

United States Mission to the OSCE



**Response to the Report of the Acting Head of the
OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Michael Davenport**

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 16, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ambassador Davenport, we welcome you to the Permanent Council in your role as Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The United States strongly supports the work of the Mission and appreciates our close collaboration with you to ensure the Republic of Kosovo’s development as a peaceful, stable, democratic, and inclusive multi-ethnic country. We also recognize the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kosovo and your Mission’s work and would like to commend you and your team for your perseverance and resilience. Your impressive scope of activity is essential to the OSCE’s ability to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

Ambassador Davenport, we applaud your continuing engagement across the core elements of your mandate, such as democratization, security and public safety, and human rights. This includes a focus on members of ethnic minority groups and the promotion of constructive inter-communal relations. The upcoming local elections represent another opportunity for Kosovo to continue strengthening its electoral processes and build on February’s general elections. We would be very interested to hear your assessment of Kosovo’s electoral preparations so far.

I note the United States is the largest donor of vaccines to Kosovo via the COVAX program, contributing 538,200 total doses since August 20 to assist the government with combating the pandemic. We have also supported Kosovo throughout the pandemic in other ways, including providing nearly \$4 million in protective gear, medical equipment, grants for online learning, and other assistance to help schools, medical facilities, families, and communities across Kosovo’s 38 municipalities.

Ambassador Davenport, we applaud your intent to prioritize the strengthening of Kosovo’s democratic institutions to foster the implementation of planned reforms in good governance and the rule of law, such as support for the Assembly’s legislative and oversight functions. We commend you for your team’s ongoing work to track the security of non-majority communities, engage in trial monitoring, and advance municipal transparency. These are just some of the invaluable ways in which your Mission promotes international best practices while making a tangible difference in aiding democratic development and security in the Republic of Kosovo. We are particularly interested in the Mission’s work at the local level via the regional and municipal centers—both in light of the pandemic and impactful outcomes, and welcome your assessment of that work, now and in the future.

The Mission’s work also contributes to a broader atmosphere in which political negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina can advance through the EU-facilitated Dialogue talks. We are pleased that these talks have resumed and encourage both parties to engage in them with urgency and seriousness,

and the spirit of flexibility and compromise necessary to reach a comprehensive normalization agreement.

The United States seeks peace, justice, and prosperity in a democratic Kosovo that is fully integrated into the international community and part of a free, resilient, and thriving Europe. Only by hearing directly from host country officials, in conjunction with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, can we fully understand the dynamics on the ground and determine how best to address them. We therefore particularly appreciated hearing from a host country beneficiary during yesterday's informal briefing with Ambassador Davenport. This practice should continue to be a part of these briefings, as it has been in the past. We look forward to the day when Kosovo will be present in the Permanent Council as an OSCE participating State.

In closing, Ambassador Davenport, we once again welcome you to the Permanent Council and look forward to working with you and your team.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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