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US: Eulex deployment crucial for independence of Kosovo

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The US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried said on Brussels that the Eulex deployment was crucial for the Ahtisaari-based “conditional independence” of Kosovo, thus negating the EU stand that its mission would be “status neutral” and not linked to the Ahtisaari plan.

“The deployment of EULEX throughout Kosovo will be a critical element of the supervised independence for this new state, and it will benefit all of Kosovo citizens and contribute to Kosovo stability and stability of the region”, Fried said.

“The United States supports Kosovo’s progress in developing a stable democratic European-oriented multi-ethnic state, laying the groundwork for prosperity and a European future for all the people who live in Kosovo”, he underlined.

He said “51 countries have recognized Kosovo so far, including three quarters of the European Union and NATO States, all of the G7, that is about 25% of the UN members, and this represents a shared global commitment to Kosovo and stability in the Balkans”.

Fried’s comments, made after he had signed the agreement on US participation in Eulex, goes against the EU position, which says that the mission is not directly linked to the Ahtisaari plan on “supervised independence” of Kosovo.

The director of the Western Balkan Directorate at the Council of the European Union Stefan Lehne is conferring with Serbian officials in Belgrade on Friday about the Eulex mission.

Meanwhile, Kosovo Serbs started the signing of a petition against the deployment of Eulex in the province.