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**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1214
Vienna, 31 January 2019**

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

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H. E. Ambassador Jan Braathu back to the Permanent Council.

Let me use this opportunity to once again underline our firm support for the valuable work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, in contributing to a safe and secure, as well as democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo*, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.

The European Union welcomes your engagement on a wide range of important activities: from support for democratic institutions and civic participation in the decision-making process, to the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

We particularly welcome and continue to support the Mission's work in assisting stakeholders in Kosovo to exercise their duties effectively, offering support and expertise to enhance compliance with good governance and highest international human rights standards. To improve accountability and transparency of institutions is especially important in that regard.

The European Union commends the Mission's commitment to the protection of human and community rights, especially the follow-up activities in response to concrete community concerns. We also welcome the monitoring of, and support for, Kosovo institutions' performance in

* 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.

improving inter-community relations and in responding to and addressing security incidents affecting communities.

Furthermore, strengthening coordination with stakeholders relating to the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities, including their safety, protection of their property and language rights, along with the protection of their cultural and religious heritage, should remain high on the Mission's agenda in the long – term.

We welcome the fact that the Mission continues to place emphasis on several other important areas, such as prevention of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism, the freedom of the media and the safety of journalists, tackling domestic violence and trafficking of human beings, return of displaced persons, as well as gender mainstreaming. We also welcome the numerous activities involving youth and look forward to increased cooperation with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO).

Continuing to play a leading role in the political and security consolidation in the region, and having the highest stakes in that outcome, the European Union remains determined to continue to assist Kosovo on its path towards enduring stability. We will maintain our resolute support for the socio - economic development of Kosovo for the benefit of all, including through financial and technical assistance.

We reiterate that progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains an essential requirement for both in order to advance on their respective European paths, in line with the European perspective of the region. Therefore, we urge both sides to redouble their efforts to engage constructively in this process.

In conclusion, we would like to thank once again Ambassador Braathu, and assure him and his able team of the European Union'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, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

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