

【Check Against Delivery】

**Statement of Mr. IWAMA Kiminori,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the OSCE
Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo
Permanent Council, OSCE
29 May, 2025**

Mr. Chair,

Let me join my colleagues in welcoming Ambassador Gerard McGurk, to the Permanent Council today.

As Ambassador to Kosovo, I am closely following the situation in Kosovo, including the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

Japan was one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence in 2008 and since then has been working together on the process of Kosovo's development based on the rule of law and democracy. Last year, commemorating the 15th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations, our former Foreign Minister, Madam KAMIKAWA, visited Kosovo as the first Foreign Minister of Japan in our history, to further develop our bilateral ties. She also visited Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and had candid dialogues on our bilateral relations as well as the future of the region.

With regard to Kosovo, various initiatives are being implemented to build on the outcome of the Minister's visit, including but not limited to continuous support for small-scale projects towards further development of the economy in Kosovo. In June, Kosovo National Day is scheduled at the Osaka Kansai Expo in Japan, for which we expect many people-to-people exchanges especially in the economic and academic fields.

Let me also share that Japan has been promoting “the Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative” since 2018, which aims at promoting stable prosperity of the Western Balkan countries including Kosovo by supporting nation-building in areas such as disaster prevention, the environment, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises. The initiative demonstrates Japan's commitment to further strengthening dialogue and development cooperation in this region.

Mr. Chair,

We highly value the important work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in promoting and protecting human and community rights, good governance as well as other areas such as Security and Public Safety in Kosovo, in order to support the country's authorities in strengthening their institutions and promoting stability and security in the region.

Especially, we commend the Mission's close cooperation with many international partners, including EULEX, KFOR, EU among others as well as for comprehensively addressing its mandate, aligned with the priorities of the OSCE Chairmanship, and promoting cooperation not only at the national level but also with 38 municipalities in Kosovo.

Japan acknowledges the positive developments in Kosovo during the reporting period. In particular, we would like to highlight the Assembly Elections held in February. The monitoring by our Embassy staff in Kosovo was conducted in different areas of Kosovo and it witnessed active participation from different communities. Voters were able to cast their ballots in good conditions, which underlined the people of Kosovo's commitment to democracy.

Hopefully the process of electing a Speaker of Parliament will come to an end soon to facilitate the establishment of a stable government.

We will continue to closely monitor developments in Kosovo, including developments after certain concerning events that took place throughout the reporting period.

Regarding the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina, Japan strongly urges the two parties to engage in constructive dialogue to find solutions for unresolved issues. It will be essential for peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

We believe it is also important for both parties to recommit to existing agreements, such as the Brussels Agreement and its annex, the Ohrid Agreement of 2023, and to continue to implement them in good faith and in their entirety, including via the establishment of the community of Serb-

majority municipalities.

Mr. Chair,

Japan remains committed to supporting Ambassador McGurk and his able team in implementing the mission's mandate throughout the coming period. We stand ready to collaborate closely with international communities for achieving peace, stability, and reconciliation in the region.

I thank you.