

## Prohlášení

## Statement

## Déclaration

Vienna 5 March 2009

### **Permanent Council No. 752 EU Statement in response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad**

The European Union welcomes Ambassador Urstad back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

The EU takes this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to the European perspective of Serbia. Serbia has a crucial role to play in the Western Balkans, both for ensuring stability and as a motor for the economic development and prosperity of the region. A deepening relationship between the European Union and Serbia, leading to membership, will bring concrete benefits to the people of Serbia.

Last year Serbia held presidential and parliamentary elections. The EU was pleased that on both occasions the Serbian people chose the path of democracy and a European future for their country. The EU also welcomed the arrest of Radovan Karadzic, now on trial in The Hague indicted by the ICTY for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. This development illustrated the commitment of the new Government in Belgrade to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

The EU recognises the progress achieved in terms of cooperation with the ICTY, but points out, however, that Serbia must complement this positive development by full cooperation. It also stresses the importance of tangible progress in priority areas such as strengthening of the rule of law, economic reform, and the fight against corruption and organised crime. It emphasises the importance of a constructive attitude towards regional cooperation. The EU restates its view that Serbia, with its strong administrative capacity, can accelerate its progress towards the EU, including candidate status, as soon as all necessary conditions are met.

Mr Chairman, the EU commends Ambassador Urstad for the continued strong performance of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and welcomes the very good relations it has developed with the Serbian authorities. The Mission is right to be placing more emphasis on the implementation of reforms and strategic support to government institutions.

We encourage the Mission to continue its close co-operation with the embassies of EU Member States in Belgrade, and with the European Commission and other international actors. We also welcome Peter Sorensen's appointment as the Personal Representative in Belgrade of Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. We encourage the authorities in Belgrade to work constructively with Mr Sorensen.

The EU values highly the Mission's work on minority rights and multi-ethnic activities in South Serbia and encourages the Mission, in cooperation with the HCNM, to explore additional measures to support the building of a functioning multi-ethnic society. We also very much welcome its increasing focus on the Sandzak region. The newly established Training

Facility in Novi Pazar is already helping to ease political and religious tensions in the region.

The EU fully supports the Mission's continued focus on promoting reconciliation and regional co-operation. The EU notes with concern Ambassador Urstad's comments about the lack of progress in dealing with refugee returns and IDPs, despite commitments from countries in the region to support the unconditional return of refugees, and supports the Mission's efforts in this area. The EU encourages the Mission to continue to promote regional co-operation in other areas too, notably border policing and in the fight against human trafficking, drug trafficking and terrorism.

The EU commends the Mission's efforts to promote the rule of law and the reform of the judiciary. Here the EU lays particular stress on further efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Serbian authorities to combat organised crime and corruption. We note Ambassador Urstad's comment that progress remains uneven in this area. We believe the Mission is doing much to help Serbia develop effective law enforcement and democratic policing.

The EU supports the Mission's continued efforts to promote democratisation, in particular by assisting parliament to become more effective and local government more accountable and transparent. The EU also believes that the Mission's efforts to promote a free, vibrant and professional media will strengthen democracy in Serbia.

Finally Mr Chairman, as this is Ambassador Urstad's last appearance before the Permanent Council, we would like to take this opportunity to

thank him for his important contribution and to wish him well for the future. Under his stewardship, the Mission has achieved a great deal in helping Serbia pursue its democratic reform agenda.

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 MONTENEGRO, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area ICELAND, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN 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.