

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Declaration by the European Union**  
**on DP boycott of Referendum on the Constitution in Albania**

The EU welcomes the work achieved by the Albanian Parliamentary Constitutional Commission in drafting the new Constitution and notes that serious efforts have been made to achieve the broadest possible participation from all Albanian political parties. The EU considers the Constitution as substantial commitment to move forward and consolidate democracy and stability in Albania.

The EU recalls the Joint Declaration issued by the OSCE, the EU, the Council of Europe and the WEU on 23 September 1998, which stresses that the international community will isolate those groups and individuals who polarise the country and undermine democratic institutions.

The EU therefore calls upon the Democratic Party, its leaders and its followers to participate in the Referendum on the Constitution on 22 November 1998. Boycott is not a constructive instrument of democracy. The EU calls on the Government to continue to show respect for the role and rights of a legitimate and constructive opposition.

The way the political forces in Albania act now will have a decisive bearing on the EU's future relations with them.

The EU encourages the Albanian population to participate in the Referendum on the new Draft Constitution. The purpose of the Referendum is to decide on the actual contents of the Draft Constitution and it should not be considered as a party-political issue. A new Constitution is an issue decisive for Albania's future and therefore it should not be approached in a partisan manner.