



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL  
TO THE OSCE

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Portugal 2007- Presidency of the European Union

## Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**688<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council**

**15<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

### Statement of the European Union in response to the UNSRSG for Kosovo, Mr. Joachim Rucker

The European Union warmly welcomes the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Kosovo, Mr. Joachim Rucker, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report on the current situation in Kosovo, including the upcoming elections and post election prospects. The European Union fully supports the UN Special Representative and his team in implementing UNMIK's mandate.

UNMIK's close relationship with the OSCE-Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) is of particular importance to the European Union. Both Missions aim at building democratic institutions and contribute to the stabilisation of Kosovo, as well as the improvement of living conditions in all communities there. We welcome OMIK's support in organising the 17 November elections in Kosovo and hope for a smooth election procedure. The EU calls upon all responsible actors to ensure a broad participation of all communities in Kosovo.

We value the essential work done by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo through its headquarters in Pristina as well as its broad field presence. We see 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 and the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. Flexibility will be required to meet the challenges ahead, including

the activities related to decentralization, community rights, security and public safety, as well as the protection of religious and cultural heritage. The EU stands ready to support the Mission in these efforts. We are convinced that the Mission should continue to play an important role in Kosovo irrespective of Kosovo's future status. We therefore support the draft Permanent Council Decision to extend OMIK's mandate to 31 December 2008.

Mr. Chairman, the European Union stands ready to play a significant role in Kosovo in the future, and is preparing accordingly. In this context it is essential that the United Nations, the European Union and the OSCE continue to coordinate their work closely and ensure a seamless exchange of information.

The status process is now at an important stage. The Troika's mandate will be concluded by the Contact Group reporting to the UN Secretary General by 10 December. The EU reaffirms its full support to the Troika. We call on all sides to engage constructively and to make best use of this opportunity.

The EU reiterates the necessity of rapidly finding a solution to the Kosovo status issue.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion we should like to wish Mr. Rücker and his team success in the challenging weeks to come. Our common aim is to promote in Kosovo a tolerant, multi-ethnic and democratic society based on the rule of law and safeguarding the future of all communities living in Kosovo.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Armenia align themselves with this statement.

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\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.