



Eighth Meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Process Tracking Mechanism

Pristina/Brussels, 14th December 2005

PRISTINA - The 8th meeting of the EU's Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Process Tracking Mechanism (STM) was held in Pristina on 14 December 2005. The STM is a regular forum of the European Commission, UNMIK and Kosovo's provisional institutions of self government. The STM and the Annual Progress Report are the main instruments of the European Commission for monitoring Kosovo's progress in the EU Stabilisation and Association Process, which has the aim of bringing Kosovo closer to the EU.

Representatives of the European Commission, the EU Presidency, UNMIK and the PISG reiterated their commitment to support Kosovo on its way to Europe and gradually move from a standards process to a European Partnership Process.

The most recent European Partnership, as endorsed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 12 December, was designed to accommodate all of the most important aspects of the Kosovo standards and European standards. This European Partnership outlines the short and medium-term priorities for Kosovo in the political, economic and EU *acquis* fields and incorporates the essence of the Standards for Kosovo. The Kosovo authorities (PISG and UNMIK) have started the process of developing a Single Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Partnership.

The Commission's annual Progress Report on Kosovo released on 9th November was another main point on the agenda. The annual report is a comprehensive assessment of Kosovo's progress on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria.

PDSRSG Larry Rossin commented in his opening remarks: "we noted with great satisfaction that the European Union has pledged an even stronger engagement in Kosovo".

"The future time that we have to enter the EU is the adequate and unique time to accomplish the reforms and the progress. The Integration process is as important as its final goal" said Bajram Kosumi, the Prime Minister of Kosovo.

The European Commission's Head of Unit for Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, Thérèse Sobieski emphasised that "by gradually merging the UN standards into the European Partnership we are creating a framework for credibly monitoring and accompanying Kosovo's development towards a stable and multi-ethnic society. This should not overburden the Kosovo administration and synergies should be found where possible. STM meetings will continue to be one of the main pillars to ensure continued dialogue between the Commission and Kosovo."

Furthermore, the European Commission added that it was preparing to add some €25m to the CARDS annual action programme for additional support in the areas of energy, institution building and support of the census operation.