



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1112 Vienna, 8 September 2016

EU statement in response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome – for the last time - H.E. Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo¹, to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report. We appreciate the valuable work carried out by the Mission in contributing to a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, particularly including rights of persons belonging to minorities. We also welcome the work done in promoting gender equality. OMiK's close relationship to all communities and other international actors on the ground and its field presence give the Mission a relevant role within the international presence in Kosovo.

The EU continues to be worried about the tense domestic political situation in Kosovo, especially the increase in politically motivated violent incidents as well as the at times violent obstruction of the Assembly of Kosovo. The EU appeals to opposition parties to respect the basic principles of democracy, including majority rule, and allow for a free and open debate in the Assembly on all issues regarding Kosovo. With regard to the Mushtishte/Musutiste incident where a group of 150 displaced Kosovo Serbs were prevented to visit their properties and attend a religious service in the local orthodox Church, we would be interested in Ambassador Schlumberger's assessment whether this was a singular incident or part of a worrying trend and what role OMiK can play in preventing such incidents.

¹This 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.

The EU calls on Kosovo to implement the agreement on an Association/Community of Kosovo Serb municipalities in Kosovo. The EU would like to underline that progress in the Dialogue and thus progress in the normalisation of relations between Pristina and Belgrade are firmly linked for both with progress on their respective paths to the EU.

The European Union would also like to use the opportunity to thank the Head of the OSCE Mission and its team, once again, for the collection of votes operation in Kosovo during the Serbian elections.

The EU recalls that ratification of the “State border Demarcation” agreement with Montenegro is one of the two remaining requirements for visa liberalisation to be approved by the European Parliament and Council, along with improving the track record in fighting organised crime and corruption.

The EU encourages Kosovo to swiftly focus on implementation of the European Reform Agenda, in order to take full advantage of the possibilities offered under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The EU is committed to assist Kosovo in tackling the challenges and re-energize the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue.

Given the current challenges, we commend the Mission for actively contributing to the implementation of relevant aspects of Kosovo’s reform agenda: improving the rule of law, including judicial independence, the fight against organised crime and corruption, electoral reform and public administration reform, effective promotion and protection of human rights throughout Kosovo, including inter-faith dialogue and with regard to the protection of cultural and religious heritage as well as the inclusion and protection of persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups are of particular importance in this context.

We underline once again the importance of regional co-operation in tackling many of the challenges in Kosovo, for example in the areas of trafficking in human beings, organised crime, drug trafficking, combatting radicalisation and terrorism, the return of displaced persons and the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities. We call for further efforts by the Mission to strengthen the regional approach and

enhance coordination with other field operations in the region. We also call for further efforts by the Mission to strengthen the coordination with local authorities regarding the protection of rights of persons belonging to all national minorities.

We would also be interested in Ambassador Schlumberger's assessment of the implications of the setting up of the Kosovo relocated Specialist Judicial Institution and which role OMiK can play in its support.

We reiterate that the Mission in Kosovo must continue to place importance on streamlining its activities and on evaluating its achievements to ensure best use of available resources. We encourage the Mission to embed further a culture of evaluation and to focus the six monthly reports on the impact Mission activities have had. With that in mind we would be grateful for details from Ambassador Schlumberger of the key impacts achieved by the Mission over the reporting period.

Finally, we use this opportunity to express our deep gratitude for Ambassador Schlumberger's committed work over the last years. The Mission he hands over to his successor has undergone a process of streamlining and presents itself nowadays as a valuable item in the OSCE-tool box. We wish Ambassador Schlumberger all the best for his personal future.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN align themselves with this statement.

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