

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 800
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EU Statement in response to the Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for her comprehensive report. It demonstrates the continued strong performance of the Mission in implementing its broad mandate.

We are pleased to see the visible progress which Montenegro has achieved and its strong determination towards European integration. The completion of the EC questionnaire, which was presented last December in Brussels, and visa liberalization confirm that Montenegro and the EU have a common vision of their joint future. We commend Montenegro for its active contribution to strengthening regional stability and security.

Despite important progress in pursuing the country's reform agenda, some challenges remain. The European Union agrees that further steps are needed to accelerate the pace of reforms, notably in key

areas such as strengthening institutional and administrative capacity for the implementation of legislation, judiciary reform, the fight against corruption, as well as economic and social development. The EU is ready to assist the Montenegrin authorities to address the outstanding issues. We encourage Montenegro to redouble efforts to harmonize legislation with the new constitution and European standards.

The European Union wishes to commend the OSCE Mission to Montenegro for its outstanding work in assisting the host country. Since combating corruption and organised crime remains one of the Government's key priorities and challenges, we highly value the assistance of the Mission in implementing key legislation, particularly the Criminal Procedure Code. This is a key priority for the European Union as well. We welcome a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Prosecution and Police aiming at closer cooperation between these two institutions. The fight against criminality requires further efforts to upgrade exchange of criminal intelligence between all law enforcement bodies. Likewise the EU encourages the Mission to continue to support the host government in its efforts to complete its new Strategy and Action Plan in the Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime.

We fully endorse the Mission's efforts in the area of police reform which aim at transforming the Montenegrin police into a modern, professional and efficient service. Engagement with the police is of particular importance in addressing a number of vital issues and challenges, including the fight against organised crime and corruption and combating trafficking in human beings and drugs smuggling. The success of these efforts will depend on increased

ownership and a strategic approach of the authorities. The EU commends the successful border cooperation between Montenegro and the neighbouring countries.

We reiterate our continuing support to the MONDEM Demilitarization Programme which is of the utmost importance for the country. It remains to be fully implemented and we note the need for further financial contributions to the project.

A professional and independent judiciary is the cornerstone of the rule of law. In this context the EU notes that the Mission plays an important advisory role in adopting and implementing relevant legislation and capacity building of the Constitutional Court and the Institution of the Ombudsman. We recognize the value of the Court Monitoring Project which addresses the main shortcomings with regard to the implementation of fair trial standards.

We encourage the Government of Montenegro to address the shortcomings identified during last year's parliamentary elections and implement key recommendations made by the ODIHR/OSCE election observation mission in this regard.

The European Union welcomes the Mission's excellent work in promoting democratisation and respect for human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Capacity building of the National Parliament and local self-government and the further strengthening of civil society are among the key elements of democratic development. In addition to this, we fully support the Mission's efforts to promote a free, vibrant and professional media sector in Montenegro.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, let me on behalf of the EU thank Ambassador Badescu and her team once again for their dedicated work. As this is the last appearance of Ambassador Badescu at the Permanent Council, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her for her excellent leadership of the OSCE Mission. Ambassador, under your guidance, the Mission has succeeded in helping Montenegro to pursue its democratic reform agenda. We wish you all the best in the future.

Los países candidatos TURQUÍA, CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA, LIECHTENSTEIN y NORUEGA, al igual que UCRANIA, la REPÚBLICA DE MOLDAVIA, ARMENIA y GEORGIA se suman a esta declaración.

*Croacia y la Antigua República Yugoslava de Macedonia siguen perteneciendo al proceso de Estabilización y Asociación.