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Press release | 14.10.2010

Kosovo

New EULEX chief will have to rise to civilian challenges

The EU legal assistance mission to Kosovo (EULEX) will come under the leadership of General Xavier Bout de Marnhac from France from tomorrow (15 October). Commenting on the change in leadership, Austrian Green MEP **Ulrike Lunacek**, EP draftsperson/rapporteur for Kosovo and Greens/EFA spokesperson, said:

"The challenges EULEX now faces are clearly mainly as regards civilian stabilisation and it is regrettable that EU High Representative Catherine Ashton failed to use this opportunity to place a civilian expert in charge of the mission. Kosovo has now left the war behind it and, while General Bout de Marnhac clearly has strong qualities, it is unfortunate that the EU mission will not reflect this shift from security to civilian challenges.

"These challenges include establishing the rule of law in Kosovo and building the confidence of the public in their state institutions. The EULEX chief will also have a highly sensitive diplomatic role in his involvement with Serbia-Kosovo relations, particularly in the context of recent developments in the UN and the forthcoming dialogue.

"For the credibility of the EU's role in Kosovo, it is important for the EULEX mission to continue the fight against corruption and organised crime. To this end, there is an urgent need for EU member states to provide sufficient resources - notably judicial staff - to ensure the proper functioning of the mission.

"As EP rapporteur on Kosovo, I find it unfortunate that EU High Representative Catherine Ashton failed to consult the EP on this important decision. However, I wish the new EULEX head well in his new role."

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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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