

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1052
Vienna, 14 May 2015**

**EU statement on the recent events in the former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia**

We deeply regret the loss of lives in Kumanovo. We express our sympathy with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and offer sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

We commend the OSCE Mission for the role it played to reduce tensions during the events. We furthermore welcome today's timely visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by the Head of the CiO Taskforce, Ambassador Šahović and the Special Representative of the Chairmanship for Western Balkans, Ambassador Stoudmann. We look forward to Ambassador Stoudmann's report on this visit to the Permanent Council.

We welcome the statements of all political leaders in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that this incident should not be seen as an inter-ethnic conflict. Ordinary people have joined in distancing themselves from conflict across ethnicities. We also welcome President Ivanov's initiative to meet with all political parties, and call for an increase in engagement in this regard. We note with satisfaction, that the governments of the neighbouring countries have denounced any attempts to destabilise the inter-ethnic relations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and have called for a restoration of calm as well as a de-escalation of tension.

We strongly believe that the incident in Kumanovo must not be allowed to harm relations within communities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or regionally. In this context, we urge the relevant authorities to fully investigate the events in an objective and transparent manner within the law, and to share

information with international partners. We expect all parties to cooperate in order to shed light on those events.

In terms of the ongoing political crisis, we recall the European Council Conclusions of 21 April, which inter alia urge all sides to assume their respective responsibilities and take immediate measures towards a sustainable solution, constructively engage to restart political dialogue and restore trust in the institutions by adequate political steps. All allegations should be investigated by the relevant authorities, including those allegations of potential wrongdoing being made public, with full regard for due process, principle of independence and the presumption of innocence.

We continue to fully support the fundamental democratic right of citizens to assemble and peacefully protest, and reiterate our appeal on all sides to refrain from violence.

Finally, we underline that this is the time for the government and opposition to pull together and engage seriously, constructively, and without delay in dialogue on all issues facing the country, including the ongoing political crisis and necessary reforms.

The Candidate Country MONTENEGRO*, 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 UKRAINE and MONACO align themselves with this statement.

* Montenegro continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.