COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 28 June 2013

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from:	Council (General Affairs)
on:	28 June 2013
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Subject:	ENLARGEMENT AND STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS – Follow-up to the December 2012 Council conclusions = Council conclusions

Delegations will find attached the conclusions of the General Affairs Council on 25 June 2013.

GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON ENLARGEMENT AND STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS

Serbia

1. In line with the Council conclusions of 11 December 2012 and further to the Council discussion of 22 April 2013, the Council examined Serbia's progress in achieving the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria, notably the key priority of taking steps towards a visible and sustainable improvement of relations with Kosovo*.

2. The Council commends the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo for the progress achieved in the EU-facilitated dialogue, and welcomes the "First agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations" of 19 April as a significant milestone, as well as the subsequent implementation agreement and concrete steps taken in recent weeks, as set out in the joint letter of the HR/VP and Commissioner Füle of 21 June 2013.

3. The Council recommends that, following completion of national parliamentary procedures and subject to the endorsement of the June European Council, accession negotiations be opened with Serbia.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

4. The Council recommends to the June European Council, with a view to holding the first intergovernmental conference with Serbia in January 2014 at the very latest, to invite the Commission to submit without delay a proposal for a framework for negotiations in line with the European Council's December 2006 conclusions and established practice, also incorporating the new approach to the chapters on the judiciary and fundamental rights and justice, freedom and security. The steps leading to the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina will also be addressed in the framework. Prior to the first intergovernmental conference, this negotiating framework will be adopted by the Council and confirmed by the European Council. The Council also recommends to the June European Council to invite the Commission to carry out the process of analytical examination of the *acquis communautaire* with Serbia, starting with the above-mentioned chapters, in order to facilitate rapid early progress in these negotiations.

5. Recalling its conclusions of December 2012, the Council reiterated that continued visible and sustainable progress in the normalisation of relations, including the implementation of agreements reached so far, remains essential so that Serbia and Kosovo can continue on their respective European paths, while avoiding that either can block the other in these efforts and with the prospect of both being able to fully exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.

Kosovo

6. In line with the Council conclusions of 11 December 2012 and further to the Council discussion of 22 April 2013, the Council examined Kosovo's progress in addressing issues set out in the December Council conclusions.

7. The Council commends the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo for the progress achieved in the EU-facilitated dialogue, and welcomes the "First agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations" of 19 April as a significant milestone, as well as the subsequent implementation agreement and concrete steps taken in recent weeks, as set out in the joint letter of the HR/VP and Commissioner Füle of 21 June 2013.

8. The Council notes the assessment of the Commission that Kosovo is ready to open negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the envisaged adoption of the decisions on 28 June 2013 following the necessary procedures. These decisions are without prejudice to Member States' positions on status.

9. Recalling its conclusions of December 2012, the Council reiterated that continued visible and sustainable progress in the normalisation of relations, including the implementation of agreements reached so far, remains essential so that Kosovo and Serbia can continue on their respective European paths, while avoiding that either can block the other in these efforts and with the prospect of both being able to fully exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.

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10. As far as the 19 April agreement and associated implementation plans are concerned, the Commission and the HR/VP are invited to continue to report to Council on Serbia and Kosovo's progress in implementation. This will inform the start, the subsequent decisions, including on the negotiating framework, and progress in the respective negotiations.

Statement for the Council Minutes on the conduct of negotiations with Serbia and Kosovo* from the Commission and the HR/VP

The Commission and the High Representative will regularly report to Council on Serbia and Kosovo's progress in implementing the 19 April agreement and its implementation plans. These reports and the Council's assessment will inform the negotiators in determining the pace and conduct of the negotiations.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Statement by Romania to be inserted in the minutes of
the General Affairs Council of 25 June 2013

Recalling the Council Conclusions of December 2012 and February 2012 and the declarations attached to the latter, Romania wishes to emphasize that in its understanding, nothing in the present Conclusions should be construed as bringing any change, whatsoever, in the importance and relevance that the uniform and nondiscriminatory implementation throughout the territory of Serbia of European compatible legislation in the area of protection of national minorities has for the start and subsequent conduct of their negotiations in all relevant documents.