



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 984
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EU Statement on the Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The European Union has followed developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina closely. We recognise the frustrations of many people in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the slow pace of reform, and the impact that this is having on their path towards accession to the EU and NATO.

Taking part in protests in a peaceful and lawful manner is a fundamental right of citizens. At the same time violence, whether towards police, journalists, protestors, public or private property, is absolutely unacceptable.

The European Union is concerned about the slow pace of progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle visited Bosnia and Herzegovina on Monday and Tuesday this week to continue the efforts to help the political leaders in the country to find the compromises needed to move Bosnia and Herzegovina forward on its European path. We encourage political leaders in the country at all levels to respond urgently to citizens' genuine aspirations for change.

In the current social, economic and political situation the dialogue between government and its citizens must address, in particular, how to strengthen the rule of law, how to boost the functioning of the administration, accelerate economic growth and improve overall quality of life and stimulate employment prospects for young people. These concerns must then be addressed directly with credible and concrete actions.

We call on the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to use its country-wide field presence to analyse the situation in the country, and to encourage constructive dialogue between the citizens and politicians, with a view to strengthening citizens' participation in decision making processes.

The European Union will continue to follow developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We strongly reject any attempts to exploit recent events to raise ethnic tensions and urge all political leaders to avoid inflammatory rhetoric.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate ALBANIA and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.