

Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo: UK response, 5 May 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair. Welcome Ambassador Davenport and thank you to you and your team for the comprehensive report, and its thorough summary of developments over the reporting period. This report sets out a number of notable achievements over the past period.

I would like, in particular, to highlight the work of the Mission's regional centres in Kosovo, which continue to provide such comprehensive coverage on the ground, especially in areas outside the capital, Pristina. Furthermore, I would like to express our gratitude for the Mission's spot reports during the reporting period, which have continued to be both timely and informative.

As your report notes, Russia's pre-meditated and unjustified invasion of Ukraine will have caused anxiety among residents of all communities in Kosovo – an invasion we condemn in the strongest terms

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom is a long-standing and strong supporter of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. Our commitment to Kosovo, forged in the worst of times, remains firm and steadfast. In this context, we value and appreciate the Mission's renewed commitment to its work to strengthen Kosovo's institutions, many of which – as this report notes – it played a role in establishing. In particular, strengthening inclusive, transparent local governance, in a way which takes into account the needs and views of all communities, remains a very important aspect of this work. We join others here in condemning the attacks against the Kosovo police in the northern municipalities in Kosovo.

I would like to underline the UK's appreciation for the willingness and preparedness of the Mission to facilitate a solution that would have enabled Serbian citizens living in Kosovo to vote in Kosovo, in the Serbian referendum of 16 January and in the Serbian elections of 3 April. We have spoken previously on this issue in this forum. On protecting cultural heritage, your report also describes recent developments related to the Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Visoki Dečani. We welcome the Mission's continued monitoring of these issues, including the Special Protective Zones, and its tireless work to ensure the rule of law is upheld in relation to these difficult issues. We refer to the Quint statement on this matter, which is noted in the report.

Lastly, we – alongside our international partners – continue to support strongly the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, working towards a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement that will be to the benefit of the people of both countries. It is vital that both sides refrain from any rhetoric or activity which may reduce the chances of constructive progress in the Dialogue, and an eventual permanent agreement. We value the continued work of EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajcak, which this report sets out in detail. It is incumbent on both Kosovo and

Serbia to seize the opportunity for renewed, good-faith engagement in the Dialogue, honouring the Dialogue commitments they have made so far, and holding regular talks at all levels in a spirit of compromise, and openness to positive, imaginative solutions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Davenport, for your leadership of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo during the reporting period, and your team for their commitment, hard work and expertise.