



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Statement by Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Council
following his meeting with Atifete Jahjaga
President of Kosovo**

I am pleased to welcome President Jahjaga in Brussels today. Her visit takes place only a few days after the latest round of the Pristina - Belgrade dialogue, so allow me to start on that topic. Let me emphasise that the EU is very satisfied with the latest agreements on Customs Stamps and Cadastre.

The agreements reached last Friday are truly European solutions to some very difficult issues. In particular, the agreement on customs stamps is crucial, since it will result in the lifting of the mutual trade embargoes. This is a significant step in improving relations in the region and ensuring freedom of movement of goods in accordance with European values and standards.

However, there is more to do. Discussions need to continue and further progress needs to be made on the remaining issues. We need to find equally creative and pragmatic solutions for the issues of telecommunication, energy, and representation in regional fora. Dialogue, compromise and consensus seeking are the European way. Both sides have everything to gain from these deals, as the aim of this dialogue is to bring both sides closer to the EU, to improve mutual cooperation, and to improve the lives of ordinary people.

This brings me to the other topic of our discussion today, namely the relations between the European Union and Kosovo, and related developments in Kosovo itself. Let me first reiterate that all 27 Member States are committed to the European perspective of the Western Balkans as a whole.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - (+32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Jesús Carmona - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - (+32 (0)2 281 9548 / 5150 - +32 (0)475 65 32 15
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

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Moving closer to the EU requires a lot of hard work, patience and focus. I encouraged President Jahjaga to continue, with fresh energy, the necessary reforms across the board – they are in the interest of all the people in Kosovo and they will steadily bring Kosovo closer to the EU. It is my sincere hope that there can be good progress soon, for example on the start of the visa dialogue.

The EU lays special importance to the area of the rule of law, the fight against organised crime, and combating corruption. I welcomed the commitments expressed by the President in this regard and I encouraged the President to make good use of our Rule of Law mission, EULEX, which is the largest EU mission in the world. In fact, cooperation with EULEX has a strong bearing on Kosovo's overall relations with the EU. EULEX is making an important contribution to Kosovo's future by strengthening the local rule of law institutions, especially the judiciary.

President Jahjaga, let me reiterate that we all want to see Kosovo move closer to the EU. The latest results are very encouraging, but there are still many challenges ahead. However, you can rely on our support.
