

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (National)

Statement by the Foreign Secretary on the visit to London of Kosovo's President and Prime Minister

Commenting on the UK's commitment to Kosovo, the Foreign Secretary said:

"The visit of President Sejdiu and Prime Minister Thaci to London demonstrates our support to Kosovo's future in the European family. It is their first visit since Kosovo's independence, which the UK strongly supported.

"I applaud the President and Prime Minister's commitment to full deployment of the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo (EULEX). This deployment is a crucial stage in Kosovo's development. Despite their deep concerns about some of the UN proposed transitional arrangements, I am impressed by the clearly-voiced commitment of Kosovo's leaders to take account of the concerns of Kosovo's Serb community. I discussed with them the importance of cooperation with the UN both in the interim phase before EULEX's full deployment, and thereafter, to the benefit of Kosovo as a multi-ethnic nation.

"Kosovo needs to keep building bridges with its neighbours as it moves closer to the EU. Britain will be with Kosovo in its search for security and prosperity, just as we were during the process leading to independence. "

Notes to Editors

1. Kosovan President Fatmir Sejdiu, Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and Foreign Minister Skender Hyseni are visiting London as Guests of Government on 20 November. During the visit they will meet the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Europe Minister Caroline Flint and DFID Minister Mike Foster.

2. EULEX will be the EU's largest civilian ESDP mission. Its responsibilities include monitoring and mentoring Kosovo's police, judiciary and prosecutors. Head of Mission General Yves de Kermabon aims to reach Initial Operating Capacity, assuming responsibility for the full range of EULEX's mandate, on 2 December.

3. 52 countries have recognised Kosovo since it declared independence on 17 February 2008. Recent recognisers include neighbouring Macedonia and Montenegro (9 October), UAE (14 October) and Malaysia (30 October).