

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 999
Vienna, 8 May 2014**

**EU Statement in Response to the OSCE Head of Mission in
Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Fletcher M. Burton**

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

We appreciate the valuable work carried out by the Mission through its broad field presence in the country. We commend the Mission for being a reliable partner in the local as well as in the regional context as we experienced it in Kosovo¹, where 100 Mission members were deployed to assist in the facilitation of two recent elections in Kosovo.

Being unequivocally committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective, we note that due to the lack of political will on the part of the Bosnia and Herzegovinian politicians and the continued use of divisive rhetoric, other countries of the region make progress, Bosnia and Herzegovina is lagging behind.

The EU foreign ministers urged on April 14 2014 the Bosnia and Herzegovinian institutions and leadership to focus as a matter of immediate priority on the following areas: reaching out actively to civil society; taking into account the needs of the citizens; focusing on socio-economic issues; and translating the

¹ 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

legitimate concerns of the Bosnia and Herzegovinian people into legislative and fully implemented initiatives, including strengthening the rule of law, anticorruption and financial accountability measures, and protecting human rights. We support the OSCE activities that could offer added value in this regard.

Regarding the current programmatic activities of the Mission, we attach a high value to the work done in fields such as war crimes processing, combating trafficking in human beings, Regional Housing Programme, gender equality, Roma integration, rule of law and the reduction of discriminatory practices in education. We support the Mission's key role in assisting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the management of stockpiles of weapons and ammunition.

We support the continuation of the "Dayton+20" strategic plan and we stress that all OSCE field operations must effectively evaluate their programmatic activities. We underline that for all field operations effective evaluation is essential to ensure the efficient use of resources and aids the development of best practices and the process of lesson learning. We would be grateful if Ambassador Burton could highlight some of the key impacts made in the Mission through its programmatic activities in this reporting period.

We would be grateful if Ambassador Burton could give us more detail on the planned build-up of capacities in the area of the conflict cycle.

Mr Chairperson,

It remains crucial for the European Union that the Bosnia and Herzegovinian leaders undertake reforms aimed at improving the efficiency and functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovinian institutions at all levels. Implementation of the Sejdic-

Finci judgment of the European Court of Human Rights also remains an issue to be addressed.

We thank Ambassador Burton and his dedicated team for your work. Since it is his last appearance before the Permanent Council in this capacity, we would like to wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

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

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.