



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

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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 698
31 January 2008**

EU statement in response to the address by the Head of Mission of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Tim Guldemann

The European Union thanks the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Tim Guldemann, for his report on the Mission's activities in the past six months and his words on the important tasks the Mission had to tackle during this period. The European Union fully supports Ambassador Guldemann and the entire Mission in their efforts. We reiterate our appreciation for the essential work done by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo through its headquarters in Pristina as well as its broad field presence.

The European Union fully recognises the important role the OSCE Mission in Kosovo assumed in the preparations for the recent elections there in a particularly short period of time. The November 2007 elections were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner and largely in accordance with international standards, as reported by the Council of Europe. However, the European Union expresses its disappointment at the low overall voter turn-out, in particular amongst the Kosovo Serb community. We stress the importance of the participation by all communities in the political life of Kosovo.

The European Union welcomes OMIK's efforts and commitment to enhance its efficiency and to prepare for the challenges which lie ahead. We appreciate the close co-operation between the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union. The

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steady exchange of information has proven indispensable in pursuing the stabilisation of the entire region.

We recognise that flexibility will be needed on all sides to meet the challenges ahead, in particular with regard to the full implementation of internationally recognised human rights standards and fundamental freedoms. The EU stands ready to play a role in strengthening stability in the region and to assist Kosovo on the path towards long-term stability, in order to achieve prosperous living conditions for all people living in Kosovo. We call on all sides to work constructively to this end.

The EU sees the OSCE as continuing to play an important role in the support of a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, with full respect for the rule of law, the protection of minorities and of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage, as well as the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. Although considerable progress has been made during the past months, further work is still needed in these fields in the interest of all people living in Kosovo.

With its broad field presence, the OSCE represents a partner of choice for the EU. Regardless of the outcome of the status question, the OSCE can provide an essential contribution to the implementation of democratic standards and human rights. The EU continues to believe that the OSCE should maintain its presence, in the interest of the people living in Kosovo and regardless of which community they belong to, as we expressed in our interpretative statement of 21 December 2007 on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the

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European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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

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