Remarks by the High Representative Catherine Ashton at the press point with Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr Hashim Thaci, Prizren

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, and thank you also for the opportunity to visit another part of beautiful Kosovo.

As you have said we've had a very enjoyable and hard-working discussion.

We've looked at the future for Kosovo as part of the European Union, a vision that we both share and that we want to see become reality.

We discussed of course the issues of concern to you – visa liberalisation, trade, the role of EULEX and the importance of support for them.

And we've considered how we can move forward in order that we can achieve as much together as possible.

I want, Prime Minister, to commend Edita Tahiri for the work she's done in pursuing the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

This dialogue as you've said is a very practical way of making sure that we make peoples' lives even easier and better.

And the practical consequences of that will, I hope, make a difference to the everyday life of the people of Kosovo.

Prime Minister, it’s my great pleasure to invite you to come to Brussels, where I hope I will be able to return your wonderful hospitality today, and to continue the dialogue as well.
Let me just add that the arrest of Mr Mladic yesterday is an important moment for Serbia. As you know, I congratulated President Tadic on that yesterday when I was there.

But the road to the European Union requires a number of things from everyone.

It requires a lot of work on the technical issues that need to be addressed and it also requires us to move forward in a political direction with the whole of the European Union.

I think that's understood very well in Serbia and understood very well in Kosovo.

What I want to do is to work to make sure that we find ourselves welcoming Kosovo and Serbia into the European Union in the best possible way.

There is absolute clarity from the UN about the position of Kosovo and you know that within the European Union there are different views.

The European Union itself doesn't recognise anyone; it's Member States who recognise countries. The critical question will be how to ensure that we have Kosovo and Serbia in the European Union in a way that provides for the people of both countries to be able to develop the relationship.

That's what we’ve got to think about for the future and those very difficult issues will be part of how we take this forward, not just, as you will have realised, between Kosovo and Serbia, but also in the European Union itself.

I think you should have a forward-looking perspective for Kosovo and one in which I think we will see the European Union play the most significant part. I look forward to that very much.