



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council N° 1176 Vienna, 15 February 2018

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#### **EU statement in response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jan Braathu**

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The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Ambassador Jan Braathu to the Permanent Council. We reiterate our firm support for the valuable work carried out by the Mission in contributing to a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.

We support the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's commitment to helping democratic institutions fulfil their role effectively in line with relevant international standards and good governance principles, in particular regarding strengthening public participation in decision-making and improving accountability and transparency of institutions. We also welcome the Mission's work on strengthening the legal and regulatory framework of media.

We commend the Mission's work on human rights and communities, especially the follow-up activities in response to concrete community concerns. Also, we welcome the monitoring of and support for Kosovo institutions' performance in improving inter-community relations and in responding to and addressing security incidents affecting communities. We encourage additional efforts by the Mission to strengthen the coordination with authorities regarding the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities throughout Kosovo, including their safety, protection of their property rights, language rights and the protection of their cultural and religious heritage.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The EU welcomes and encourages the Mission's engagement in contributing to Kosovo's efforts in countering violent extremism and radicalisation that leads to terrorism.

We welcome the cross-cutting youth-oriented activities of the Mission, aimed at boosting inter-ethnic relations and promoting dialogue. In this context, we continue to appreciate the support provided to the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO) and we look forward to increased co-operation with it.

The EU continues to appreciate the work done by the Mission related to gender equality and empowering women in Kosovo, including promoting the number and position of women in the judicial sector, enhancing the role of women police officers and advocating for enhanced women's representation in the municipal bodies.

The EU continues to play a leading role in strengthening stability in the region and to assist Kosovo in the path towards sustainable stability. The EU will continue to support Kosovo's socio-economic development as part of its European reform agenda including through financial and technical assistance. We recall that progress in the EU facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is an essential requirement for both in order to advance on their respective paths towards the EU, in line with the European perspective of the region, and we urge both sides to constructively engage in this process.

In conclusion, we would like to thank once again Ambassador Braathu and assure him and his able team of the EU's continued support.

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.