



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1135  
Vienna, 2 March 2017**

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**EU Statement in Response to the Head of the OSCE  
Mission to Montenegro, H.E. Ambassador Maryse Daviet**

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The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Maryse Daviet, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro to the Permanent Council for the first time and thanks her for the report on the Mission's activities over the past year.

Montenegro is firmly committed to its EU path and the European Union remains equally dedicated to Montenegro's future in the EU. Accession negotiations are progressing at a steady pace and we very much welcome the excellent cooperation in furthering EU related reforms.

The parliamentary elections of October 2016 were conducted under a substantially revised legal framework, in a competitive environment and respect for fundamental freedoms. The EU supports the assessment of the final report of the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission and the timely implementation of its recommendations.

One of the priority recommendations calls for inclusive electoral reform to be completed well in advance of the next elections. In this regard we see an important role for the Mission in providing further assistance to the host country in the continuation of electoral reform, as well as implementation of already adopted electoral legislation.

A constructive and inclusive dialogue of all parliamentary parties within the democratic processes is important for the country's overall transformation process. In that light we encourage moving the political dialogue to the Parliament, where it belongs. We call on all political parties to demonstrate responsibility and contribute constructively to the political dialogue, also in light of local elections in the town of Nikšić scheduled to take place on 12 March. We also call on the authorities that the

investigation around the Election Day events is handled transparently and according to the law.

It is also important to see the continuous impact of the rule of law reforms in the form of tangible results on the ground; namely, a track record in effectively fighting corruption and organised crime as well as protecting fundamental freedoms.

We encourage Montenegro to continue its efforts to achieve further progress in promoting freedom of expression, including by ensuring safety of journalists, also in close co-operation with the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We echo the recommendations from 2014 on prioritising cases of violence against journalists also in light of the 2004 murder case that has yet to be fully processed and the perpetrators brought to justice. We continue to value the Mission's active role in assisting the media in establishing solid professional and ethical standards and efficient self-regulation, again in close co-operation with the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Mr. Chairperson, we welcome the Mission activities in areas such as addressing transnational threats and organized crime, fostering the rule of law and law enforcement, supporting freedom of the media and media development, assisting the growth of accountable, democratic and participatory institutions, combatting trafficking in human beings, as well as supporting police reform, arms control, gender equality and vulnerable groups. We appreciate its focus on the engagement of civil society in the reform processes.

On gender equality activities of the Mission we particularly welcome the cooperation on drafting National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, as well as awareness raising against gender-based violence and supporting capacities of the Network of Municipal Gender Focal Points.

We are pleased that the Mission has been developing a focused approach on the most relevant priorities after the strategic review of programmatic activities in 2015. We would be grateful if Ambassador Daviet could provide us with more information on the new partnership model with national counterparts. We would also like to underline that it is essential for an effective evaluation of all field operations to ensure efficient use of resources and we encourage the Mission to continue to focus its

reporting at outcome level and to use the reports to bring out the impact of the Mission's programmatic work – on results and follow-up – as well as on ensuring continuous evaluation.

The European Union highly values the constructive role Montenegro is playing in advancing regional co-operation, reconciliation and further developing good neighbourly relations, including the ratification of border agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and with Kosovo\*. We also underline the progress the country has made on its path to European and Euro-Atlantic integration, especially in light of the signing of the Accession Protocol with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation last May.

Finally, we thank you, Ambassador, for your presentation and wish you and your team success in your work in the coming year.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, SERBIA, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.