



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 707
3 April 2008**

EU statement in response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Douglas Davidson

The EU is pleased to welcome Ambassador Davidson back to the PC today and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

The European Union wishes to commend the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina for continuing the outstanding work it is doing to assist the country in its full recovery, despite recent political difficulties.

The EU continues to reiterate its full support to the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU notes that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress with regard to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. We urge Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to make further efforts to ensure swift and effective fulfilment of all four conditions necessary for signing the Stabilisation and Association agreement.

In this regard, it is important that the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopt the necessary police reform laws which are currently under consideration. These laws, which would implement the Mostar Declaration and the subsequent Action Plan, are an important step towards establishing a more effective police force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Full cooperation with the ICTY remains an essential requirement for Bosnia and Herzegovina's continuing progress towards the EU. In this context, it is positive that Bosnia and Herzegovina's cooperation with the ICTY has improved substantially in the last years. It is important that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to do its utmost in this regard.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has also made progress in addressing the reforms of public broadcasting and public administration. The EU encourages stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward on these issues with determination.

The European Commission also intends to launch soon a visa dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to establishing road-maps on the conditions to be met for lifting the visa requirement.

The EU welcomes the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board's decision that the Office of the High Representative will remain in place and continue to carry out its mandate under the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement until the necessary objectives and conditions as set out in the PIC Steering Board Declaration of 27 February are met. The EU urges the relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to address these objectives and conditions urgently and efficiently so as to pave the way for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

The EU expresses concern over challenges to the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement and calls on politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina to end the practice of threatening unilateral changes to the constitutional structure of the country and weakening the legitimacy of the state. The EU expects all democratically elected institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully abide by the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. Any future constitutional change in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be agreed by consensus among all the nationalities in the country.

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The EU underlines the responsibility of the political leaders to ensure the full functioning of state institutions and to advance reforms, including constitutional reform, which are essential for Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward and assume full ownership of its governance.

The European Union attaches particular importance to the continuation of the Mission's work on addressing war crimes issues. We take this opportunity to commend the Mission's own efforts to promote reconciliation, including its work in the areas of refugee returns, property rights, human rights, war crimes trial monitoring and interethnic dialogue. We welcome the Mission's role in producing a comprehensive overview of the principles that any national strategy for war crime prosecutions would have to address in order to be effective. We also highly value the increasing cooperation between the Mission and the ICTY.

Ambassador Davidson's report rightly highlights the Mission's important work on education. We share his regret that the absence of genuine political will has slowed tangible progress in this key area. The European Union reaffirms its broad support for the Mission's efforts to promote a rational and professional education structure free from undue political influences

We support the Mission's focus on good governance in particular at municipal level, on establishing justice, and on promoting rule of law. We welcome the work of the Mission on election related activities as well as its advisory role.

The EU agrees with Ambassador Davidson that the establishment of justice is crucial to the maintenance of peace. The monitoring of court trials has proven to be beneficial and we welcome the Mission's role in supporting the drafting of a Justice Sector Reform Strategy.

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The EU takes note of the concerns raised by Ambassador Davidson with regard to the locally recruited staff. The EU is ready to discuss these issues in the course of the coming months in the framework of the 2009 Programme Outline discussion and 2009 Budget negotiations.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the EU congratulates the Mission on its continuing significant contribution to sustainable peace and further democratic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for their good cooperation with the host government. We trust that the OSCE Mission will continue to play a constructive role. As this is the last time Ambassador Davidson addresses the Permanent Council in his capacity of Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would like to thank him for his very dedicated and successful work and wish him the best of success in his future activities.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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