



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1575 Vienna, 30 July 2026

EU Statement in Response to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Marcel Peško

The European Union warmly welcomes Ambassador Marcel Peško to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report. We highly value the important work of the OSCE Mission to Serbia across its mandated areas, despite budgetary constraints and an environment marked by continued political and social polarisation. We appreciate its reprioritisation of activities in response to Serbia's needs, which helps maximise the OSCE's comparative advantage. The Mission remains an important and impartial partner for institutions, civil society and media actors alike.

We welcome the Mission's efforts to improve the media environment, including its contribution to the 2026–2030 Media Strategy and Action Plan, the development of Serbia's first Media Literacy Index, and its support for processes related to the Regulatory Authority on Electronic Media (REM). A fully functioning REM Council is essential for media pluralism and fair electoral processes. Serbia needs to ensure a truly enabling environment for civil society, media, and academic freedom and strengthen the protection and safety of journalists.

Noting concerns expressed by ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, we underline that Serbia must ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. While we welcome positive steps regarding the unified voter register, key aspects of the electoral process still require tangible improvement and further reform. We trust that Serbia will implement the remaining ODIHR recommendations. The EU stands ready to support the relevant authorities in this regard.

We acknowledge the Mission's contribution to the national Action Plan for the Realization of the Rights of National Minorities (2026-2029), in line with OSCE commitments and international standards, as well as its support for increasing the

representation of national minorities in the police and judiciary. Serbia should continue to pay particular attention to protecting persons in vulnerable situations and to ensuring the non-discriminatory treatment of persons belonging to national minorities throughout the country. We welcome the selection of the Serbian NGO *Education for the 21st Century* as the winner of the 2026 Max van der Stoep Award for its contribution to tolerance, inclusion and education on national minorities.

We commend the Mission's continued support for judicial reform, judicial independence and accountability, as well as monitoring of high-profile organised crime and corruption cases within the EU-funded Western Balkans regional trial monitoring project.

We also appreciate its efforts to strengthen the capacities of the Serbian authorities to fight corruption, money laundering and organised crime.

We encourage Serbia to strengthen good neighbourly relations and contribute to stability and reconciliation with all partners in the region. While welcoming that Serbia has maintained its commitment in a number of regional cooperation initiatives, decisive efforts are still required to solve issues rooted in the legacy of the past, in line with international law and established principles.

We underline that progress on the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina remains essential for both to advance on their respective European paths, in line with the European perspective of the region. We expect political leaders to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and contribute to an environment of trust and regional stability.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to enlargement, as an investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity, as declared in the 2003 Thessaloniki Agenda. We reiterate the EU's unequivocal support for the European Union membership perspective of the Western Balkans, based upon credible reforms by partners, fair and rigorous conditionality and the principle of own merits. We welcome Serbia's overall progress made so far and we encourage further and more focused efforts to accelerate reforms and deliver concrete and tangible results in the identified key areas. Commitment to EU values, including full alignment with EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, implementation of the necessary reforms, notably in the rule of law, and fostering good neighbourly relations, are essential in the enlargement process.

Finally, Ambassador Peško, we thank you for your dedicated work and wish you and your team every success.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.