Press release | 16.11.2009

Kosovo

Victory for democracy in independent Kosovo's first local elections

Commenting on yesterday's local elections in Kosovo – the first since its independence – **Austrian Green MEP and EP rapporteur for Kosovo Ulrike Lunacek** commented:

"Kosovo has passed an important test of its democratic credentials by holding free and fair elections that meet international standards. I am greatly encouraged by the overall level of participation by the Serb minority, which paves the way to securing autonomy at the level of their municipalities, in line with the Ahtisaari plan. These successful elections increase the chances of further countries recognising Kosovo's independence and they give a welcome boost to the future development of the country."

Marije Cornelissen, **Dutch Green MEP and observer at the local elections in Kosovo**, commented:

"These local elections mark an important step forward for Kosovo on its path to becoming a mature democracy with a future in the EU. The peaceful process, good organisation and the relatively high turnout are a credit to all who were involved.

It is positive that many Serbs in mixed communities decided to vote despite threats from Serbia to withdraw allowances or salaries originating from its territory. Turnout and opening of election offices were however much lower in the northern area of Kosovo with a Serb majority population. This demonstrates that the EU must exert more pressure on Serbia not to interfere in the elections in Kosovo and that the Kosovo government must step up efforts to include the Serbian minority."

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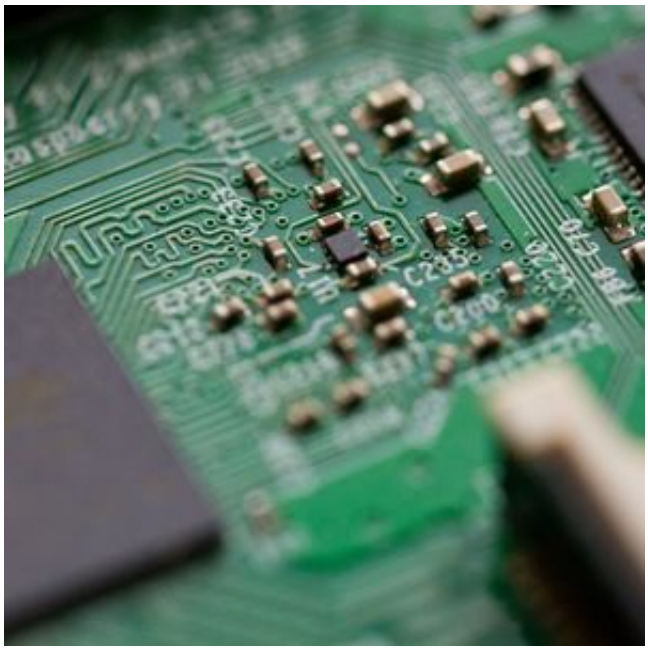


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