



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1137  
Vienna, 16 March 2017**

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**EU statement in response to the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, H.E. Mr  
Nikola Poposki**

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The EU welcomes Minister Poposki to the Permanent Council. We thank you for sharing your views on the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We also took note of the information we received earlier this week by the Secretary General Lamberto Zannier on his recent visit to the country.

Mr Foreign Minister, the EU remains deeply concerned with developments in your country, as we have underlined in our statement during the last week's Permanent Council.

We reiterate that the EU is committed to the EU accession process of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in line with the European perspective of the region.

We recall that the early parliamentary elections on 11 December 2016 were a first step towards reaching a solution to the long-lasting political crisis and enabling the country to pursue the common objective of European integration. The EU expects the swift formation of a new government that commits strongly to European reforms and to implementing all parts of the Pržino Agreement, including full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and strengthening of good neighbourly relations.

We reiterate our call to all leaders of the country to respect the outcome of the recent elections and acknowledge parliamentary majorities. This entails that the President, in line with the Constitution, entrusts the mandate to form a government to the candidate from the party or parties which have a majority in the Assembly.

We reiterate our serious concern about the escalation of negative rhetoric targeting civil society organisations and the international community. We urge everyone to refrain from fuelling any form of inter-ethnic tensions, negative rhetoric or incitement to violence. Any statement or action undermining good neighbourly relations or rhetoric fuelling tensions should be avoided. We expect all the political leaders in the country to display a consensual approach to the benefit of the democracy and stability of the country and of the whole region.

Mr Foreign Minister, we want to use this opportunity to commend the OSCE Mission in Skopje for its work, including its cooperation with the host country, international and regional actors, the European Union, as well as civil society. We encourage the Mission to continue to provide its good services to your country in fulfilling its mandate across all three dimensions, in the implementation of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement and in completion of the Ohrid Framework Agreement Review. In addition, we highly value the expertise of the High Commissioner on National Minorities as part of the OSCE's toolbox on the ground.

Thank you, Foreign Minister Poposki, for being with us today and for updating us on the situation in your country and the prospects for the future.

The Candidate Countries MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, align themselves with this statement.

\* Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.