



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1394 Vienna, 13 October 2022

EU Statement in response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Michael Davenport

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Michael Davenport and thanks him for presenting his biannual report to the Permanent Council.
2. Against the backdrop of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms as a gross violation of international law, the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments, the role of the OSCE and its field operations continue to be imperative in promoting and safeguarding security and stability across the OSCE area. Kosovo's^{*1} unequivocal condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is testimony to its strong commitment to the European values we share.
3. We reiterate our support for the valuable work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, despite the serious challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mission has proven itself as a trusted partner of all communities and contributes to a safe and secure, as well as a democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.
4. The EU welcomes the Mission's balanced approach based on three programmatic pillars: human rights and communities, democratisation, and security and public safety. We value the Mission's continued involvement in targeted projects and activities dedicated to priority issues such as freedom of expression and media freedom, gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as active youth and civil society, to name just a few. A recent

* 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.

example in that field is the adoption in September 2022 of the Strategy for Advancing the Rights of the Roma and Ashkali Communities 2022 - 2026 and its corresponding Action Plan.

5. The EU welcomes the Mission's activities on promoting inter-community relations. Strengthening coordination with relevant stakeholders for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups, including their safety and the protection of their property rights, along with the protection of their cultural and religious heritage, including the Special Protective Zones, should remain high on the Mission's agenda. In this context, the 2016 Constitutional court ruling on the land dispute case in Decani must be implemented. We also welcome the Mission's support for the development and adoption of cultural heritage management plans in Kosovo.
6. We commend the Mission's continued assistance to strengthening the capacities of Kosovo's law enforcement institutions and emphasis on important areas, including fighting organised crime and corruption, combatting trafficking in human beings, as well as preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. Improving the accountability and transparency of institutions remains equally important. We also welcome the contribution of the Mission to the implementation of the EU-funded OSCE Regional Trial Monitoring Project in the Western Balkans (2021-2023), which contributes to strengthening the rule of law in Kosovo, by supporting a more effective administration of justice in corruption and organised crime cases.
7. We praise the Mission's efforts to improve Kosovo's media environment and the continued focus on freedom of expression, increasing media literacy and safety of journalists. In addition, we highlight the importance of engagement with civil society, including through youth-oriented activities, aimed at enhancing inter-ethnic relations and promoting dialogue.
8. We highly value the close cooperation between the EU and the Mission on strengthening the electoral process in Kosovo, as manifested by the renewed regional EU-funded project on electoral reform with ODIHR, and the Mission's willingness to provide technical support to the electoral reform process based on recommendations of the successive EU Election

Observation Missions. These recommendations should be fully implemented in order to improve the electoral process, in line with international standards and norms. . We also encourage all stakeholders to further advance on key reforms, guided by the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the European Reform Agenda, as well as on regional cooperation.

9. The EU welcomes the agreement reached between Belgrade and Pristina on 27 August under the EU-facilitated Dialogue and with the support of the United States enabling citizens to travel freely between the two sides using their ID cards. Nevertheless, the work on freedom of movement is not over. We expect both sides to continue showing political will, pragmatism and constructiveness in order to resolve in a timely manner all outstanding issues, including finding a solution to the dispute over license plates, as well as on putting the implementation of the Energy Implementation Roadmap, which was agreed within the EU-facilitated Dialogue in June, back on track without delay. The EU welcomes the continued good cooperation and coordination between the EU and the Mission on issues related to the EU-facilitated Dialogue on normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

10. The European Union underlines that progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains essential for both in order to advance on their respective European paths, in line with the European perspective of the region. They must fully implement all past commitments, constructively engage in the negotiations and make additional substantial efforts, with the aim of reaching a comprehensive legally-binding normalisation agreement. Such an agreement is urgent and crucial for the stability of the entire region. Both sides should also avoid actions that undermine stability and rhetoric that is not conducive to dialogue.

11. Finally, with a strong interest in political and security consolidation in the region, the European Union remains determined to continue to assist Kosovo towards lasting stability and prosperity. We wish you Ambassador Davenport and your dedicated team every success and assure you of the EU's resolute support in your important work.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE, REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE and REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Countries BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.