

**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Statement delivered by

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Permanent Representative  
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**UNSC briefing UNMIK**

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Mr. President,

I thank Special Representative and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Zahir TANIN for his briefing and salute the presence of both Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. President,

Let me first turn to the recent political developments in Kosovo. In the interest of its people, we call on political leaders to show unity and cooperation. Political stability is key to keep the country on the reform-track and for Kosovo to pursue its European aspirations. We particularly underline the progress required with regard to the rule of law.

The urgency imposed by COVID-19 should inspire the political leadership to put its political differences aside and to provide Kosovo's citizens the protection and assistance needed under the current circumstances. At the end of March, the EU reallocated €37 million for emergency support to its partners in the Western Balkan. €5 million of COVID-19 emergency support has been awarded to Kosovo. A further €61 million for economic recovery measures and loans are awaiting approval.

The efficient allocation of these and other resources is a considerable undertaking. It necessitates a stable political environment that fosters bold and inclusive policy-making, with special attention for vulnerable groups. We call on relevant actors to prioritize services for prevention and response to gender-based violence, given worldwide reported rises of domestic violence, affecting in particular women and girls. We reiterate the call of the SRSB for all Kosovo institutions and stakeholders to uphold human rights, and to leave no one behind in the fight against COVID-19.

Mr. President,

The struggle against the virus and its impact benefits from tangible regional cooperation without ulterior motives. We welcome the pragmatic approach taken by the Serbian and Kosovar authorities on health issues during the current crisis, facilitated by prior agreements under the EU dialogue. We encourage the parties to continue and further expand these efforts to the benefit of their populations.

Also the recent decision of the Kosovar government to lift the custom tariffs on goods imported from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina has produced tangible results on the ground as the flow of goods has taken up. We hope this first positive gesture preludes further confidence building initiatives and the renewal of the EU facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We call for the implementation of existing agreements concluded in the framework of the EU facilitated dialogue and welcome the recent appointment of Miroslav LAJCAK as EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues. The EU remains resolved to end the current status quo between Pristina and Belgrade. We invite both parties to engage with the EUSR with the view of reaching a comprehensive normalisation of relations in the form of a legally binding agreement.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to reiterate our engagement in favour of transitional justice. Contradictory narratives about Kosovo's past continue to create division. Only by truthfully facing its past will Kosovo be able to consolidate lasting peace and reconciliation. In their efforts to achieve truth, justice and reparation for past human rights violations, it is important that the authorities consult and engage with civil society and grassroots organizations. Victims' needs must be placed at the centre of the process, with special attention to the plight of missing persons and their families.

I thank you.