



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

PC.DEL/298/08
17 April 2008

ENGLISH only

Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 709
17 April 2008**

EU statement in response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje, Ambassador Giorgio Radicati

The European Union welcomes back to the Permanent Council the Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje, Ambassador Radicati and thanks him for his comprehensive report. It reinforces the belief that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to make progress towards developing a functional multiethnic democratic state as well as administrative structures based on the Rule of Law. The country, having adopted most of the necessary legislation, is now faced with the challenge of its implementation.

The country has come a long way since the violence of 2001. Nonetheless, in order to further build on the progress that has been made, all sides still need to fully observe the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as well as to work for the implementation of all relevant subsequent understandings and agreements aiming at enhancing inter-ethnic cooperation and consolidating state institutions.

We are encouraged by the fact that, over the past few months, there seem to be sincere efforts on the part of the political leadership of the country towards normalisation of the internal political process. The EU calls upon all political leaders to demonstrate the necessary will and leadership in order to successfully overcome the current challenges and actively work towards national reconciliation and good neighbourly relations, which are indispensable for stability in the region.

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

In this regard, the EU expects that the reform agenda will not be affected or slowed down by the upcoming elections. We wish to stress the need for the elections to meet OSCE and Council of Europe commitments for democratic elections. These elections will be of importance in respect to the Copenhagen political criteria. In this context, the EU regrets that the amendments jointly developed with the ODIHR to improve electoral legislation have not yet been approved.

The return of four non-indicted war crime files from the ICTY will test, as Ambassador Radicati points out, the ability of the country's judicial system to handle politically sensitive cases. Their successful handling will reinforce the trust of the population to the state institutions. The EU encourages all the political parties to contribute to their successful handling which in the end will reinforce the trust of the population in the state institutions.

The EU fully shares the emphasis put by the OSCE Mission on promoting Rule of Law in the country. In this spirit, it applauds the Mission's valuable and multifaceted support, *inter alia*, for the implementation of the National Judicial Reform Strategy, for the enhancement of the work of the Ombudsman, as well as for the creation of an external oversight mechanism of law-enforcement institutions. The EU commends the Mission also for its work, programmes and activities in the area of police development, which constitutes one of the key reform projects in the country's efforts to meet international policing standards and expresses the hope that delays in the reform process will be adequately tackled in the near future.

Of great importance also is the contribution of the Mission to the Public Administration Reform, in particular to the process of devolving competences from the central administration of the state to the local government authorities. This will contribute to greater inter-ethnic stability in the country. In this respect, the EU

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

encourages efforts aiming at increasing the participation of ethnic minorities in all sectors of public administration.

The EU also appreciates the fact that the Mission has set as one of its priorities the building of confidence among the ethnic communities of the country. It notes in particular the Mission's endeavours to encourage interethnic dialogue among youth organisations and to promote tolerance in the education system.

The EU welcomes all efforts aiming at combating Trafficking in Human Beings, including through the implementation of the National Action plan, and encourages ongoing efforts against corruption and organised crime.

In line with the findings of the EU Mission in Skopje, The EU shares Ambassador Radicati's observation that the desire of the population to join the EU and NATO unites the people across ethnic, religious and social boundaries. The EU reiterates its support to the efforts of the country to achieve these goals. In this context, the EU calls on the government to make renewed efforts, with a constructive approach, to find a negotiated and mutual acceptable solution on the name issue with Greece, under the auspices of the UN, thereby contributing to regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations. The EU encourages the negotiations on the name issue to be resumed without delay and expects them to be concluded as soon as possible.

In conclusion, the EU shares Ambassador Radicati's assessment that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is on a good track but the pace of reforms needs to be sustained. This year could be a decisive year for the country's EU accession process, provided there is political will and the necessary efforts are made.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the EU congratulates the Mission on its continuing significant support to the democratic development of the former Yugoslav Republic of

eu2008.si



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Macedonia and the modernisation of its institutions. The EU also welcomes the Mission's efforts to improve its management and is particularly satisfied with the work aimed at strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of its activities. We trust that the OSCE Mission will continue to play a constructive role.

The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Iceland, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

eu2008.si