



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1015 Vienna, 4 September 2014

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 H.E. Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his comprehensive report. We appreciate the valuable work carried out by the Mission through its headquarters and its broad field presence throughout Kosovo¹.

We continue to strongly support the building of a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo within Europe with full respect for the rule of law, the protection of the rights of persons belonging to non-Albanian communities and cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) plays an important role in the realisation of this goal and continues to enjoy the full support of the European Union.

We commend the progress achieved so far in the implementation of the 19 April 2013 Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue. Since the work on implementation needs to be continued urgently, the swift formation of a new government would be crucial. An agreement on judiciary in the north should be a priority. Moreover, the Association of Serbian Majority Municipalities in Kosovo should be established urgently, and in line with the provisions of the April Agreement.

With regard to other areas and topics dealt with by the EU-facilitated dialogue, we expect the two sides to accelerate their work in addressing all aspects of the

¹ This 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.

relations, including the full implementation of previous agreements such as on energy and telecommunications.

We commend the OSCE, both the mission in Kosovo and the Secretariat, for its active role on facilitation of the final stages of municipal elections based on the 19 April Agreement, the collection of votes operation for the Serbian parliamentary elections on 16 March as well as the support provided to the elections for the Assembly of Kosovo on 8 June in the four northern municipalities.

In the same context, we expect Kosovo authorities to continue addressing the population in northern Kosovo via confidence building and other constructive steps in close co-operation with the European Union. We encourage OMiK to continue to implement successful approaches, such as on local and municipal safety committees and community policing, in the municipalities of northern Kosovo in close coordination with international partners, thereby avoiding duplications.

Electoral reform is a key part of Kosovo's further development, and EU track and substantive reform should be concluded right after the formation of a new government. Political parties need to address the concerns raised by international partners with regard to the draft law.

The essential role OMiK has been playing in the elections underlines, on a more general level, the importance of the presence and work of the international community. In this context, we encourage OMiK to continue its coordination and cooperation with international partners, and underline our continued support for EULEX and KFOR in their respective roles and the importance we attach to all parties co-operating with them. The EU also welcomes the decision to establish a special court for war crimes as a follow-up on the EU Special Investigative Task Force.

In line with the relevant Council conclusions, we also recall the EU's willingness to assist in the economic and political development of Kosovo through a clear

European perspective, in line with the European perspective of the region. The EU welcomes the completion of the negotiations and the initialling of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) by the chief negotiators at the end of July.

We believe that determined action is required to prevent radicalisation and extremism and to stem the flow of foreign fighters. In this context, close cooperation between the EU and relevant third countries is of major importance. We, therefore, support relevant efforts within the OSCE and welcome that Kosovo institutions are aware of the threat posed by the recruitment of foreign fighters and determined to take appropriate counter-measures.

With regard to the programmatic activities of the Mission, we reiterate the high value we attach to the work done in fields such as electoral reform, support for the Assembly, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, rule of law, civil society, media freedom, cultural and religious heritage and public safety. We underline that for OMiK, and for all field operations, effective evaluation based on benchmarking and performance indicators is essential to ensure efficient use of resources and aids the development of best practices and the process of lesson learning. We are grateful for the account of activities undertaken in this reporting period. We would also be grateful if Ambassador Schlumberger could highlight some of the key outcomes the mission has delivered through its work in this period.

In this context, we reiterate our special support for OMiK's activities in the field of regional co-operation, including with the other OSCE field missions in the region, and encourage OMiK to continue with this approach.

In our statement in response to Ambassador Schlumberger's last report, on 6 February, we noted that in light of the progress Kosovo and Serbia have made towards normalisation of relations, it is important that OMiK continues to review its programmes, resources, and operating model to identify and implement further streamlining, and to ensure it can continue to play an effective role in the

years ahead. We would be grateful to hear from Ambassador Schlumberger what progress has been made on this during the reporting period.

Finally, we are looking forward to continued fruitful co-operation with OMiK, under the able leadership of Ambassador Schlumberger, and will support it in its crucial tasks. We wish you every success in your future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as MONACO align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.