



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1261 Vienna, 5 March 2020

EU Statement in response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jan Braathu

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome Ambassador Jan Braathu back to the Permanent Council.

We reiterate our resolute support for the valuable work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The Mission has proven itself as a trusted partner of all communities and contributes to a safe and secure, as well as democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo^{*1}, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. We applaud you for that.

The European Union welcomes the Mission's engagement on a wide range of important activities, thus further intensifying its "whole-of-Mission" approach that stands on three key programmatic pillars: human rights and communities, democratization, and security and public safety. This encompasses, inter alia, the promotion of human rights, rule of law, democratization through the support for democratic institutions and civic participation in the decision-making process, as well as an efficient and democratic security and public safety sector.

^{*} This 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 particularly appreciate that the Mission continues to promote inter-community cooperation towards enhancing community relations. We commend the Mission's commitment to the protection of human rights, especially the follow-up activities in response to concrete concerns. We also welcome the monitoring of, and support for, Kosovo institutions' performance in improving inter-community relations and in responding to and addressing security incidents affecting persons belonging to minorities, and vulnerable groups. We are also pleased to note the technical assistance provided by the Mission during elections, including during early legislative elections in October. Following its long-standing commitment to support democratic processes in Kosovo, the EU deployed an Election Observation Mission to monitor the elections, and we expect decisive follow-up to implement its recommendations and look forward to continuing our cooperation with the OSCE in this regard.

We furthermore welcome the Mission's continued work in assisting stakeholders to exercise their duties effectively, offering support and expertise to enhance compliance with good governance and the highest international human rights standards. Improving the accountability and transparency of institutions remains especially important in that regard.

In addition, strengthening coordination with stakeholders relating to the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities, including their safety, protection of their property and language rights, along with the protection of their cultural and religious heritage, including the Special Protective Zones, should remain high on the Mission's long term agenda. We also welcome the numerous activities involving youth and look forward to increased cooperation with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO).

We will maintain our strong support for the socio-economic development of Kosovo for the benefit of all, including through very concrete financial and technical assistance. This was reconfirmed in January, when the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, during his visit to Pristina, Prizren and Obilić, launched a major EU-financed project to improve the environmental performance of the largest electricity generator in Kosovo. The €76.4 million project will significantly lower emissions by reducing harmful dust, contribute to reliable and clean energy supply, and improve the health and well-being of the population.

We underline that progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains an essential requirement for both in order to advance on their respective European paths, in line with the European perspective of the region. It is essential that the Dialogue restarts as soon as possible. To this end, both sides need to do their share to contribute to restoring a conducive environment.

In conclusion, with a strong interest in the political and security consolidation in the region, and having the highest stakes in the outcome, the European Union remains determined to continue to assist Kosovo on its path towards lasting stability. We would therefore like to thank once again Ambassador Braathu and assure him and his capable team of the European Union's continued support.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country LIECHTENSTEIN align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.