



Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne

**Conseil permanent extraordinaire No. 731
10 septembre 2008**

**EU response to the address by the Serbian Foreign Minister,
H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić**

The European Union welcomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Vuk Jeremić to this special meeting of the Permanent Council. We congratulate him on his reappointment and thank him for his address.

Mr Chairman, the EU would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to the European perspective of Serbia. Serbia has a crucial role to play in the Western Balkans, both for ensuring stability and as a motor for the economic development and prosperity of the region. A deepening relationship between the European Union and Serbia, leading to membership, will bring concrete benefits to the people of Serbia.

Two weeks ago OSCE/ODIHR published its Final Report on the parliamentary elections held in Serbia last May. The EU is pleased to note that the elections were conducted in line with Serbia's international commitments for democratic elections. The EU was pleased that the Serbian people again chose the path of democracy and a European future for their country.

The EU has welcomed the recent arrest of Radovan Karadzic, who is now on trial in The Hague indicted by the ICTY for genocide, crimes against humanity

ue2008.fr

and war crimes. This development illustrates the commitment of the new Government in Belgrade to contribute to peace and stability in the Balkans region. It is a significant step on Serbia's path towards the EU.

The EU encourages the Serbian Government to continue along that path. Building on the signature of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, Serbia can accelerate its progress towards the EU, including candidate status, as soon as all necessary conditions are met. The EU reiterates that full co-operation with the ICTY is an essential element of the SAA and Interim Agreement and a precondition for them to take effect. We also reiterate our attachment to dialogue on visa liberalization with Serbia and call on the Government to focus on full implementation of the criteria set out in the road map.

Mr. Chairman, we have listened very carefully to what Mr Jeremić has said here today about Kosovo. This is an issue which is of crucial importance to reconciliation and future stability in the Balkans and to the security of Europe as a whole.

On 17 February 2008 the Kosovo Assembly adopted a resolution which declared Kosovo to be independent. That resolution committed Kosovo to the principles of democracy and equality of all its citizens, the protection of the Serb and other minorities, the protection of the cultural and religious heritage and international supervision. The EU welcomes the continued presence of the international community based on UN Security Council resolution 1244. We also remain committed to playing a leading role in ensuring the stability of Kosovo, through the EULEX Kosovo, the EUSR and its contribution to an international civilian office as part of the international presences.

The EU reiterates its adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, *inter alia* the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity

ue2008.fr

and all UN Security Council resolutions. It underlines its conviction that in view of the conflict of the 1990s and the extended period of international administration under SCR 1244, Kosovo constitutes a sui generis case which does not call into question these principles and resolutions.

As we told Ambassadors Zannier and Guldemann last week at the Permanent Council, the EU remains committed to a continued strong presence of the OSCE in Kosovo. OMIK's work makes a difference to the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo regardless of which community they come from. Close co-operation and consultation between the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union will continue to be necessary.

The European Union welcomes the close co-operation and constructive dialogue between the Serbian authorities and the OSCE Mission in Serbia. Importantly the Mission is helping Serbia to drive the democratic reform process itself. The EU encourages all Serbian Ministries to co-operate fully with the Mission across its full range of activities, and notably in the areas of judicial reform and the rule of law. We particularly value the Mission's work on the rights of the persons belonging to national minorities and multi-ethnic activities in South Serbia, and we also welcome its increasing focus on the Sandzak/Raska region. We encourage the Serbian government to pay more attention to these regions and to support the OSCE Mission's good work there.

Regarding the appointment of the head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the EU recalls its firm attachment to the relevant rules and procedures contained in Staff regulations and Staff rules agreed upon. We look forward to good cooperation by all participating States with the new Head of Mission to be appointed.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we would like once again to thank Foreign Minister Jeremić for addressing the Permanent Council today. We wish him and his

ue2008.fr

country well with their political and economic reforms, and in their efforts to meet their strategic objective of EU accession.

La Turquie, la Croatie* et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine*, pays candidats ; l'Albanie, la Bosnie - Herzégovine et le Monténégro, pays du processus de stabilisation et d'association et candidats potentiels se rallient à cette déclaration.

*La Croatie et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine continuent à participer au processus de stabilisation et d'association.

ue2008.fr