

EU Special Representative in Kosovo

Speech delivered by Pieter Feith, EU Special Representative in Kosovo
at the Donors Conference for Kosovo – Brussels

Friday 11 July 2008

Prime Minister, Commissioner, distinguished representatives of the international donors' community,

- I am happy to take part in this much awaited and much needed donors' conference for Kosovo in my capacity of EUSR for Kosovo. Especially so as this conference takes place in the context of an overall increased EU commitment to support progress in Kosovo.
- I would in particular like to thank the European Commission for organizing and hosting this event here in Brussels.
- International aid should focus on creating and fostering sustainable structures to provide predictability and stability and thereby pave the way for development in Kosovo. This is obviously important in any economy. In Kosovo the potential impact of success, or failure, go much beyond the ordinary measure and will be vital for a stable and peaceful future. Economic development will not only raise prosperity but also ease political tensions.
- This donors' conference, and its follow up, will strengthen the fundamentals of economic dynamism. Kosovo's economic development has been lagging behind its neighbours. Due to decades of neglect in terms of public investments Kosovo will need financial support for the years and generation to come.

For further details:

Office of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR)
Tel: + 381 (0) 38 2044 - 307 (office) + 377 (0) 44 509 760 (mobile) E-mail:
julia.rueter@eusrinkosovo.eu
www.eusrinkosovo.eu

- Our aim should however be to make that period as short as possible. Increased stability and predictability will be key to Kosovo's success. In order to move Kosovo forward towards an environment, stable enough to attract investments and guarantee the equal right of all Kosovo's inhabitants I would like to identify three priority areas: i) strengthening the Rule of law, ii) decentralization with its benefits for the Kosovo Serb community, and iii) security sector reform including the establishing of new institutions.
- Progress in these areas will help bring us closer to a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo with improved social and economic conditions for its citizens.
- Without forgetting the enormous demand in the whole of Kosovo special efforts should be made to improve the situation of the Serb community. The over-all tool must be decentralization. This is however a lengthy process and we need to help the government in Pristina to reach out to the Serb community now. We have no time to lose. I would therefore like to underline the need for immediate targeted projects to improve the living standard in the Serb areas.
- The European Union stands ready through a triple commitment to support the government in leading the implementation of the necessary reforms. The European Commission will play a key role through its continued technical and financial assistance to support Kosovo in fulfilling the necessary conditions for further progress in the European integration process. EULEX, the largest ESDP mission in the EU's history on the other hand will provide great support to strengthen the rule of law, a key aspect for successful development. Finally my office will continue to provide the necessary political coordination, support and advice.
- Finally I would like to congratulate the government to the high technical quality of its Medium-term. It is clear from the people I have met that Kosovars have the will and the drive to make good use of what is pledged today.

Good luck to all of you for a fruitful conference and thank you very much for your attention.

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