

Prohlášení
Statement
DéclarationPC.DEL/161/09
19 March 2009

ENGLISH only

Vienna 19 March 2009

Permanent Council No. 755
EU Statement in response to the report by the Head of the OSCE
Mission to Montenegro, Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Badescu back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for her comprehensive report. It confirms our belief that since her last appearance, Montenegro has made considerable progress in pursuit of its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

The EU welcomes the important progress achieved by Montenegro, and highly values its ambitious economic and political reform agenda as well as its constructive approach towards regional co-operation and stability. On 15 December 2008 Montenegro submitted its application for EU membership. We encourage the Montenegrin authorities to keep up the pace of reform and to remove all obstacles that hamper its progress. The EU reiterates its aim to intensify people to people contacts with the countries of the Western Balkans, including Montenegro, inter alia through pursuing a visa liberalisation dialogue.

Madam Chair, Montenegro has indeed come a long way in a short time. However, sustained effort is still necessary in order to achieve progress in a number of areas, in particular strengthening of the rule of law and administrative capacity, judicial reform, media independence, and the fight against corruption and organised crime. The EU is ready to assist the

Montenegrin authorities to address these outstanding issues. We encourage them to make further efforts to harmonize the legislative corpus with the new constitution and implement it in line with European standards.

The European Union wishes to commend the OSCE Mission to Montenegro for the outstanding work it has been doing to assist the country, in particular in supporting the authorities to tackle the remaining challenges. Ambassador Badescu can be proud on her Mission's work in helping Montenegro to pursue its European aspirations. We also appreciate the excellent relations between the Mission and the Montenegrin authorities, the Mission's efforts to involve NGO's and other stakeholders in its activities as well as good co-operation with the other international organizations on the ground.

The European Union welcomes the Mission's excellent work in promoting democratisation, the rule of law, tolerance, protecting human rights and rights of persons belonging to national minorities. We also support its assistance to the Montenegrin Parliament in modernizing its structures and procedures as well as its efforts regarding the final phase of judicial reform. Since a well functioning and efficient judicial system is a key priority the EU supports further implementation of the Court Monitoring Project.

The European Union commends the Mission's efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Montenegrin authorities to combat organised crime and corruption. Police training programmes are transforming the police into a modern, professional and efficient institution. We also support the Mission's work to promote regional co-operation on border policing and its

work on the development of better media legislation and improving professional journalistic standards. We welcome the Mission's role in facilitating the effective implementation of the comprehensive Montenegro Demilitarization Programme. We also welcome the focus of the Mission's economic and environmental programme on the promotion of good governance, prevention of corruption and money laundering.

Madam Chair, early parliamentary elections will take place in Montenegro on 29 March. The European Union welcomes the commitment of the authorities of Montenegro to address the issue of "authentic representation" of national minorities after the coming elections. As stressed in the OSCE/ODIHR's Needs Assessment Mission Report despite substantive progress on harmonization of some laws with the Constitution, the discussion on further amending the electoral legislation has languished in the Parliament. In this context the EU calls upon the Montenegrin authorities to address the remaining challenges and implement key recommendations made by the ODIHR.

Finally Madam Chair we would like to thank once again Ambassador Badescu and assure her and her dedicated team of the EU continued support.

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, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 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, ARMENIA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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