

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the security situation at the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's border
with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The EU considers the stability of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia of fundamental importance for the future development of the whole region, and reiterates its strong condemnation of the recent episodes of ethnic Albanian extremist attacks in the area, which endanger the stability and security of the country and the region.

EU's Political and Security Committee discussed on 9 March with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Foreign Minister, Srgjan Kerim, his government's action plan for measures aimed at the cessation of violence and at ensuring lasting stability at its border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was presented to the UN Security Council on 7 March. It supports the government's policy of maintaining the appropriate level of restraint, in preserving the political stability of the country and in fostering harmony and co-operation among all ethnic groups of the population. In this context, the EU welcomes the increased contacts between KFOR, UNMIK and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia authorities to address the volatile situation in the border area. It welcomes the actions already undertaken, especially by KFOR. It calls upon all

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neighbouring countries and international organisations active in the area to examine what support they could provide. It underlines the importance of the role played by KFOR, the EU and its Monitoring Mission (EUMM), as well as the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, especially in the monitoring along the borders of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Recalling the importance of integrated border management, the EU stands ready to support efforts by the countries in the region. In the context of improving inter-ethnic relations, the EU is contributing substantially to the Southeast Europe University in Tetovo.

The EU reiterates its call on all political forces in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as in Kosovo to distance themselves from and isolate the forces behind the recent attacks and to shoulder their responsibility for peace and stability in the region. It confirms its strong attachment to the principle of inviolability of internationally recognised borders in the region, and to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
