



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1143 Vienna, 27 April 2017

EU statement in Response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, H. E. Jonathan Moore

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Jonathan Moore, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Mission.

We highly appreciate the support the Mission provides to the host country, including to its reform processes. We commend the Mission's work, in close cooperation with the host country in areas such as rule of law, war crimes cases processing, combating hate crimes and promoting inter-religious dialogue, the sustainable return of displaced persons, anti-discrimination, security sector reform, including prevention of proliferation of small arms and light weapons and security upgrades of storage sites, youth and gender equality. At the same time, there are also areas where further progress is needed, including in the field of education, combating corruption, media freedom and journalists' safety, impartial and professional judiciary, countering violent extremism and terrorism, democratic governance, improving coordination and co-operation among different government levels and law-enforcement bodies, or election legislation.

We acknowledge that prioritisation following the completion of the Mission's multi-year reform strategy and some additional structural changes, is essential. We welcome the Mission's flexibility towards putting more emphasis into new activities while responding to a changing environment. Effective impact-based evaluation is of key importance. We would welcome an assessment of the overall impact all these changes have had on the programmatic work of the Mission.

We commend the Mission for its use of the field offices, including as instruments of early warning at the community level. In this regard, we appreciate the Mission's

prompt response to an incident in Stolac during local elections in October last year. We underline the role of ODIHR when it comes to election monitoring.

We furthermore welcome strengthening of coordination by the Mission with the international community, including co-operation with the EU. We also commend the Mission for deepening its cooperation with other OSCE structures to strengthen regional co-operation. We encourage the mission to further advance this co-operation, in close coordination with the Secretariat, in relevant areas such as countering violent extremism and terrorism, including the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, education, anti-discrimination, combating hate crimes, war crimes processing, elections and human rights protection. A very good example of efficient regional co-operation was the facilitation of the ballot collection for the Serbian presidential elections in Kosovo¹ by contributing 60 personnel of the Mission in April 2017.

We encourage the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop a modern and efficient education system. The area of education continues to be a persistent challenge. We appreciate the work of the Mission in response to tensions arising on education issues. We encourage the Mission to keep the main focus on inclusivity and non-segregation of education in the host country.

We share the Mission's concern about the challenges faced in the area of media freedom, journalists' safety, sustainability of public broadcast system and quality and professionalism of media reporting. In this regard we would welcome Mission's assessment of concrete impacts of steps initiated by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We welcome the Mission's focus on combating corruption and countering violent extremism as two areas of the recent programmatic innovations. We highly value the Mission's horizontal focus on youth, in particular the Mission's Youth Advisory Group as a great inclusive tool. The recent Chairmanship workshop on prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, held earlier this week, is a great example of this active engagement the Mission is encouraged to continue.

¹This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

We strongly appreciate the work of the Mission in support of gender equality and welcome concrete actions of the Mission to this end. We encourage the Mission to pay special attention to combating domestic violence which remains a serious issue in the host country.

We once again express our strong support to activities of the Mission and encourage the Mission to maintain continuity in its programmatic activities while preserving sufficient flexibility. Many challenges still lay ahead in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Mission's support will certainly continue to be much needed.

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective as a single, united and sovereign country. In this context, we welcome the progress in the EU integration process and implementation of the Reform Agenda, however efforts need to be intensified.

We regret that the pace of reforms has at times been delayed due to growing political polarisation and we urge all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to constructively contribute to keeping the momentum reached on its path to the EU. As the fight against corruption, as well as the freedom of the media and their independence from political influence are important preconditions for EU membership, we appreciate the OSCE's commitments in those areas.

In conclusion, let me thank Ambassador Moore and his able staff for their work on the ground. Since this is your last annual activity report to the Permanent Council in your current capacity of the Head of the Mission, the EU would like to especially thank you, Ambassador, for your personal commitment and dedication in so successfully leading the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past years.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND 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, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.