



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1197
Vienna, 11 October 2018**

**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.

We reiterate our strong support for the important endeavors undertaken 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 Mission continues to run an extensive array of valuable activities: from the support to the functioning of democratic institutions and civic participation in decision-making process, to the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The European Union commends you for that.

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.

We maintain our support to the Mission's engagement on protecting 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 improving inter-community relations and in responding to and addressing security incidents affecting communities.

^{*} 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.

Enhancing the coordination with stakeholders with regard 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 of continued importance for the Mission. In that regard, we are pleased to note that the Implementation and Monitoring Council for the protection of the Serbian religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo reconvened in March after almost two-year inactivity.

The European Union acknowledges, with great satisfaction, that the Mission continues to pay close attention to strengthening individual, community and institutional awareness and responses to the issue of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism.

In addition, the freedom of the media and the safety of journalists, the rights of youth and adolescents, as well as gender mainstreaming, continue to feature prominently on the Mission's agenda. This is highly commendable and we look forward to increased cooperation with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office.

Being the pivotal factor for the political and security consolidation in the region, and having the highest stakes in that outcome, the European Union stays determined to continue to assist Kosovo on its path towards long - term stability. We will maintain our unwavering 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 a critical prerequisite for both in order to advance on their respective European paths in line with the European perspective of the region. We, therefore, urge both sides to redouble their efforts to constructively engage in this process.

In conclusion, we would like to extend once again our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Braathu and his capable team for their work. We can assure you that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo can count on the full and continued support of the European Union.

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 country LIECHTENSTEIN, member 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.