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## R E M A R K S

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council**

*"Thank you everyone.*

*It has been a great delight to meet with Prime Minister Dačić for the first ever Stabilisation and Association Council that took place in Luxembourg today. We were very pleased that we were able to convene this meeting only a few weeks after the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, that came in on the first of September. And it marks a new phase in the relationship between the European Union and Serbia.*

*Indeed, as we have been discussing, Serbia's progress over this last year - including of course when it comes to the normalisation of relations with Pristina - has been historic. These achievements led to the decision of the June European Council to open the accession negotiations with Serbia. And I congratulated – and I do it again – Prime Minister Dačić for this important result and for his personal commitment to the European perspective of Serbia.*

*And I was pleased to reassure him that the European Union wants Serbia to succeed and to have a first accession conference by January 2014 at the very latest.*

*Before we began the Council I also met PM Dačić bilaterally and we also discussed the issues around the municipal elections in Kosovo. We all stand together as one team to see successful elections on November the third, for people to come out and vote, and to participate in an important moment in the life of the people. We have kept in touch on all of the ways that we need to make sure that these elections can be as successful as possible.*

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*I want to pay tribute to Prime Minister Dačić and Prime Minister Thaçi for working through some of these challenging issues at times. And also to the OSCE that has really been helpful in working out how to make this go as well as possible.*

*And I believe we will see very successful elections. I do know that we have to continue to work out some of the issues that arrive from time to time. But I think that everyone has entered into this with a great spirit and a great determination to see them be successful. And I just hope that we will see people come out and vote and make their voices heard for what they want to have for the future."*

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