and misuse of public resources;
- E. whereas the elections were, overall, conducted smoothly, but the day was marked by numerous procedural deficiencies, including inconsistent application of safeguards during voting and counting, frequent instances of overcrowding, breaches of voting secrecy, and numerous instances of group voting;
- F. whereas voter lists were updated through the unified voter register and the final number of voters stood at 6 500 666; whereas it was alleged that numerous deceased electors remained on the register;

- G. whereas Serbia's legal framework provides an adequate basis for the conducting of democratic elections and whereas recent amendments had addressed a number of previous OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations; whereas measures are still needed to solve several key issues, including to prevent the misuse of public office and to safeguard voters from intimidation and pressure;
- H. whereas despite the fact that 43 % of the 2 827 parliamentary candidates were women and that efforts to promote women's participation have been made, women remain generally under-represented in elected and appointed offices;
- I. whereas Parliament's standing rapporteur for Serbia stated that Parliament's observer delegation had 'noticed that the elections were well conducted, well managed. There are some irregularities when it comes to the reports we received from the places we visited about bringing in additional voters, but it is not about a large number of voters', and that 'there were no tensions regarding voters from Kosovo and Metohija who came to central Serbia to vote';
- J. whereas the opposition coalition Serbia Against Violence has submitted an application for judicial review of the elections, challenging the validity of the election procedure for the councillors of the City Assembly of Belgrade; whereas it accused the government of bringing 40 000 people from Republika Srpska to vote in Belgrade without them actually being resident there;
- K. whereas each enlargement country is judged on its own merits and whereas it is the fulfilment of the enlargement criteria and the implementation of the necessary reforms, in particular in the areas of 'fundamentals' and legislative alignment, that determine the timetable and progress of accession;
1. Expresses again its strong solidarity with the Serbian people after the two mass shooting incidents of May 2023;
 2. Takes note of the results of the parliamentary elections of 17 December 2023 in Serbia; deplores the fact that numerous significant deficiencies made a negative contribution to the electoral process; deplores the incumbents' abuse of institutions and the media to gain an unfair advantage;
 3. Expresses its regret at the aggressive pre-election rhetoric, bias in the media, pressure on public sector employees and misuse of public resources, as well as the intimidation and harassment of civil activists, LGBTI and other human rights defenders, and journalists;
 4. Expresses its regret at the insufficient political will of the national authorities to address key problematic aspects of the electoral process; calls on these authorities to follow up in a transparent manner on any credible reports of widespread irregularities, including allegations related to the local elections in Belgrade and other municipalities;
 5. Looks forward to the final OSCE/ODIHR report and recommendations for future elections, which should be implemented as soon as possible and well in advance of any future elections;

6. Calls on Serbia to fulfil the outstanding OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations concerning the conducting of elections;
7. Encourages the Serbian authorities to ensure that the country's independent and supervisory institutions, especially the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media and the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, play a proactive role in creating the conditions for fair elections;
8. Underlines the need to step up efforts to increase women's representation in elected and appointed offices;
9. Underscores that progress in the EU accession process is result- and reform-oriented and is based on further alignment on the rule of law, good governance, fundamental rights and respect for European rights and values;
10. Calls on all political forces in Serbia to engage in a constructive political dialogue to ensure the proper functioning of the country's institutions, to protect free expression and to make the necessary improvements to the electoral process;
11. Calls, in this light, for the respect and implementation of the Agreement on the path to normalization between Kosovo and Serbia (Ohrid Agreement);
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the President, Government and National Assembly of Serbia.