

**PRESS RELEASE**

04 March 2008

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## Sweden recognises the Republic of Kosovo

Today the Government decided to recognise the Republic of Kosovo as an independent state whose independence is supervised for the time being by the international community.

The Government's decision is being communicated to Kosovo in a letter from Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt to the President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu, and to the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi.

On 17 February the Kosovo Assembly adopted a resolution which declares Kosovo to be independent. At a meeting on 18 February, the day after the declaration of independence, EU foreign ministers agreed on a text that enables EU Member States to each decide, in accordance with national practice and international law, on their relations with Kosovo.

EU foreign ministers took particular note of Kosovo's assurance that it will establish a democratic and multiethnic state that secures the rights of the minorities and the protection of the cultural heritage and that it also accepts continued international supervision of Kosovo. Moreover, the foreign ministers noted that the international presence in Kosovo is based on UN Security Council resolution 1244. In view of the conflicts in the 1990s that led to the collapse of Yugoslavia and the subsequent extended period of international administration of Kosovo, the EU also underlined that Kosovo is a sui generis case that cannot be deemed to have any effect as a precedent.

Kosovo' declaration of independence comes after several years of fruitless international efforts to achieve an agreement between Pristina and Belgrade. There is also still disagreement in the Security Council on the proposed solution produced for the status of Kosovo. The Government regrets that it has not been possible to reach any agreement in the Security Council.

Europe bears a special responsibility for the future development of Kosovo. The EU stands prepared to support and supervise the development of Kosovo in the direction of a modern society based on the rule of law. One step to that end is the establishment of the EU's largest-ever civilian mission, EULEX Kosovo, which will consist of up to 2200 people posted in Kosovo. In addition, the EU contributes to the political development of Kosovo by a special EU representative in Pristina as well as by supporting the international civilian presence in other ways. Through the European Commission the EU has also undertaken to contribute to the economic and political development of Kosovo by providing extensive financial support. A difficult and

demanding process is now being started to build a Kosovan state that meets international requirements. One major challenge will be to strengthen regional cooperation, which is a pre-requisite for reconciliation and economic growth in Kosovo.

Sweden is one of the very largest contributors to Kosovo and the region as a whole. Sweden plans to make a major contribution to EULEX Kosovo. Sweden will also continue to contribute Swedish troops to the NATO-led military presence, KFOR. In addition, Sweden will continue to have extensive bilateral development cooperation with Kosovo.

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