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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

THE WESTERN BALKANS, 15 YEARS AFTER
DAYTON: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS

REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2010 will mark the 15th anniversary of the Dayton Accord, which put an end to the conflict that had its origin in the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. There have been far-reaching changes in the Balkans in fifteen years. Nonetheless, there are still areas of fragility in some parts of the region, as well as in certain areas of political, economic and social life.
2. The international community has made a substantial investment in the stabilisation of the region. The lessons learned from this experience have led the UN, NATO and the European Union (EU) to rethink their role and how they intervene in crisis management.
3. The requirement now is to complete the task that begun 15 years ago. Complete normalisation of the situation in the region will be achieved only when the international civil and military presence has finally withdrawn and the region is fully and completely integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions. This is the ambitious vision which governments in the region and their international partners must pursue together. To achieve this, the problems and challenges that remain in the region, particularly in Serbia/Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, must be tackled.
4. This report tries to assess the results of 15 years of stabilisation and reconstruction in the western Balkans. The first chapter deals with the transformation of the region into a zone of shared stability and prosperity. The second chapter sets out the lessons learned in international intervention in the western Balkans. Lastly, the final chapter examines some of the main obstacles to complete normalisation of the region.
5. The analysis presented in this report is based principally on several previous reports by this Committee, as well as on the findings of the Rose-Roth seminar held in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* on 19-21 October and of the visit of a delegation of the Sub-Committee on Democratic Governance to Serbia on 22-23 October 2010.

* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Western Balkans Map



----- Inter-entity boundary line * UN Security Council Resolution 1244

The map is reproduced here with the kind authorisation of the International Committee of the Red Cross

II. ACHIEVEMENTS: TRANSCENDING CONFLICT TO BUILD A ZONE OF SHARED STABILITY AND PROSPERITY

6. The following sections examine some of the major achievements in the last 15 years which have enabled the western Balkan countries to transcend the bloody conflicts that rocked the region and to build a zone of shared stability and prosperity. The issue of integration into the EU and NATO is considered in the next chapter.

A. ESTABLISHING A ZONE OF SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: FROM BLOODY ARMED CONFLICTS TO REFORM OF THE DEFENCE AND SECURITY SECTOR

7. Without doubt, the most important achievement in the last 15 years in the western Balkans has been the establishment of a zone of security and stability in which the prospect of armed conflict has become unacceptable. This has been accompanied by a process of reform of the defence and security sector in the various countries, culminating in the radical transformation of

local security institutions, which are now capable of contributing to international security as part of multilateral peace operations.

8. The break-up of the former Yugoslavia led to the bloodiest conflict in European territory since 1945. It came to an end in the autumn of 1995, having taken a very heavy toll: between 100,000 and 200 000 dead in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone according to estimates, and nearly 2 million displaced persons. The Dayton Accord, concluded on 21 November 1995 and signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, marked the end of hostilities.

9. Less than four years later there was a resumption of violence, this time in Kosovo, where Belgrade had stepped up its repression of the actions taken by the Albanian population towards independence. The rejection by the Serbian authorities of the Rambouillet Accord - the peace plan proposed by the international community – led to the launch of an intensive bombing campaign by NATO, which continued for 78 days between March and June 1999. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that 860,000 Albanians from Kosovo fled or were deported to neighbouring States during the period 1998-99 and that many soon returned at the end of 1999. This movement of population was followed by a second mass exodus of some 230,000 Serbs and Roma, who left Kosovo in fear of reprisals.¹

10. The period that followed the armed conflicts in the Balkans was not free from tensions, but events which might have affected the stability of the region – interethnic tensions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the independence of Montenegro, the failure of negotiations on the final status of Kosovo and its unilateral declaration of independence – were all managed peacefully. The profound effect of the recent violence on the collective consciousness of peoples in the region, the punishment of the principal offenders, the strong commitment and presence of the international community in the region, the reform processes initiated, in particular in the security sector, and the re-establishment of close ties – in particular economic ties – between neighbouring countries are all factors that helped to make the prospect of a new armed conflict in the Balkans unacceptable to an overwhelming majority of the population and of the political class.

11. Reform of the defence and security sector, and consequently the reform of the institutions which had been directly involved in the armed conflicts, was a crucial stage in consolidating peace in all the countries in the region. NATO and the EU, recognising that the Balkans' future lies in their full and complete integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, made this reform a key element in their relations with countries in the region and so have played an essential part in steering and supporting the reform process. We will concentrate here on defence reform. However, it should be stressed that restructuring the police in the post-conflict phase has been a fundamental element in the consolidation of democratic institutions respecting the rule of law. The establishment of a multiethnic police force was also a key factor contributing to reconciliation among communities. Nevertheless this process was not without incident and is still incomplete, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

12. Although the criteria and procedures in defence reform were relatively similar in the various countries, the challenges which they faced differed greatly. Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the requirement was to unify two completely separate armies, each with its own chain of command, a total of 400 000 men, with strong ethnic and political allegiances and almost no democratic control. Montenegro was another special case, where the army was one of the rare prerogatives of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, which operated jointly up to independence. Since Serbia inherited by far the greater part of the military resources, both in men and materiel, after the separation of the Union, Montenegro was faced with the challenge of constructing its national defence rather than reforming it.

¹ Some 205,000 persons are still displaced, despite efforts by the UNHCR and its local partners to facilitate their return.

13. It was necessary to redefine defence policy principles and priorities everywhere by adopting strategic documents taking account of the new security environment. All countries in the region have decided to abolish conscription in favour of a professional army, reduced in size and modernised², a transformation that has been completed in some countries in the region but that is still ongoing in others. Moreover, the key element has been to promote the interoperability of these new armies with NATO and to prepare them for deployments in multilateral operations. These fundamental changes have confronted governments in the region with a whole series of difficult challenges: retraining of personnel, funding military retirements, modernisation of training, etc. Other important measures have also been adopted: strengthening of democratic control, and in particular parliamentary control, revision of defence budgets, modernisation of equipment, and destruction of obsolete and surplus weapons.

Table 1: Western Balkan Countries' Armed Forces (active)

Albania	16,500
Croatia	25,000
Slovenia	9,000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10,000
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	8,000
Montenegro	2,500
Serbia	28,000

Source: *International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2010* and NATO

14. Today, defence reform may be regarded as a real success, as shown by Albania and Croatia's recent accession to NATO. In particular the armies of the Balkans have demonstrated their willingness and their capability to be not just consumers but also contributors of security. Thus, the fact that all the countries in the region – with the exception of Serbia – are now contributing to NATO operations in Afghanistan is to be welcomed.

Table 2: Contribution by Western Balkan Countries to the NATO International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan (troop numbers as at 6 August 2010)

Albania	295
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
Croatia	295
Montenegro	30
Slovenia	70
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	240

Source: NATO

² Thus there has been a transition from an army of 400,000 to 10,000 men and 5,000 reservists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and from 120,000 to 16,500 men in Albania.

B. CONSOLIDATING INDEPENDENT STATES' IDENTITY AND STRUCTURES

15. The consolidation of independent States in the region may be regarded as another fundamental achievement in the last 15 years. The break-up of the former Yugoslavia has led, in several phases, to the creation of six new States: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro³. The special case of Kosovo will be dealt with below.

16. In the early years of independence, all the States emerging from the former Yugoslavia faced the challenge of defining their new independent State identity and establishing all the attributes of their statehood. The adoption of a new Constitution, the organisation of elections and the installation of new institutions at the central level were some of the essential stages in this process.

17. Although all the States in the region reached a threshold of "State maturity" in a relatively short time – with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as will be seen below - this process was still not trouble-free. In particular the definition of national and State identity raised many difficult issues. The new States, born from interethnic conflicts, had to find a satisfactory balance between affirming the identity of the majority group and recognising the contribution of minority communities to the national identity. This involved difficult choices as to the official language or languages, the place of the various communities within State structures, State symbols, etc.

C. PUNISHING THE GUILTY

18. Punishing those guilty of crimes committed during the Yugoslav conflicts was another essential stage in consolidating peace in the region. To a large extent, this process was initiated and boosted from outside, with the creation in May 1993 of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) by resolution of the United Nations Security Council⁴. However, this work has also been gradually taken up at local level by new national courts with specific responsibility for trying war criminals.

19. In March 2005, the date of publication of the last indictments, the ICTY had indicted 161 persons, most of them for crimes committed during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In June 2010, 89 cases had been decided, involving 125 persons⁵. Two of those accused are still at large, one of whom is Ratko Mladic, the military leader of the Bosnian Serbs and a major figure in the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the targets which it set for itself in mid-2010, the Tribunal should have completed all the cases at first instance at the end of 2012 and all appeal proceedings at the end of 2013⁶.

20. The ICTY experiment has been a major innovation. The Tribunal has created a precedent in international criminal justice and has acted as a role model for the creation of the International Criminal Court. It has indicted a head of State while in office for the first time. It has contributed to

³ Although Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were all regarded as new States, joining the United Nations between 1992 and 1993, the views as to whether Serbia-and-Montenegro was the successor State or was also a new State were far from unanimous. The status of Serbia-and-Montenegro remained uncertain until the fall of the Milosevic regime in 2000 and until the new government's decision to apply for membership of the United Nations. Montenegro became a member of the United Nations in 2006 after gaining its independence.

⁴ The mandate of the ICTY is to try persons indicted for certain violations of international humanitarian law (serious violations of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and violations of the laws and customs of war, crimes against humanity or genocide) committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991. Its jurisdiction has also been extended to crimes committed during the Kosovo conflict.

⁵ Among these 12 were acquitted, 64 were sentenced and 26 were referred to national courts for trial; in addition, proceedings against 36 persons were abandoned, either because the charge was dropped or because the accused had died.

⁶ Nevertheless longer time-limits have been set for the proceedings against Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, brought before the Tribunal in July 2008.

the development of international humanitarian law and has defined its key concepts. It has made it possible to throw light on some of the darkest episodes in Europe's recent history and has given the victims a voice. Lastly, it has contributed directly and indirectly to strengthening the rule of law and the legal system in countries in the Balkans.

21. However, punishing the guilty has not been a purely international matter; States in the region have also played a more and more active part in it. First of all, after an initial phase of distrust, or even defiance, co-operation by governments in the region with the Tribunal has steadily improved, even though some problems remain. Moreover, States in the region have gradually been setting up courts with specific responsibility for war crimes trials. These local courts have an essential role, especially having regard to the impending closure of the ICTY.

D. DEVELOPING REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

22. The steady integration of the Balkan countries into Euro-Atlantic institutions has gone hand in hand with the development of a dense network of regional co-operation structures. This process has sometimes suffered from a lack of interest on the part of governments in the region, and from blockages linked to various political tensions and problems. Some people have also observed, quite rightly, that the proliferation of structures does not necessarily guarantee actual achievements, neither is it an indicator of the quality of co-operation. The fact remains, however, that the installation of all these frameworks for regional co-operation has indisputably contributed to the success of the peace consolidation process in the Balkans, by increasing the number of political, economic, social and security links between countries in the region. Although the initial impetus came from the international community, priority has gradually been given to local ownership, a development which should be welcomed.

23. Until recently, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SPSEE), adopted in June 1999 by 39 countries and 17 international organisations, was the principal tool used by the international community to promote regional co-operation in the Balkans. The Pact provided a framework within which several regional initiatives in trade, energy, combating organised crime, population movements, etc. could be developed. Moreover, the European Union's Association and Stabilisation Process and NATO's South-East Europe Initiative have played an important part in promoting regional co-operation as a complementary dimension of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration process.

24. Among the purely regional initiatives, the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) deserves a special mention. Set up in 1996, it still provides today the main forum for regional political dialogue. It was under the aegis of the SEECP that the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which took over from the Stability Pact in February 2008, was created. Unlike the Pact, the RCC is controlled by the countries in the region, and therefore likes to regard itself as the symbol of local ownership. Council activities are concentrated on six priority areas: economic and social development, energy and infrastructures, justice and internal affairs, security co-operation, the development of human capital and parliamentary co-operation.

25. Several noteworthy initiatives have been taken in the field of security. In particular the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM), launched in 1996, has made it possible to strengthen military co-operation and interoperability, supplementing the efforts made in NATO. The flagship initiative in this area is the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), a multinational force available for peacekeeping missions. Special reference should also be made to the co-operation between Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with the addition of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in September 2008, within the framework of the Adriatic Charter, an initiative developed in partnership with the United States with the aim of strengthening co-operation among participating States with a view to joining NATO.

26. The successful implementation, under the auspices of the OSCE, of the 1996 Florence Agreement on Sub-regional arms control, adopted in accordance with Article IV Annex 1-B of the Dayton Accord, has also made a decisive contribution to achieving balanced and stable defence

force levels within the geographical area of the Agreement (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia). This document provides a framework for establishing numerical limits of heavy weapons and voluntary limitations on military personnel, as well as implementing an intrusive arms control inspection regime.

III. STABILISATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS AND EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION: LESSONS FROM 15 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

A. OPERATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS: THE SPECIFICITY OF INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN THE BALKANS

27. Experience gained in intervention in the Balkans has made a substantial and direct contribution to the evolution of methods of crisis and conflict management in the post-Cold War world. Thus, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia have led the UN to rethink its peacekeeping operations. They have also contributed to changes in NATO's role and to the steady emancipation of the EU in the area of defence and security policy.

28. Although the international community has been involved in all the conflict and post-conflict phases in the former Yugoslavia, its achievements have been mixed, to say the least. In particular the interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have highlighted the weakness of conflict prevention machinery and the many difficulties, both political and operational, that may erode the effectiveness of a multinational military intervention. The post-conflict phase has seen a substantial deployment of resources and the establishment of legal and institutional mechanisms with many exceptional features, which made some notable achievements possible. The fact remains, however, that after over 15 years of international presence in the Balkans it has not yet been possible to meet all the requirements for complete normalisation.

1. Conflict prevention and resolution

29. Conflict prevention and resolution is undoubtedly the area in which international action has been least successful.

30. The escalation of the conflict in Kosovo in particular has shown the international community's inability to foresee and prevent the crisis, in spite of intense diplomatic activity in the months preceding military intervention. Consequently the political deadlock in the UN Security Council compelled NATO to take the initiative in military intervention alone, in order to end the violence. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the only example of real success in preventing conflicts in the region. Here reference should be made to the support given to the authorities in the country at the time of the Kosovo conflict to manage the influx of refugees and to avoid indirect destabilisation. The active contribution by NATO and the EU to the conclusion and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement should also be emphasised: this agreement helped damp down the interethnic violence which had broken out in the country early in 2001.

31. The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina has revealed the many weaknesses in the peacekeeping operation set up by the United Nations: an unsuitable mandate, giving preference to interposition and neutrality to the detriment of imposing peace; reluctance of member-States to provide the necessary troops on the ground; late and limited use of the threat to use force; and ineffective sanctions, which altered the balance of forces on the ground. The international community finally managed to put an end to hostilities only by making the transition to a peace imposition phase, in particular through NATO air strikes.

32. Experience in the Balkans has prompted a far-reaching reappraisal of UN peacekeeping operations. The 2000 report by the group of experts led by the Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi

seeks to learn from the failure of UN interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Rwanda. It stresses the necessity for UN peace operations to have a clear, credible and realistic mandate, supported by a strong and sustainable political consensus among Security Council members and implemented by troops in sufficient numbers and with robust rules of engagement. Today, however, UN peace missions still meet these requirements but rarely.

2. Post-conflict: experience of international civil administration in the Balkans

33. The post-conflict phase has seen a remarkable deployment of resources. This time international action was able to rely on a broad political consensus and robust mandates. The creation of the ICTY is one of the noteworthy factors in international intervention. Here, however, we will concentrate on another essential and remarkable aspect of international experience in the Balkans, namely the establishment under the aegis of the United Nations of international administrative and supervisory mechanisms in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo⁷. In both cases a representative of the international community with binding powers was given the task of supervising the implementation of the peace agreements⁸.

34. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, these duties are performed by the High Representative. Pursuant to the Dayton Accord, the High Representative has ultimate authority in respect of interpretation and implementation of the civil aspects of the Accord. He is totally independent of the local authorities and is answerable only to the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), the principal co-ordinating authority for implementing the civil aspects of the Dayton Accord. The “Bonn powers” granted to the High Representative in 1997 enable him to quash decisions taken by the local authorities, to impose certain decisions and to dismiss local officials.

35. In Kosovo, interim civil administrative duties are performed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), under the leadership of the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Representative, who acts as the ultimate authority in Kosovo. The international civil presence in Kosovo has been reconfigured since the declaration of independence in February 2008 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which continues to provide the legal framework essential to international action in Kosovo. This reconfiguration has led *inter alia* to a substantial reduction in the role of UNMIK. At the same time, the institution of International Civilian Representative (ICR) was established which, pursuant to the Kosovar Constitution, is responsible for supervising implementation of the principles of the Ahtisaari Plan⁹ by the Kosovar authorities, and has ultimate authority regarding interpretation of the civil aspects of the plan.

⁷ It should be noted, however, that the exercise by the UN of territorial civil administrative functions did not begin in the Balkans and is not characteristic of this region. In particular, the United Nations interim administration missions in Cambodia in 1992-1993 and in East Timor in 1999-2002 may be cited as examples.

⁸ It is important to stress that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in Kosovo, the local authorities expressly consented to the installation of such international administrative mechanisms.

⁹ In November 2005 the United Nations Secretary General had given Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, the task of devising a plan to solve the problem of defining the final status of Kosovo. After months of fruitless negotiation Mr. Ahtisaari had submitted his plan, consisting of a Report and a Comprehensive Proposal, to the Secretary General. Although there was no express reference to independence this plan, passed to the Security Council on 26 March 2007, provided the basis for the creation of an independent State of Kosovo, with a Constitution, its own symbols of State and security forces, as well as the right to membership of international organisations. It also reorganised the international civil presence in Kosovo. The Ahtisaari Plan had been welcomed by the Kosovo Albanians, NATO, the European Union and their member States individually. In contrast, Kosovo Serbs, supported by Belgrade and Moscow, strongly opposed it. As a result, it had not been possible to find any agreement within the Security Council to ratify the plan. In their declaration of independence the Kosovar authorities nevertheless undertook to implement the Ahtisaari Plan, and the Kosovar Constitution is strictly in accordance with the criteria set in the Comprehensive Proposal. On the history of the negotiations on the final status of Kosovo and the Ahtisaari Plan see the two Reports submitted to this Committee by Vitalino Canas: “Kosovo and the Future of Balkan Security” [163 CDS 07 E rev. 2] and [155 CDS 08 E].

However, the office of ICR is not endorsed by the UN, and his authority is acknowledged only by Pristina and by States which have recognised the independence of Kosovo. UNMIK and the ICR thus continue to operate in parallel, a coexistence which is unfortunately detrimental to the consistency of international action in Kosovo.

36. Although the UN has provided the essential framework for the international civil presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in Kosovo, certain tasks have also been passed on to other organisations, in particular the OSCE and the EU. The good co-operation among these various organisations is generally regarded as one of the factors to the credit of international action in the region.

37. In 15 years of intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina and over 10 years in Kosovo, the international civil presence has had a key role in securing political stability and laying the foundations for interethnic reconciliation. It has also initiated and directed the process of creating and consolidating institutions and, more widely, political, economic and social reforms.

38. However, international action has also encountered several major problems. By making the international presence primarily responsible for reforms, the international administrative mechanisms have indirectly contributed to undermining the local authorities' sense of responsibility and encouraging apathy in a population which has difficulty in identifying with decisions seen as imposed from outside. In such a context it is easy, and a good move politically, to impute errors and failures to the international community. Thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina has gone through several phases in which the international presence, and in particular the binding powers of the High Representative, have been challenged, a challenge which is re-emerging today, particularly in the Republika Srpska (RS). UNMIK also has regularly been the target of criticism by local authorities, criticism which has grown stronger after the declaration of independence. Moreover, while the authority of the ICR is recognised and accepted by Pristina, Belgrade on the contrary regards this office as illegal.

39. These challenges to the international presence have also highlighted the limits on the use of binding powers by the international community and the importance of having positive incentives available which can supplement and reinforce the negative incentives linked to the power of sanction. In this sense, the prospect of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and implementation of the conditionality principle have played an essential part in support of the measures taken by the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and by UNMIK in Kosovo.

40. However, it is important for international bodies to be accountable for their actions and decisions in order for the international community to be seen as legitimate. This presupposes the establishment of clear audit and accountability mechanisms, a dimension that should receive more attention in future.

41. It is yet too early to pass definitive judgement on the international action in the post-conflict phase in the former Yugoslavia. The international community's ability to "orchestrate its departure", i.e. to arrive at a situation in which the abolition of the international supervisory mechanisms culminates in the transfer of authority to local stable, democratic, multiethnic and economically viable institutions, is what will govern the success or failure of international intervention in the final analysis.

3. NATO and EU operations in the Balkans

42. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in Kosovo, the task of ensuring security in the post-conflict phase was initially given to NATO by the UN Security Council. The Alliance also made an active contribution to stabilising the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. However, the EU has gradually taken over in these three theatres as it developed its capability to mount civil and

military operations as part of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)¹⁰. The Table in Annex 1 shows the principal NATO and EU operations in the region since 1995.

43. As discussed in the previous chapter, the re-establishment of a stable and safe environment is one of the indisputable successes of international intervention in the Balkans. In addition to their impact on the ground, NATO and EU operations have also contributed to far-reaching changes in both organisations and helped to make them indispensable players in the region.

44. It should be borne in mind that NATO's intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the Alliance's very first use of armed force, as part of operation *Deny Flight* protecting air exclusion zones. This is also NATO's first out-of-area intervention. More generally, with the deployment of IFOR (Implementation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and then SFOR (Stabilisation Force), NATO went beyond its central mission of collective defence and was involved in crisis management for the first time. The operations conducted by the Alliance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo have profoundly influenced discussions on the future of NATO in the post-Cold War world. They have highlighted the fact that the security of the European continent is directly dependent on the stability of its immediate neighbourhood. They have also helped to define new roles for the Alliance, *inter alia* in the area of crisis stabilisation and management. The 1999 Strategic Concept, which is the outcome of these discussions, reflects the various lessons learned from NATO's experience in the Balkans.

45. In the same way the Balkans have transformed the EU by leading to the development of civil and military crisis management capabilities as part of the ESDP. The EUPM (EU police Mission) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the very first ESDP mission and the EUFOR-Concordia operation (European Union Force operation) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the very first military operation. In December 2008, the EU also deployed its largest ESDP mission in Kosovo, EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo).

46. Increasing participation by partner countries in operations has been another noteworthy aspect of NATO and EU interventions in the Balkans, a trend which has since become even more widespread and significant. Participation by Russian troops in SFOR and KFOR (Kosovo Force) has been a noteworthy precedent in this respect¹¹.

47. NATO and EU operations in the Balkans have also been an opportunity to lay the foundation for institutional co-operation between these organisations, which was formalised in the March 2003 Berlin Plus agreement. This agreement provides a framework allowing the EU to use the planning capabilities and other resources of NATO to conduct its own operations. Thus, Berlin Plus has been used successfully for EUFOR-Concordia operations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and for EUFOR-Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has facilitated a handover between NATO and EU operations in the two countries. Moreover, in July 2003 the EU and NATO jointly published a "concerted approach for the Western Balkans", which defines the main lines of co-operation between the two organisations and stresses their joint commitment to stability in the region. Joint meetings of the North Atlantic Council and the EU Political and Security Committee are held from time to time to consider developments in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and implementation of EU-NATO co-operation within the Berlin Plus framework.

48. In January 2010, the EU Council took note of "decisive progress by the ALTHEA operation towards fulfilling its mandate, and in particular the completion of the military tasks and stabilisation

¹⁰ The ESDP has become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. In this Report the title ESDP will continue to be used regarding operations launched before the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.

¹¹ Partner countries' contributions today account for some 20% of KFOR strength, with contributions from Austria, Finland, Ireland, Morocco, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine. As for the EU, particular reference may be made to the American contribution to the EULEX mission in Kosovo, or to participation by Albania, Chile, Switzerland, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in EUFOR-Althea.

set out in the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement” and therefore decided on an adaptation of the EUFOR mandate. While retaining certain executive tasks, from now on EUFOR will also help to strengthen capabilities and contribute to training as part of the reform of the security sector, a function already fulfilled to a large extent by the NATO presence in the country. During the visit by a NATO-PA delegation to Sarajevo in June 2010, the EUFOR Commander nevertheless stressed that the EU-NATO relationship in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a model of mutually beneficial co-operation, especially in capability building and training. In his view, EUFOR has identified the minimum resources necessary for maximum effect without duplicating existing initiatives.¹²

49. However, it should be noted that while the achievements of EU-NATO co-operation in the Balkans are on the whole positive, this remains to a large extent an isolated precedent. Since EUFOR-Althea, the EU has no longer made use of the Berlin Plus agreement for another ESDP operation. Moreover, NATO and EU operations are more and more frequently deployed side by side, a situation not covered by the Berlin Plus agreements. This is the case, for example, in Kosovo or in Afghanistan, where a NATO military operation and an EU civilian mission coexist, or in Somalia, where both NATO and the EU have a military presence. Admittedly ad hoc methods of co-ordination have been established on the ground, but we are far from the “strategic partnership” set out in the December 2002 EU-NATO joint statement on the EDSP. The EU should be encouraged to reciprocate NATO’s positive steps with a view to taking NATO-EU relations further in accordance with the agreed framework

50. The principal challenge for NATO, as it is for the EU, in the future will be managing the gradual withdrawal of international forces. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the EUFOR presence has already been reduced substantially since 2007, from some 7,000 men to about 1900 today. In June 2009, Alliance Defence Ministers acknowledged that the improvement in the security situation in Kosovo was making gradual adjustments to KFOR dispositions towards a deterrent presence possible. In practice this takes the form of a reduced presence – about 10,000 men – and greater mobility. The first phase in this process was completed in February 2010. It should be stressed that the transition to the next stages in the deterrent presence is not automatic, but will have to be approved by the North Atlantic Council on the basis of an assessment of the situation on the ground.¹³ For the time being the Council has taken the view that these conditions had not yet been met.

B. POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS: GRADUAL INTEGRATION OF THE BALKANS INTO EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS

51. The process of gradual integration of the Balkan countries into Euro-Atlantic institutions has indubitably been a crucial factor in promoting regional stabilisation and the reform process in the political, economic, social and security fields. At the Feira European Council in June 2000, the EU endorsed the prospect of future membership of all the countries in the western Balkans. This goal was confirmed at the Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003. NATO’s open door policy also recognises the eligibility of these countries to join the Alliance in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which states that the Alliance is open to any European State “in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area”.¹⁴ The countries in the region have all made integration into NATO and the EU a key goal of their foreign policy. Only Serbia still rules out any prospect of joining NATO for the time being¹⁵, but the

¹² See the mission report [194 DSCFC 10 E].

¹³ Stages 2 and 3 should lead to additional phased force reductions, 5,700 and 2,500 troops respectively.

¹⁴ The Heads of State and Government of the Alliance also reaffirmed at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009 that “[w]e remain committed to the Balkans, which is a strategically important region, where Euro-Atlantic integration, based on democratic values and regional cooperation, remains necessary for lasting peace and stability”.

¹⁵ Belgrade’s position on the issue of NATO membership was explained to the delegation of the Sub-Committee visiting Belgrade on 22-23 October 2010. See the mission report [263 CDS 10 E], and in particular paragraph 9: “Parliamentarians noted that the 2007 parliamentary declaration on neutrality

country takes an active part in the Partnership for Peace, has adopted a new Security Strategy which provides for greater participation in peacekeeping operations, and is considering concluding an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) in 2011. In 2004, Slovenia became the first country in the region to join the EU and NATO. Albania and Croatia joining NATO in April 2009 marked another major stage in the process of Balkan integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

52. In their relations with the Balkan countries, NATO and the EU have been able to rely on experience gained in the previous rounds of enlargement to central and Eastern Europe. However, both organisations have also had to develop new political and institutional tools to assist candidate countries along the path to integration. The tables in Appendices 2 and 3 set out in detail the principal stages in these processes in the context of NATO and the EU and the progress made by each of the Balkan countries.

53. On the whole, it can be said that the parallel processes of integration into NATO and the EU have been complementary and mutually reinforcing. As in central and eastern Europe, joining NATO is widely seen by governments in the region both as a goal in itself and as an important stage on the way to integration into the EU. Both organisations have also adopted similar approaches, based on consideration of the merits of each candidate rather than on a regional or country bloc approach. Both of them have also left plenty of room for the principle of conditionality, whereby the transition to future stages in integration depends on measurable progress in the reform process and full and entire co-operation with the ICTY.

54. However, the integration process has not been trouble-free. First of all, it is regrettable that no real EU-NATO co-ordination exists at the political level, either in defining or in monitoring enlargement policies, although criteria for accession are highly complementary, especially in the areas of political reform. The implementation of conditionality has also proved to be especially tricky. Too strict a conditionality is likely to erode the support of the local population for integration as well as the positive effect that the integration process has in encouraging the implementation of reforms. Too flexible or inopportune application of the condition is likely to call the credibility of the EU and NATO into question and to cast doubt on their members' political will to defend the criteria and norms that are the foundation of the accession process. Lastly, the discussion that has emerged in recent years as to the EU's absorption capacity has been seen in the region as indirectly calling the Thessaloniki promise of integration into question. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty should now enable the Union to end the institutional debate and facilitate impending enlargements.

55. However, the full and complete integration of the Balkans into Euro-Atlantic institutions is still a relatively distant prospect, due in particular to the specific difficulties raised by certain applications. This is the case with, for example, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: in spite of indisputable progress in the reform process, the country's application to NATO, and to the EU, continues to suffer from the failure to resolve the difference with Greece over the name. Political blockage and a slowdown in the reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina have also held up the integration of the country and prevented the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the transition of the international civil presence, a transition which is regarded as an essential precondition for accession. Lastly, Serbia and Kosovo are a particularly difficult case for the EU and NATO, having regard to the fact that certain member States of both organisations have not recognised the independence of Kosovo. The EU has stated several times that the issue of Kosovo and that of Serbia's integration are not linked and will continue to be treated separately. In fact the EU is continuing to encourage Serbia's integration while at the same time maintaining its support for the reform process in Kosovo and recognising Kosovo's "clear European perspective". Although the question of Serbia's joining NATO does not arise for the time being because of the present strategic orientation chosen by Belgrade, in the long term the Alliance will have to manage the

was binding on the current government, and that the issue of NATO membership would have to be decided jointly by state authorities and the population."

aspirations of Pristina, which has already made joining NATO one of the priorities in its foreign policy.

56. However, the extent to which the prospect of integration into NATO and the EU is still a magnet and a key factor in stability for the region should be emphasised. To continue in this role, this prospect must remain open and credible for all the countries in the region. The member countries of these two organisations have an historic responsibility to complete the process of full and complete integration of the Balkans into the transatlantic area of peace, stability and prosperity.

IV. HOW TO ENSURE THAT THE LEGACY OF 15 YEARS OF PEACE CONSOLIDATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS BECOMES IRREVERSIBLE

57. In the sections that follow we will tackle only some of the most serious problems which, failing a suitable solution, would be likely to erode the remarkable progress made in the region in the last 15 years. However, reference might also be made to other challenges that call for closer attention: completion of the reform of the security sector, in particular with regard to police reform and democratic control; continuing political reforms, including consolidation of the political landscape and combating corruption; combating organised crime.

A. GUARANTEEING THAT INSTITUTIONS ARE TRULY MULTIETHNIC

58. Building societies and institutions that are truly multiethnic is an essential condition for peace consolidation in the region, but is still a substantial challenge in several countries. Interethnic relations pose specific challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Serbia, in connection with the situation in Kosovo. These special cases will be considered below. In other countries in the region problems persist, varying in extent, in several areas:

- implementation of the constitutional and legislative framework for the political representation and participation of minorities in institutions of central government;
- implementation of decentralisation and local government measures;
- minority representation in the principal public services: the armed forces, the police, the legal system, etc.;
- non-discrimination and respect for minority rights (culture, language, education, access to employment, etc.);
- resolution of problems connected with refugees and displaced persons.

Table 3: Official language(s) of Western Balkan Countries and Demographic Data¹⁶

(Note: the designation used for the languages and ethnic groups are as per local authorities; this does not necessarily represent the official view of the Assembly)

	Official language(s)	Population (Source: National Statistics Offices)	Ethnic composition
Albania	Albanian	3.2 million	95% Albanians (source: Foreign Ministry)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosniac, Croatian and Serbian	3.8 million	No census since 1991
Croatia	Croatian Minority languages are also used officially under the conditions prescribed by the law.	4.4 million	89.6% Croats, 4.5% Serbs, others (2001 census)
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Macedonian In municipalities where over 20% of the population belongs to an ethnic group other than Macedonian, the language of that group also has the status of an official language.	2 million	64% Macedonians, 25% Albanians, others (Turks, Roma, Vlachs, Serbs, Bosniacs) (2002 census)
Montenegro	Montenegrin Serbian, Bosniac, Albanian and Croatian are also recognised as official languages.	0.62 million	43% Montenegrins, 32% Serbs, 7.7% Bosniacs, 5% Albanians, others (2003 census)
Serbia	Serbian Minority languages are also used officially under the conditions prescribed by law.	7.3 million	82.8% Serbs, 3.9% Hungarians, 1.8% Bosniacs, others (2002 census; excluding Kosovo)
Slovenia	Slovenian Italian and Hungarian are also recognised as official languages in municipalities where Italian and Hungarian communities reside.	2 million	83% Slovenes, 2% Serbs, 1.8% Croats, 1.1% Bosniacs, others (2002 census)

59. The case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia deserves special mention. Despite considerable and indisputable achievements, implementation of the Ohrid Accords, concluded in August 2001 and seeking to put an end to interethnic violence, still gives rise to problems. It also remains a reason for tension with political parties representing the Albanian minority; the DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) in 2007, then since August 2009 the DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians), have taken it in turns to boycott parliament to denounce the failure to implement certain provisions in the Ohrid Agreement. The October 2009 Progress Report by the European Commission lays stress on progress in implementing laws on languages, on decentralisation and on equitable representation, but notes that "further efforts in a constructive spirit are needed to fulfil

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The demographic data for Kosovo are extremely unreliable, in view of the fact that there has been no census since 1991. According to estimates by the Kosovo Statistics Office for 2010, the Kosovar population is 2.18 million, 92 % of whom are Albanian. The Kosovar authorities are hoping to organise a census in April 2011. The Kosovar Constitution recognises two official languages, Albanian and Serbian: Turkish, Bosnian and Romani are also used officially under the conditions prescribed by law.

the objectives of the Agreement” and that “continued efforts to deepen political dialogue including on interethnic issues would consolidate the engagement of all parties”. The Membership Action Plan for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for 2009-2010 refers to the same areas of progress and the same weaknesses.

B. TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RECONCILIATION

60. As described in Chapter II, the ICTY and the local courts responsible for war crimes trials have played a remarkable part in ensuring that serious crimes committed during conflicts in the former Yugoslavia do not go unpunished. However, this process still has to be brought to an end. Several important questions remain in this respect:

- two individuals with a key role in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia are still on the run; their arrest must remain an absolute priority and calls for increased efforts by governments in the region, in co-operation with the ICTY; the question also arises whether the ICTY will be maintained in its present form or with a streamlined structure to allow the two accused to be tried, or whether an alternative solution can be found;
- an appropriate solution should also be found to the problem of preserving the legacy of the ICTY and in particular the storage of its archives;
- the resources of the local courts responsible for war crimes trials must be increased still further;
- improving co-operation by governments in the region with the ICTY and regional co-operation in police and legal matters should also continue.

61. Alongside the completion of individual proceedings, reconciliation also comes through the settlement of the genocide cases pending before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) involving Croatia and Serbia. Unfortunately, negotiations between the two governments for the withdrawal of the Croatian Application filed in July 1999 have still not been successful and Serbia filed a Counter-Application in January 2010.

62. The case filed by Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serbia in March 1993 ended in February 2007 with recognition by the Court that Serbia has no committed genocide, but was responsible for failing in its obligation to prevent the commission of genocide¹⁷. The positive reaction of the Serbian authorities to the judgment, and in particular the adoption by the Serbian Parliament on 30 March 2010 of a resolution condemning the atrocities in Srebrenica, should be welcomed. This resolution, and the discussions preceding its adoption, mark a fundamental stage in the public debate on crimes committed during the Yugoslav conflicts, an important and necessary debate in all the countries in the region.

63. The question of the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on Kosovo is touched upon below.

64. The settlement of the missing persons issue is another essential stage in the reconciliation process. According to the July 2010 estimates by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), there are still 10,419 unsolved cases connected with the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 1,839 connected with the conflict in Kosovo. It is essential that governments in the region continue to keep this issue under close scrutiny and, with the support of the ICRC, bring the efforts to settle all the still unsolved cases to a successful conclusion.

65. In general, it is the implementation of a whole range of long-term internal and external measures that will secure firmly established and sustainable reconciliation in the region. Internally,

¹⁷ However, the Court rejected the application for financial compensation, taking the view that “[s]ince the Court cannot therefore regard as proven a causal nexus between the Respondent’s violation of its obligation of prevention and the damage resulting from the genocide at Srebrenica, financial compensation is not the appropriate form of reparation for the breach of the obligation to prevent genocide”.

special priority must be given to education and to strengthening truly multiethnic societies. Externally, the enhancement of regional co-operation in all areas must be continued. Moreover, the fundamental role of the process of integration into the EU and NATO in offering the peoples of the region the prospect of a common destiny within the European and Euro-Atlantic family cannot be overstressed.

C. STATE FRAGILITY: THE CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹⁸

66. Although the process of institutional consolidation is well advanced in most of the countries in the region, recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate the continuing fragility of the institutions.

67. The present Constitution, in Annex 4 to the Dayton Accord, establishes a weak and divided State under close international supervision, in which two Entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska and three constituent populations – Bosno-Croat, Bosno-Serb and Bosniac – coexist. Central State attributes are reduced to a minimum and a whole series of instruments, such as the right of veto when vital interests are affected, seek to prevent one community from dominating the others.

68. Substantial reforms were nevertheless introduced during the years after the end of the war, *inter alia* to strengthen central institutions. The creation of a common currency, a common customs area and common indirect taxation were important stages in progress towards the unification of the country. Defence reform may also be regarded as a major success. However, this process of State consolidation has been slow and difficult and many reforms could not have succeeded without strong pressure exerted by the international community.

69. Furthermore, the rejection in April 2006 by two votes or so of the draft revised Constitution opened up a new phase, marked by a clear slowdown in the reform process, which continues today. Constitutional reform is still blocked. Negotiations in Butmir in the autumn of 2009 under American and European mediation seeking to break the deadlock were unsuccessful. In addition, in December 2009 the European Court of Human Rights confirmed – in the case of Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina – that the present provisions regarding elections to the Presidency of the Republic and to the House of Peoples establish a discriminatory regime and therefore conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights¹⁹. The Working Group set up by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina to bring the Constitution into line with the Court's decision has not yet managed to reach agreement. Because of this continuing blockage of constitutional reform, the October elections were again held on the basis of the constitutional framework established by Dayton.

70. The delay in implementing essential reforms and the worsening political climate in the country have led the international community to postpone the closure of the Office of the High Representative several times. However, the powers of the latter are being disputed with increasing vigour, especially in the RS, where the authorities are contemplating holding a referendum in RS territory, the aim of which would be to measure the population's support for the powers of the High Representative²⁰. The international community has strongly condemned this approach, as being against the Constitution and in breach of the Dayton Accord.

¹⁸ On this subject see, *inter alia*, the general report prepared by Vitalino Canas (Portugal) for this Committee in 2006 "Bosnia and Herzegovina. Prospects for the post-Dayton era" [164 CDS 06 E rev. 1], as well as the Report of the Rose-Roth Seminar held in Sarajevo in March 2009 "South-Eastern Europe: from Dayton to Brussels" [092 SEM 09 E].

¹⁹ These provisions state that only representatives of the three constituent peoples are eligible for these offices, thereby excluding any candidacy by, *inter alia*, Bosnian citizens belonging to other ethnolinguistic minorities.

²⁰ On 10 February 2010 the RS parliament passed a law which opens the way to such a referendum. However, no date has yet been set, neither has the precise question been defined. The RS authorities have also brought up the idea of a referendum on Bosnia and Herzegovina joining NATO. The Prime

71. Bosnia and Herzegovina had passed an important milestone on the way to Euro-Atlantic integration in April 2010, when the North Atlantic Council decided to grant it a Membership Action Plan, in recognition of progress in the destruction of surplus stocks of arms and the decision to increase the Bosnian contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. However, the Plan will be activated only when the defence property issue has been resolved. This issue is highly politicised, because the positions taken by the leaders of the various communities differ fundamentally.²¹

72. This is a clear illustration of the way in which technical issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be caught up in political debates and in which political blockages may in the end affect even reforms regarded as successful up to that point, such as defence reform.

73. In this context the general elections on 3 October 2010 gave rise to great expectations. The population was called upon to elect its representatives in six simultaneous elections, two at national level and four at Entity level: election to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina; election of members of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina; election to the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of RS; election to the RS National Assembly; election to the Federation House of Representatives; election to the 10 Cantonal Assemblies of the Federation.

74. These elections provided a good illustration of the ambiguities in the present situation. On the one hand, the official observers welcomed the general smooth running of the elections. On the other, the campaign and the election results revealed divergent trends within the various communities.

75. Regarding the organisation of the elections, the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) – including representatives of the OSCE, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the NATO PA – considered that the elections were “generally in line with international standards for democratic elections” and welcomed “further progress for Bosnia and Herzegovina”, although “certain areas require further action”. In particular the international observers noted that because of ethnic criteria affecting voting and eligibility, the elections had once more been organised in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights.

76. Moreover, the IEOM stresses that the campaign was generally calm, although occasionally marked by nationalist rhetoric and inflammatory statements by certain candidates. While candidates did address economic and social issues and European integration, “constitutional issues and underlying ethnic divisions remained omnipresent”.

77. The election results are also mixed. The official turnout of 56% at the national level is the highest recorded since 2002 (one and a half points higher than the 2006 general elections). However, while the voters in the Federation seem to have opted for change by supporting parties regarded as moderate – the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) – RS voters confirmed domination by Milorad Dodik’s Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)²². In particular the change is most marked in the Bosniak electorate, with a loss of momentum by the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SzBiH) of Haris Silajdzic, the Bosniak Prime Minister during the war and outgoing Bosniak member of the country’s Collegial Presidency,

Minister of the RS, Milorad Dodik, has nevertheless rejected fears of a referendum on the secession of the RS as unfounded.

²¹ In September 2010 the RS Parliament had discussed a law aimed at resolving the issue of ownership of State assets in the entity’s territory, a unilateral approach condemned by the High Representative and the Peace Implementation Council.

²² According to final results, Mr Dodik was elected to the Presidency of the RS with 50,5% of the votes. The SNSD remains the first party in the RS Assembly, but with slightly less votes than in the 2006 elections.

supplanted by the SDA, which saw its candidate, Bakir Izetbegovic, elected to the Presidency²³.

78. Final results were declared on 2 November 2010. It will probably take several months more to form the government.²⁴ Fifteen years after the end of the conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina again seems to be at a watershed. The post-electoral period will give important guidance as to the willingness and capability of the political class to go resolutely into the post-Dayton phase. All the international observers have called for the rapid resumption of the reform process, which is essential both for the future of the country on the domestic level and for its future integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. In particular it is essential to relaunch the constitutional reform process as soon as possible.

79. The EU and NATO are faced with a difficult choice. Up to now the EU has adhered to strict conditionality, whereby an application by Bosnia and Herzegovina to join could be accepted only once the Office of the High Representative had been dismantled, which assumes compliance with the 5 objectives and the 2 conditions set out by the Peace Implementation Council.²⁵ At the same time, some observers deplore the fact that this strict conditionality has not had the desired incentive effect and state that perhaps a more targeted approach which makes a clearer distinction between technical and political issues would be preferable. Thus relaxing the conditions for obtaining visas and the prospect of visa exemption for Bosnian citizens are widely welcomed as having encouraged the authorities to take the necessary steps. The regional dimension has unquestionably been an important factor. The same targeted approach has been adopted by NATO, with the condition that the issue of defence property must be resolved in order to activate the Membership Action Plan.

80. By its vote, a substantial part of the Bosnian electorate has declared that it expects its elected representatives to tackle the most important economic and social problems. The opportunity offered by these elections to refocus on these problems must be seized. It means something that it is in the Federation in particular that the call for political renewal has elicited the greatest response. The Federation suffers from many of the same ills as the State, and the situation, both political and economic and social, feels their effects.²⁶ It is therefore essential to relaunch the reform process at both central and entity level, in order to avoid a widening gap between the Federation and the RS and the resulting creation of a new imbalance bringing instability.

81. Urgent institutional reforms are required for the Bosnian political system to be viable. However, it is possible and desirable to disconnect the timetable and framework for institutional negotiations from those for governmental institutions, to avoid, as far as possible, technical issues

²³ According to final results, Mr Izetbegovic was elected with 34.8%, while Mr Silajdzic came third with 25.1% of the votes (as against 62.8% in 2006). Zeljko Comsic (SDP), the outgoing Croat member of the Presidency, was re-elected with over 60% of the votes (as against 39.5% in 2006), as was Nebojsa Radmanovic (SNSD), the outgoing Serb member, re-elected with 48.9% of the votes (as against 53.2% in 2006).

²⁴ According to estimates by the High Representative, this will not occur before February 2011.

²⁵ Objectives: 1) acceptable and sustainable resolution of the issue of apportionment of property between State and other levels of government; 2) acceptable and sustainable resolution of defence property; 3) completion of the Brcko final award; 4) fiscal sustainability; 5) entrenchment of the rule of law. Conditions: 1) signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU; 2) stability in the political situation. The General Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on 7 December 2009 reaffirmed in its conclusions "that it would not be in a position to consider an application for membership by Bosnia and Herzegovina until the transition of the OHR to a reinforced EU presence has been decided. While underlining that constitutional reform is not part of the conditions for closure of the OHR, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to undertake an initial set of constitutional changes to create a functional state and align its constitutional framework with the European Convention on Human Rights."

²⁶ On the situation in the Federation, see the detailed report by the *International Crisis Group* "Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – A Parallel Crisis", 28 September 2010.

again becoming hostage to political blockages. The EU and NATO can encourage advances in parallel on these two fronts by a more targeted approach. Having regard to developments in the political landscape in the Federation, the attitude of the RS will probably be the decisive factor. It is to be hoped that now the elections are over, campaign rhetoric will give way to a more constructive approach and that no political force is prepared to be responsible for an isolated Bosnia and Herzegovina, falling behind in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Resolution of the defence property issue would be a first strong signal, allowing the country to take a major step on the way to integration into NATO.

D. KOSOVO

82. After nine years of international administration in Kosovo and two years of fruitless negotiations on the final status of the province, on 17 February 2008 the Kosovar authorities decided to proclaim the independence of Kosovo²⁷. For Pristina and the States which have recognised the independence of Kosovo this declaration was the logical culmination of a process and the only viable long-term solution. On the other hand, Belgrade has roundly condemned this unilateral step. Thus the effect of Kosovo's declaration of independence has also been to create fresh uncertainties and difficult challenges, which are still unresolved two and a half years later.

83. First there is legal uncertainty, because the declaration of independence of Kosovo shattered the consensus that had existed up to that point within the international community on Kosovo. Divisions are apparent within the Alliance and the EU, as well as in the region. Thus, on 11 October 2010 the independence of Kosovo had been recognised by 70 of the 192 UN member States, including 22 of the 27 member States of the European Union, 24 of the 28 members of NATO²⁸ and 4 of the 6 successor States of the former Yugoslavia²⁹.

84. Serbia has brought the issue of the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence into the legal arena by initiating Advisory Proceedings in the ICJ³⁰. The Court gave its Opinion on 22 July 2010, finding by ten votes to four that "the declaration of independence of 22 February 2008 did not violate general international law". The judges adopted a very narrow approach to the question put to them, going through the rules of international law that applied to Kosovo at the time of the events³¹, and taking the view that the authors of the declaration were not bound by any rule prohibiting adoption of such a declaration. The Court did not consider it necessary to examine the question whether international law conferred on Kosovo a positive right to declare its independence, or the more general issue of the right to secession.

85. Although the Court's Opinion strengthens Pristina's position, it has not had the impact expected by the Kosovar authorities, who were hoping for a new wave of recognitions.³² Nonetheless it has the great merit that it clarifies a certain number of legal issues, and in particular sends the ball back into the politicians' court.

86. The security situation has remained relatively calm, in contrast to the fears that had preceded the declaration of independence. Nonetheless, "the potential for volatility and instability, especially

²⁷ On the stages which led to independence, see *inter alia* the two reports "Kosovo and the Future of Balkan security" [163 CDS 07 E rev. 1 and 155 CDS 08 E] prepared by Vitalino Canas (Portugal) for this Committee in 2007 and 2008.

²⁸ The 4 NATO member States which have not recognised the independence of Kosovo are Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. In the EU it is the same four, plus Cyprus.

²⁹ Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have not recognised the independence of Kosovo.

³⁰ An Advisory Opinion concerning "Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo" was requested by the United Nations General Assembly in October 2008.

³¹ General international law, Security Council resolution 1244 and the Constitutional Framework adopted on behalf of UNMIK by the Secretary General's Special Representative.

³² Honduras is the only State to have recognised Kosovo after the publication by the Court.

in northern Kosovo, cannot be underestimated.”³³ Isolated incidents and violence interethnic in nature continue to nourish a climate of insecurity and tension, particularly in Northern Kosovo. The year 2010 was marked by a number of incidents: confrontations between Serb and Albanian demonstrators on the bridge at Mitrovica on the occasion of elections organised by Belgrade in North Mitrovica on 30 May; demonstrations and violence on the opening of a Kosovar Local Government and Internal Affairs Ministry office in Bosniak Mahalla on 2 July, leaving one person dead and 12 injured; shots fired at a Serb member of the Kosovo Assembly in front of his residence in North Mitrovica on 5 July; and interethnic violence in Mitrovica following Serbia’s defeat at the basketball world championship, leaving one EULEX French gendarme and several KFOR soldiers injured. Moreover, several Serb families which had moved back to Zec/Zilac in western Kosovo in March were subjected to threats and violence. Although the trend is not towards an increase in the number of incidents, these events indicate the suspicion – even distrust – that continues to affect relations between communities.

87. The Kosovo Police Service (KPS) has a key role to play in this, both by demonstrating its ability to perform its duties in maintaining law and order in the service of the population and also by acting as a vehicle for integrating the various communities. It is therefore essential to continue with the reinstatement of the Serb police officers who had left the KPS after the February 2008 declaration of independence.³⁴ Moreover, the transfer of responsibility for protecting Serb religious and cultural sites in Kosovo from KFOR to the KPS will be an important test for the latter, so it is necessary to ensure that this is done under the best possible conditions, taking into account in particular the concerns of local Serb populations and the Orthodox Church.³⁵ The gradual reduction in the KFOR presence as part of the transition to a deterrent presence must also be managed with care.

88. The Kosovar authorities have sought to establish the legal framework and institutions of an independent State, drawing *inter alia* on the principles and priorities set out in the Ahtisaari Plan. They have also embarked upon a wide-ranging process of political, economic and social reforms. Nevertheless, these measures have come up against the weakness and the problems characteristic of new institutions, among which may be mentioned, notably corruption that is still too widespread³⁶ and limited administrative capabilities, which mean in practice that many reforms are implemented only in part. Moreover, the rejection by part of the population of the legitimacy of Pristina’s institutions, as well as the lack of universal recognition of Kosovo’s independence at the international level, also restrict the capacity of the Kosovar authorities to exercise in full the jurisdictions and powers to which State institutions are normally entitled. Consequently, many problems remain in essential areas such as strengthening the rule of law. To this should be added structural difficulties and weaknesses in the Kosovar economy, and in particular a rate of unemployment that remains particularly high.

³³ Report of the United Nations Secretary-General of 29 July 2010, S/2010/401, para. 50.

³⁴ 317 of the 325 officers who had ceased activity after the declaration of independence were reinstated in 2009. According to the Kosovo Police Service’s official statistics, the Service includes 7,000 police officers, of which 85.8% are Albanian and 9.4% are Serb.

³⁵ An initial transfer began in March 2010, for the protection of the Gazimestan monument. Responsibility for security at the Gracanica monastery was also transferred to the KPS in August 2010. Each of these transfers must be specifically approved by the North Atlantic Council on the basis of an assessment of the situation on the ground. Transferring the protection of religious and cultural sites is a particularly sensitive area for the Kosovo Serb community, which still retains a very vivid memory of the March 2004 riots. Some 30 Serb churches and 2 monasteries had been destroyed or damaged during these riots, which had also cost the lives of twenty persons and injured some 900 others, and caused some 5,000 Serbs to quit Kosovo. During a visit by a NATO PA delegation to the Gracanica monastery in June 2010, the Serb Bishop Teodosije had repeated again that only KFOR had the trust of all the communities enough to be able to perform this task of protecting religious sites. See the report of this visit [194 DSCFC 10 E].

³⁶ However, we can point to recent efforts by the government in Pristina, supported by EULEX, to step up the campaign against corruption.

89. However, the most serious challenge is still the situation in areas with a majority population of Kosovo Serbs, where the authority of Pristina is disputed and challenged by installing administrative structures linked to and supported by Belgrade. This competition also extends to the private sector, where the Kosovar regulatory authorities have tried, for the present with little success, to get Serb operators, especially in the electricity sector³⁷ and cellphone networks³⁸, to carry on their business in accordance with the Kosovar legal framework. It is particularly in the north of Kosovo that the situation is most complicated and sensitive. Attempts by Pristina to strengthen its presence there have been strongly resisted, as shown by the violent incidents of 2 July 2010.

90. While security is guaranteed in the North thanks to the joint action of the Kosovo Police Service, EULEX and KFOR, the most pressing problem is re-establishing the rule of law. In this connection a more active and visible approach by EULEX, both in its judicial branch and in its police work, especially in cases of corruption and organised crime, is to be welcomed. However, two important issues are still unresolved: the reinstatement of Albanian and Serb judges in the Mitrovica Court, which is operating for the time being solely with EULEX international judges, and the restoration of customs services at posts 1 and 31 on the administrative demarcation line. Furthermore, the EU could consider strengthening EULEX's justice component; indeed, staff numbers in the justice component are far below those of the police component.³⁹ This would enable EULEX to extend its mentoring, monitoring and advising activities, and speed up the handling of cases, as well as help improve EULEX's image with the local population.

91. In such a difficult context, the local elections of 15 November 2009, which were held in 36 municipalities including some in areas with a majority Serb population, were an important test. On the whole these elections, organised and administered entirely by the Kosovar authorities, passed off peacefully. The electoral process was generally well received by the competent international bodies, including the EU and NATO, who laid particular stress on increased participation by the Serb population. This is one of the noteworthy developments revealed by these elections. In Shtërpce/Štrpce, a municipality with a Serb majority, the turnout reached over 54% in the second round. A Serb mayor was elected there, as in three other municipalities (Graçanicë/Gračanica, Klllokot/Klokot and Ranillug/Ranilug). The turnout in the election organised in Partesh/Parteš in Eastern Kosovo in June 2010 was also particularly high, at 65%.

92. However, the situation in the municipalities in Northern Kosovo, where Serb participation has been extremely limited, is completely different. Moreover, the Kosovar authorities have still not been in a position to hold elections in North Mitrovica. Pristina has installed preparation teams consisting of local representatives of the Serb population, but with little result up to now.

93. It should be stressed that although the Serbian authorities denounced these elections as being contrary to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, Belgrade, unlike certain Serb bodies in Kosovo, did not officially call upon the Serb population for a boycott. At the same time, however, on 29 November 2009 the Serbian authorities organised a local by-election in the municipality of Leposaviq/Leposavić in Northern Kosovo to replace the local authorities which had been elected in elections organised by Belgrade in municipalities with a Serb majority in May 2008⁴⁰ and whose mandate had subsequently been cancelled. Similarly fresh municipal elections were organised by Belgrade in Novo Brdo and North Mitrovica on 30 May 2010.⁴¹

³⁷ In October 2009 the Serb electricity supplier had taken control of the Valac power station, nominally owned by the Kosovo Power Company (KEK), becoming *de facto* the only supplier in the north of Kosovo. KEK has since begun to supply power to the north again.

³⁸ In April, then again in September, the Kosovo telecommunications authority started dismantling some of the installations belonging to Serb mobile telephony operators south of the Ibar and disconnecting their networks, arguing that they had not obtained a licence from the authority to transmit.

³⁹ EULEX includes 40 judges and 20 prosecutors as opposed to 1,400 police officers.

⁴⁰ Belgrade had decided to organise the general and local elections scheduled in Serbia on 11 May 2008 in 23 municipalities in Kosovo where Serb populations lived. International institutions did not oppose participation by Kosovo Serbs in the general election, but took the view that the conduct of elections at

94. The local elections in November-December 2009 thus again revealed the complexity of the present situation regarding the status of the Kosovo Serb populations. In addition to the struggle for influence by Belgrade and Pristina to assert their authority over Serb areas and populations in Kosovo, and which take the form *inter alia* of competing political and administrative institutions running in parallel, various influences and approaches can also be seen within the Kosovo Serb population itself. In particular a split can be seen between a pragmatic approach, more widespread in the South and East, which recognises that a certain degree of interaction or even co-operation with the authorities in Pristina is inevitable, and a strict policy of non-recognition and non-co-operation, which prevails in the North. It is also necessary to take account of the sometimes divergent influences exerted respectively by Belgrade and by representative bodies of Kosovo Serbs, which are dominated by political parties competing with those currently in power in Belgrade.

95. It would therefore be wrong to regard the Serb population in Kosovo as a homogeneous and uniform group under the exclusive influence of Belgrade. The clearest disparity is between the more urban North, which benefits from a greater range of infrastructure in the education, health and other sectors, and the more rural and isolated Serb enclaves in the rest of Kosovo. There is a serious risk that the gap will grow as the North continues to attract young and qualified Serbs from the enclaves. The situation is therefore complicated, and calls for an approach which takes account of the diversity of situations, interests, and influences at work, without deepening the split between the North and the rest of Kosovo. While the legitimate desire of certain population groups to maintain links with Belgrade, and the genuine needs of these populations, cannot be ignored, this cannot justify installing structures which challenge the administrative and territorial unity of Kosovo. The international community has an essential part to play in facilitating channels of communication and interaction which reconcile these two requirements.

96. In fact the publication of the ICJ's Advisory Opinion marked the beginning of a new phase with the prospect of a resumption of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, a dialogue prayed for in the resolution submitted jointly by Belgrade and the countries of the European Union and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 8 September 2010, and which is to be held under the auspices of the European Union.⁴² Generally speaking, the priority for all the principal players should be to put the needs of local populations back into the centre of policies

97. However, the long-awaited resumption of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina raises many tricky questions.⁴³ In particular there is as yet no agreement between the parties as to the precise terms of the dialogue. At least Belgrade and Pristina should be able to resume discussions on measures that make it possible to improve the lives of the inhabitants of Kosovo, whatever their ethnic affiliations may be: freedom of movement, the return of displaced persons, infrastructure development, stabilisation of the economy and support for growth and employment, speeding up decentralisation and encouragement of local government, strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption and organised crime. They also need to go beyond these technical issues and seek a comprehensive solution that would lead to mutual recognition and a full normalisation

the municipal level in Kosovo was exclusively a matter for UNMIK, and therefore described the results of these elections organised by Belgrade as illegal. Nevertheless the elections were followed by the creation of parallel municipal assemblies, and in several municipalities the Kosovo Serb representatives elected on 11 May 2008 replaced the interim representatives appointed by UNMIK after the Kosovo Serb boycott of the November 2007 elections.

⁴¹ The turnout in Novo Brdo reportedly reached 75 %, but only 30.5 % in North Mitrovica.

⁴² This resolution (A/64/L.65/Rev.1) is the product of intense negotiations, which have led Belgrade to agree to substantial amendments to the text which it had initially submitted. The resolution "acknowledges" the content of the Court's Advisory Opinion and "welcomes" the readiness of the European Union to facilitate a process of dialogue between the parties, a dialogue which "in itself would be a factor for peace, security and stability in the region" and would be "to promote cooperation, achieve progress on the path to the European Union and improve the lives of the people".

⁴³ On this issue see in particular the report by the *International Crisis Group* "Kosovo and Serbia after the ICJ Opinion", 26 August 2010.

of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Hints coming from Pristina as well as Belgrade seem to make an agreement possible. Several options could be envisaged, such as a review of the status of Serb populations in Kosovo – towards even greater autonomy – and additional guarantees for the protection of Serb religious sites in Kosovo. Reference is also increasingly made to the prospect of a partition of the North of Kosovo or even of land swap – North Kosovo for the Albanian-speaking region in south Serbia. The principal representatives of the international community have so far dismissed these radical options. Indeed, one should not lose sight of the numerous obstacles and complications that such solutions create. Notably, such scenarios raise questions regarding the status of Serb communities in the scattered enclaves south of the Ibar river – which represent some two thirds of the Serb population of Kosovo –, as well as that of the Albanian population of North Kosovo and the Serb population of South Serbia.

98. One can only hope that a comprehensive agreement between Belgrade and Pristina might be possible which would contribute to regional stability and take account of the interests of all the communities concerned. However, it is to be feared that while the ICJ's Opinion has opened a window of opportunity it is a narrow one and likely to close again quite soon. The resignation by the President of Kosovo in September⁴⁴ and the break-up of the governing coalition in October have hastened the organisation of elections in Kosovo; these will be held on 12 December 2010, and are likely to complicate the launch and conduct of the dialogue with Belgrade. The EU will have a key role in the next few months in creating a favourable context for the resumption of the dialogue, including a prospect of integration, which it should continue to promote actively both for Belgrade and for Pristina. Belgrade and Pristina alike have a lot to gain from a normalisation of their relations. Only through political courage and leadership can they take this step.

99. Lastly, the necessity for maintaining the unity and clarity of the goals of international action in the region as far as possible cannot be overstressed. At the present time an UNMIK-EULEX-KFOR presence, based on Security Council Resolution 1244 coexists with the International Civilian Representative (ICR), whose mandate is derived from the Ahtisaari Plan and the Kosovar Constitution. Moreover, since its creation the duties of the ICR have been performed by Pieter Feith, the EU Special Representative in Kosovo. It is vital that this imperfect cohabitation of presences with different terms of reference should not damage the overall effectiveness of international action. In particular, KFOR and EULEX must continue to be seen by all as impartial and to co-operate as closely as possible on the ground, as well as maintaining a presence sufficient to respond to events.

100. In the past 15 years, the Western Balkans region has gone through a remarkable transformation. Undeniably, a new positive dynamic is at play in many areas, particularly regional co-operation. Arguably, the issues that remain are also the most sensitive and complex ones. However, it would be unacceptable for these issues to jeopardize the progress achieved in the past 15 years; similarly, it would be inconceivable for part of the region to be excluded from the process of integration into the European space of security and prosperity because of this. The full normalisation of the Western Balkans requires that outstanding issues be resolved. This is the path that governments of the region and their international partners need to pursue resolutely. There is no other way. The only acceptable question is "when", not "if". Fifteen years after Dayton, time has come to take a new decisive step to confirm the European future of the Western Balkans once and for all.

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The Constitutional Court of Kosovo had taken the view that the President could not hold that office and the office of President of his party at the same time. On 27 September 2010 Mr Sejdiu therefore decided to resign from the Kosovo Presidency.

APPENDIX 1 - PRINCIPAL NATO AND EU OPERATIONS IN THE BALKANS FROM 1995 TO THE PRESENT

	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
NATO completed operations	<p>1. <u>IFOR</u> <i>December 1995 - December 1996</i> 60,000 troops Implementation of military aspects of the Dayton Accord</p> <p>2. <u>SFOR</u> <i>December 1996 - December 2004</i> 31,000 – 7,000 troops Establishment of safety and security conditions so as to encourage civil and political reconstruction</p>		<p>1. <u>Essential Harvest</u> <i>August – September 2001</i> 3,500 troops Collecting weapons of Albanian insurgents</p> <p>2. <u>Amber Fox</u> <i>September 2001 - December 2002</i> 700 troops Protecting international observers responsible for supervising implementation of the Ohrid Accords</p> <p>3. <u>Allied Harmony</u> <i>December 2002 - March 2003</i> 450 troops Supporting international observers and assisting the government to assume responsibility for security throughout the country</p>
NATO current operation or presence	<p><u>NATO HQ Sarajevo</u> <i>150 civilian and military personnel</i> Assisting the process of defence sector reform and supporting NATO operations in the region</p>	<p><u>KFOR</u> <i>June 1999 - present</i> <i>From 50,000 to 10,000 troops</i> Helping to maintain a safe and secure environment in Kosovo ; Assisting the disbanding of the Kosovo Protection Corps and setting up the Kosovo Security Force as well as creating the civilian structure responsible for supervising it</p>	<p><u>NATO HQ Skopje</u> <i>180 civilian et military personnel</i> Assisting the process of defence sector reform and supporting NATO operations in the region</p>

<p>EU completed operation</p>			<p>1. Military : <u>EUFOR - Concordia</u> <i>March – December 2003</i> 350 troops Helping to maintain a safe and secure environment making implementation of the Ohrid Accords possible</p> <p>2. Civil : <u>EUPOL – Proxima</u> <i>December 2003 – December 2005</i> 200 police officers and international civilian experts Monitor, mentor and advise the local police to help them in combating organised crime and promoting European standards of policing</p> <p>3. Civil : <u>EUPAT</u> <i>December 2005 – June 2006</i> 30 police advisers Assistance in developing an efficient and professional police service meeting European standards</p>
<p>EU current operations</p>	<p>1. Military : <u>EUFOR-Althea</u> <i>December 2004 – present</i> From 7,000 to about 1,900 troops Maintaining a secure environment and ensuring continued compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement</p> <p>2. Civil : <u>EUPM</u> <i>January 2003 - present</i> 92 police officers, 30 international civilian staff and 157 local staff Strengthening the operational capability and joint capabilities of the services involved in combating organised crime and corruption</p>	<p><u>EULEX Kosovo (civilian)</u> <i>December 2008 – present</i> 1,650 international staff et 1,100 local staff Assisting the authorities in Kosovo in all areas connected with the rule of law, in particular the police, the judiciary, customs and correctional services.</p>	

APPENDIX 2: PROGRESS IN THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION OF BALKAN COUNTRIES INTO NATO

	PfP and Intensified Dialogue	Membership Action Plan	Invitation	Membership
ALBANIA	1994	April 1999	April 2008	1 April 2009
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	1995	April 1999		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	2006/2008	April 2010		
CROATIA	2000	May 2002	April 2008	1 April 2009
SERBIA	2006			
MONTENEGRO	2006/2008	December 2009		

APPENDIX 3: PROGRESS IN THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION OF BALKAN COUNTRIES INTO THE EU

	<i>Signature of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement</i>	<i>Filing of application</i>	<i>Status of candidate</i>	<i>Start of accession negotiations</i>	<i>Accession</i>
ALBANIA	12 June 2006	28 April 2009			
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	9 April 2001	22 March 2004	16 December 2005		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	16 June 2008				
CROATIA	29 October 2001	21 February 2003	16 June 2004	3 October 2005	
SERBIA	29 April 2008	22 December 2009			
MONTENEGRO	15 October 2007	15 December 2008			
KOSOVO (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244)⁴⁵	-	-	-	-	-

⁴⁵ Kosovo is participating in the Stabilisation and Association Process. The revised European Partnership for Serbia including Kosovo as defined by UN Security Council resolution 1244 was adopted by the Council in February 2008, and contains a number of reform priorities for Kosovo. In June 2008 the Union also restated 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”.