



se2009.eu

PC.DEL/706/09  
10 September 2009

ENGLISH only

## Swedish Presidency of the European Union

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 773  
Vienna 10 September 2009**

### **EU statement in response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Almhofer**

---

The European Union welcomes the head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Almhofer, back to the Permanent Council and would like to thank him for his comprehensive report. Once again the EU wants to express its appreciation for the work done by the Mission through its headquarters and its broad field presence throughout Kosovo.

The EU remains strongly committed to a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo with full respect for the rule of law, the protection of non-Albanian communities and of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage. OMiK has an important role to play in the realization of this goal and the EU stands ready to support the Mission in these efforts. The EU agrees with the Mission's approach to continuing its valuable work in a status neutral manner on the basis of its existing mandate.

The European Union continues to play a leading role in ensuring the stability of Kosovo, including through the EULEX Kosovo, the EUSR

---

*Postal address*  
Obere Donaustrasse 49-51  
1020 Vienna, Austria

*Telephone*  
+43 (0) 1 217 53 0

*E-mail:* osse-del.wien@foreign.ministry.se  
euoffice@osce.org

*Visitor's address*  
Obere Donaustrasse 49-51  
1020 Vienna, Austria

*Fax*  
+43 (0) 1 217 53 380

and its contribution to the international civilian office as part of the international presences. The enhanced operational role of the EU in the area of rule of law through the full deployment of the EULEX - which also operates within the status-neutral framework of the UNSCR 1244 – requires close coordination to promote complementarity and avoid duplication.

With the reconfiguration of UNMIK the Mission assumes a broader role in monitoring the compliance with human and communities' rights and through its extensive field presence. The steady exchange of information among all international actors on the ground – the OSCE, the United Nations, NATO and the European Union – has proven indispensable in pursuing the stabilisation of the entire region. We call on all sides to work together to achieve long-term stability and prosperity for all people living in Kosovo and in the region.

OMiK holds a unique position within the international presence in Kosovo, with its close relationship to all ethnic communities, its longstanding expertise in building local capacities and its broad field presence. This allows for the thorough monitoring of human and community rights compliance at the grassroots level. The Mission's particular attention to non-Albanian communities' access to public services and participation in public life receives our full support. The EU also agrees that the protection of housing and property rights as well as of religious and cultural heritage is a cornerstone for the future development of Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, in close cooperation with the HCNM, has played an essential role in keeping the issue of access to

education for Gorani children high on the agenda. We welcome this contribution of OMiK in building bridges between communities and local authorities and in helping to ensure comprehensive and meaningful engagement at the local level. Therefore we repeat: OMiK's work makes a difference to the lives of ordinary people living in Kosovo regardless of which community they come from.

The EU commends the Mission for working intensively and in coordination with other international stakeholders to support the Central Election Commission (CEC) and for taking the lead in coordinating international stakeholders' assistance to the CEC, in accordance with OMiK's previous experience in organizing elections and within its status-neutral mandate.

The EU recognizes the Mission's efforts to strengthen independent institutions, such as the office of the Ombudsperson and, in this context, welcomes the recent election of a new Ombudsperson, after almost 4 years of failed attempts. Helping democratic institutions to function properly and to implement principles of good governance effectively remains crucial. We welcome OMiK's continued engagement in strengthening civil society to achieve tangible results in the lives of all people living in Kosovo.

Freedom of expression and of the media is a core value of the OSCE and we recognize OMiK's efforts in promoting these values as well as its assistance to independent institutions such as the Press Council and the Independent Media Commission.

The EU recalls its 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 European Union continues to value the important OMiK contribution to its Progress Report on Kosovo. We hope that EU cooperation with the OSCE will remain as fruitful as ever in this area. We reiterate that, through financial contributions and seconded staff, the EU continues to support OMiK in its crucial tasks.

In concluding we would like to thank Ambassador Almhofer and his dedicated staff for their work and wish them all the best for the future.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA\* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ARMENIA align themselves with this statement.

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