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EU-US sign agreement on American participation in Eulex

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US Under Secretary of State Daniel Fried signed in Brussels on Wednesday an agreement between the United States and the European Union on the participation of 80 US police officers and eight prosecutors and judges in the Eulex mission in Kosovo.

In a joint statement by the EU and the US issued after the signing of the agreement at the headquarters of the Council of the European Union, it was pointed out that “EULEX's initial operational capability is expected to be declared at the start of December 2008.”

“The European Union and the United States have a common desire to work together to support the development of Kosovo's democratic standards, in particular the strengthening of an independent and multi-ethnic rule of law system,” it was pointed out in the statement.

The statement added that the deployment of the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) “throughout Kosovo is of benefit to all the communities in Kosovo.”

“It is critical for international efforts to deepen rule of law in Kosovo in order to contribute to greater stability in the region,” the statement added.

The talks on the agreement between the EU and the US were conducted by Fried and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana.

Solana’s spokeswoman Cristina Gallach said talks on possibilities for the deployment of Eulex have intensified between the United Nations and EU and between the Union and Belgrade.

She underlined that Solana and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon discussed Kosovo in Geneva last week, and that UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy visited Brussels last Friday.

“Solana and Ban Ki-Moon are maintaining intensive communication on Kosovo and diplomatic contacts with Serbia have intensified”, said Gallach.

She added that the deployment of EULEX in Kosovo will be accelerated in the coming weeks, aiming at preparing it for action in early December.



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She underscored that EULEC will operate in Kosovo based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

“All EU countries have accepted EULEX, although not all of them had recognized Kosovo”, said Gallach, underlining that there is no mention of Ahtisaari's plan in the EU document on the mission.

Meanwhile, in Belgrade, UN negotiator Andrew Ladley on Monday and Tuesday was on a visit to Belgrade where he discussed the six points of the UNMIK reconfiguration process with Serbian representatives with the aim of speeding up the process, UNMIK Spokesperson Aleksandar Ivanko said.

He explained that Ladley has been appointed by the UN to help and speed up the dialogue over the six points contained in the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon letter to Serbian President Boris Tadic of June 12.

The points relate to judiciary, police, customs, transportation and infrastructure and the protection of Serbian cultural heritage.