

Prohlášení Statement Déclaration

Vienna 5 February 2009

Permanent Council No.749

EU Statement in response to the address by the Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Almhofer

The European Union thanks the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Almhofer, for his first appearance in the Permanent Council and for his report on the Mission's activities in the past six months. We would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for the essential work done by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo through its headquarters in Pristina as well as its broad field presence throughout Kosovo. The EU supports OMIK's continued activities in the areas of monitoring, assistance and public safety.

The European Union remains committed to playing a leading role in ensuring the stability of Kosovo, through the EULEX Kosovo, the EUSR and its contribution to the international civilian office, as part of the international presences. The EU recalls its willingness to assist 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 incisive OMIK contribution to our Progress Report on Kosovo. We hope that our cooperation with the OSCE will remain as fruitful as ever in this regard.

The EU particularly welcomes the vital role of OMIK in building bridges between communities and local authorities and in helping to ensure

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comprehensive and meaningful engagement at the local level. OMIK's work makes a difference to the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo regardless of which community they come from.

The European Union values the Mission's commitment to continue its work in a status-neutral manner on the basis of the existing mandate. The EU remains committed to a continued strong presence of the OSCE in Kosovo in the interest of people living in Kosovo. In a changing environment OMIK continues to play an essential role in promoting a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, with full respect for the rule of law, the protection of the Serb and other communities and of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage, as well as of the highest level of internationally recognised fundamental rights. Through financial contributions and seconded staff, the EU stands ready to continue to support OMIK in its crucial tasks. After the full deployment of EULEX even closer coordination will be necessary to promote complementarity and avoid duplication.

The European Union welcomes OMIK's efforts and commitment to enhance its efficiency and to prepare for the challenges ahead. The steady exchange of information among all international actors on the ground - 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 the people in Kosovo and in the region.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Ambassador Almhofer and his team for their dedicated work and wish them the best of success in their future activities.

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 and NORWAY align themselves with this statement.

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