



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton after the seventh meeting in the framework of the EU-facilitated Dialogue, 20 March 2013

"Thank you to the press who've waited for this, being a long day and a very important day.

We've had our seventh meeting. I want to, before I say anything further, pay great tribute to both Prime Ministers who are with me today and to all those that they represent. It is not easy to have come here and to have started this dialogue. And they have committed to it with the great spirit of openness and determination. Determination to be clear about their objectives, determination on behalf of those they represent, but also determination to look for a way through and to find solutions. I wholeheartedly have enormous respect for both.

We have been together since 10.30 this morning, determined to make progress, which we have certainly made. It is my personal view that we're very close to a solution on some of the most difficult issues concerning northern Kosovo. I've always said that the purpose of this Dialogue is to normalise relations. We stand in the European Union completely committed to support the Prime Ministers, to support Belgrade and Pristina in moving forward in that direction.

Having spent all day together, it is now the turn for consultations: if we're going to make sure that what we're discussing is going to work on the ground and is going to be implemented, it is time for some consultations to take place before we come back together on 2 April for what will be the conclusive meeting of this set of issues and of this group of discussions.

I've said to both Prime Ministers - I can think of no one better to spend my birthday with! And tomorrow, as it happens, they will travel on the same airplane to New York, so my birthday present is that they should keep working tomorrow and we will, I hope, reach conclusions on 2 April. Thank you."

P R E S S

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