



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1538
Vienna, 16 October 2025**

**EU Statement in Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission in
Kosovo, Mr. Gerard McGurk**

FINAL (909 words)

1. The European Union welcomes the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Mr Gerard McGurk, and thanks him for his comprehensive report to the Permanent Council.
2. We take note of the report's assessment regarding the complex and uncertain operating environment the Mission has functioned in since the end of May 2025 and welcome the progress sustained across the spectrum of the Mission mandated areas.
3. We reiterate our strong support for the valuable work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, which has proven itself as a trusted partner of all communities, and contributes to a safe and secure, democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo^{*1}, based on respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The EU welcomes the Mission's balanced approach based on three programmatic pillars: human rights and communities, democratisation, and security and public safety.
4. The EU welcomes the Mission's activities on promoting inter-community relations and emphasises the importance of coordination with relevant stakeholders for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and persons in vulnerable situations. This entails ensuring voluntary returns, their safety, protecting their property rights, including against contentious expropriations, and preserving their cultural and religious heritage, such as through the Special Protective Zones. We highlight the importance of engagement with civil society, including through youth-oriented activities, to enhance inter-ethnic relations and inter-municipal cooperation, and promote dialogue.

¹ * 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.

5. Improving the accountability and transparency of institutions remains equally important. We commend the Mission's continued assistance in strengthening Kosovo's democratic institutions and its focus on enhancing public safety, the rule of law, and transparent and inclusive good governance at both central and local levels. The EU highly values the Mission's contributions to enhancing Kosovo's inter-institutional co-operation in addressing security challenges and risks related to trafficking in human beings, extremism leading to terrorism, organised crime and corruption, as well as hate crimes, and attacks against journalists and public defamation campaigns. We particularly appreciate the Mission's activities in support of Kosovo's legislative and policy agenda, notably its contribution to the review of legal and policy acts, and its continuous engagement in the implementation of the EU-funded OSCE Regional Trial Monitoring Project in the Western Balkans.
6. We welcome the fair, transparent, and inclusive conduct of this first round of 12 October 2025 local elections with the participation of all communities. Voter turnout was particularly high in majority Serb-inhabited municipalities, reflecting strong engagement by the Kosovo Serb community. We continue to encourage Kosovo to fully implement the EU Election Observation Mission recommendations following the Assembly elections on 9 February 2025 and take positive note of the progress made so far. The EU will pay close attention to the smooth hand-over to the incoming elected mayors.
7. The EU values the Mission's monitoring and early warning efforts, particularly given the fragile and complex security environment in the north of Kosovo. In this context we welcome the regular reporting and exchanges with the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. We welcome the Mission's continued good cooperation and coordination with partners on the ground, including the EUSR/EU Office in Kosovo, EULEX, KFOR, and the UN in support of multilateral efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and implementing obligations under the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.
8. The EU continues to closely monitor developments in the north of Kosovo. We reiterate our concerns about the continuing unilateral and uncoordinated actions in the north by Pristina, including the closure of Kosovo Serbs' institutions that have negatively affected the daily lives and living conditions of the local communities and could worsen the fragile security situation on the ground. The status of Belgrade-supported structures and services is foreseen to be resolved in line with agreements reached in the EU-facilitated

Dialogue and Kosovo law. We also reiterate that the facts regarding the Zubin Potok canal explosion on 29 November 2024, and the Banjska/Banjskë attack on 24 September 2023 need to be established, and we call on Belgrade to hold the perpetrators of the Banjska/Banjskë attack accountable and face justice. We take positive note of the resolution of the case related to the 29 May 2023 Zvečan/Zveçan attack. Pristina and Belgrade must pursue sustained de-escalation efforts, refrain from unilateral and provocative actions that could lead to tensions and violence and avoid divisive rhetoric. We expect that both remain engaged, constructively and in good faith, in the EU-facilitated Dialogue and the process of normalisation of their relations.

9. We underline that there is no alternative to the EU-facilitated dialogue. The Agreement on the Path to Normalisation and its Implementation Annex, adopted in February and March 2023, offer a clear platform for advancing the normalisation of relations. The obligations stemming from these agreements remain valid and binding, they have been integrated into the respective European paths of both sides, and their implementation is essential for the stability of the entire region. We call on both sides to fully implement all obligations and past commitments without delay or preconditions.
10. Finally, with a strong interest in political and security consolidation in the region, the EU remains determined to continue assisting Kosovo towards lasting stability and prosperity. We wish you, Mr McGurk, and the dedicated Mission team every success and assure them of the EU's support in their important work.

[Alignments]