

Spanish Presidency of the European Union

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 808
Vienna, 6 May 2010****EU statement in response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Gary Robbins**

The European Union is pleased to welcome Ambassador Robbins back to the PC and thanks him for his report.

The European Union wishes to commend the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina for continuing the outstanding work it is doing to assist the country in its development, despite the ongoing difficult domestic political situation.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call upon the local political leaders to engage constructively and with strong determination on the necessary reform agenda in order for the country to make substantial progress on its way towards the European Union. We welcome the significant progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina since last July in meeting the outstanding benchmarks of the Visa Liberalisation Road Map. However, further efforts are still needed.

The EU remains concerned about the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call upon Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and provocative statements in particular in view of the incoming Presidential and Parliamentary elections. The EU reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement and the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to comply with all decisions taken by the High Representative/EU Special Representative and not to seek to undermine his authority.

We reconfirm our readiness for a transition from the Office of the High Representative to increased local ownership, supported by a reinforced European Union presence, as soon as the objectives and conditions are met.

The EU is concerned to see constitutional and electoral law reform, including in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, as soon as practicable. We will continue to work with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement to this end with a view to action as soon as possible after the election.

Furthermore, the EU considers the adoption of the Law on Census of utmost importance. A census would provide a basis for socio-economic development planning and for furthering EU accession.

The EU underlines the significant contribution to the stability and security of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Operation Althea. In

addition, the EU Police Mission continues to contribute to the fight against organised crime and corruption.

The EU remains committed to supporting regional co-operation in South East Europe. In this context the EU welcomes the contribution of recent visits of Serbian President Tadić and Croatian President Josipović to Bosnia and Herzegovina in promoting reconciliation and regional cooperation.

The EU commends the Mission for its successful work in the past 12 months in implementing its mandate through its headquarters in Sarajevo as well as through its broad field presence.

We appreciate the Mission's approach to working and cooperating with the EU presence and other international partners operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of avoiding duplication of initiatives and promoting coordination and cooperation.

We look forward to continuing working together with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in areas of common interest and where Bosnia and Herzegovina needs urgent reforms: Education, Rule of Law, Democratisation Process and Human Rights are only some to be mentioned. The EU strongly encourages the Mission to continue playing a pro-active role in those areas where the OSCE can bring added value within the International Community, such as Education and war crimes trial monitoring. In particular, the European Union reaffirms its broad support for the Mission's efforts to promote a rational and professional education structure free from undue political

interference, which prepares the ground for overcoming the deep divisions in the country.

The EU has supported the Mission's new structure. We are confident that the new organisation will be beneficial not only for improving intra-Mission coordination and efficiency but also for increasing the political visibility and impact of the Mission at entity and local level.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the EU congratulates Ambassador Robbins and the Mission on their continuing significant contribution to sustainable peace and further democratic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for their good cooperation with the host government.

Los países candidatos CROACIA* y la ANTIGUA REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE MACEDONIA*, los países del Proceso de Estabilización y Asociación y los países candidatos potenciales, ALBANIA, MONTENEGRO y SERBIA, los países de la Asociación Europea de Libre Comercio y los miembros del Espacio Económico Europeo, ISLANDIA 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.