



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1066 Vienna, 3 September 2015

EU statement in Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo*, Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome H.E. Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his comprehensive report. We appreciate the valuable work carried out by the Mission through its headquarters and its field presence throughout Kosovo.

We commend the OSCE Mission in Kosovo for playing an important role in Kosovo's stability, normalisation and reconciliation. The Mission contributes significantly to Kosovo's goal of a democratic, multi-ethnic society, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including rights of persons belonging to minorities as set out in its mandate. OMiK's close relationship to all communities, its field presence in particular in the north and institutional memory are all strengths the Mission can bring to bear within the international presence in Kosovo.

After the solution of last year's political stalemate, the constitution of a Parliament and the formation of a government, Kosovo has seen progress in key legislative areas which gives way to great hope that it has entered a period of political and economic consolidation.

Overall, the EU urges continued efforts in the areas of rule of law, judiciary, strong institutions, electoral reform, fight against organised crime and corruption. By paving the way for the establishment of a special court to follow-up on the findings of the EU Special Investigative Task Force for War crime allegations, Pristina fulfilled a promise we had considered a key element.

The reporting period saw a sudden and sharp increase of irregular migration emanating from Kosovo to different EU member states in late 2014 and 2015. The EU and its Member States call on Kosovo to continue working to address irregular migratory flows of asylum seekers from Kosovo, e.g. by addressing the root causes and continuing its efforts to inform the public about the futility of an unfounded asylum claim as a means to achieve a permanent stay in the European Union. We would appreciate more information from Ambassador Schlumberger on how the Mission is assisting and can assist this aim.

We welcome the drafting by Pristina of an Action Plan on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that lead to Terrorism. Countering the flow of foreign fighters towards the Islamic State in Syria and adopting relevant legislation penalising the participation in conflicts outside Kosovo is an important contribution. As the attempted terrorist attack at Lake Badovc on 11th July demonstrated continuous vigilance is necessary.

The EU welcomes the resumption of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina in 2015. Starting with the high-level meeting between Prime Ministers Vucic and Mustafa facilitated by High Representative/Vice President Mogherini, substantial progress has been achieved in all areas. We welcome the landmark achievements in the normalisation process reached in the High Level Dialogue of 25 August on the association/community of Serb majority municipalities, telecoms, energy and freedom of movement/Mitrovica bridge. The conclusion of the demarcation process with Montenegro after signing the Agreement on the State Border in Vienna last week is also a positive step.

We would be interested in Ambassador Schlumberger's view on how the Mission can help support the implementation of agreements reached in Brussels and underline the importance of coordination between international actors. This is especially crucial in Kosovo, where the international presence continues to be significant and diverse.

In line with the relevant Council conclusions, we recall the EU's willingness to assist in the economic and political development of Kosovo within the European perspective of the region. We reiterate the call of the Council on Kosovo to focus on the comprehensive reforms necessary to meet its obligations under the proposed Stabilisation and Association Agreement which was initialled by the chief negotiators on 25 July 2014. We look forward to the early entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

With regard to the municipalities in northern Kosovo, we support OMiK's approach of targeted and tailor-made activities in those areas of the Brussels Agreement that fall under the Mission's mandate such as local governance, police and judiciary, in close coordination with the European Union and other international partners. We commend OMiK for its activities in the area of democratisation and human rights which includes inter-faith dialogue and working with civil-society. We would welcome OMiK taking a lead within the international community in a resolution of the land dispute between the Decani municipality and the Decani monastery.

It is important that OMiK continues to review its programmes, resources, and operating model to focus on those areas where it can have most impact, and to implement further streamlining. In this regard we welcome the Mission's "Strategic Vision" and would appreciate further information about what this review entailed, the outcomes, and the implications for the Mission, in both programmatic and resource terms. We underline that for all field operations effective evaluation is essential to ensure efficient use of resources, the development of best practices and the process of lesson learning. We reiterate the importance of focussing on outcomes in Mission reporting and would welcome examples of concrete impact during this reporting period.

Finally, we are looking forward to continued fruitful co-operation with OMiK, under the leadership of Ambassador Schlumberger, and will support it in its crucial tasks. We wish you every success in your future endeavours.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.*