



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Special Permanent Council No. 1372 Vienna, 5 May 2022

EU Statement in Response to 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 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 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 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 European Union welcomes the Mission's balanced approach based on three programmatic pillars: human rights and communities, democratization, and security and public safety. We value the Mission's continued involvement in targeted projects and tailored-made activities dedicated to priority issues such as freedom of expression and media freedom, gender equality and women's empowerment, and youth and civil

* 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.

society. A clear example of progress in that field is the adoption in January 2022 of the Strategy to Combat Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and its corresponding Action Plan.

5. The EU follows closely the Mission's activities focused on promoting inter-community relations. We welcome the Mission's fifth comprehensive assessment of community rights protection in Kosovo, paving the way for further progress in this area. Strengthening the 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 Decan/i 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 Kosovo's law enforcement institutions and emphasis on important areas such as fighting organised crime and corruption, combatting trafficking in human beings and preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization 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 Regional Trial Monitoring Project in the Western Balkans, which contributes to strengthening the rule of law in Kosovo, by supporting a more effective administration of justice in corruption and organized 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. We welcome the successful, peaceful conduct of the fourth local elections in Kosovo in October/November 2021.

The recommendations of the successive EU Election Observation Missions should be followed with determination 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 Stabilization and Association Agreement and the European Reform Agenda, as well as on regional cooperation.

9. Acting as a facilitator between the two parties, the European Union actively supported the concerted efforts of the international community to find a solution that would allow eligible voters in Kosovo to exercise their democratic right and participate in the Serbian parliamentary and presidential elections on 3 April 2022. As also mentioned in the Mission's report, the EU regrets that a consensus between the parties, based on previously established practice, was not found due to Pristina's decision to reject a proposal on the table. However, we appreciate the good cooperation and coordination with the Mission on this issue.
10. The European Union strongly condemns the recent attacks on Kosovo Police patrols. Use of force is unacceptable. The rule of law is fundamental to peace and security.
11. The European Union underlines that progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue on normalisation of relations 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. Both sides 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 parties should also avoid actions that undermine stability and rhetoric that is not conducive to dialogue.
12. Finally, with a strong interest in the 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 in the coming year and assure you of the EU's resolute support on your important work.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA* and MONTENEGRO*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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