

【Check Against Delivery】

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN,
Permanent Council, OSCE
9 May, 2024**

Madam Chair,

Let me join my colleagues in welcoming Ambassador Michael Davenport, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, back to the Permanent Council today.

We are closely following the situation in Kosovo, including the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, as our Ambassador to Austria and the Permanent Representative to the OSCE is covering Kosovo from Vienna.

Madam Chair,

As a country, which has been actively engaging in the peace and security in the Balkans, we recognize and value the important work carried out by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to support the country's authorities in strengthening their institutions and promoting stability and security for all communities in the region.

In this regard, Japan acknowledges with satisfaction the positive development of Kosovo based on the rule of law since its independence and the relative stability reached in the region. At the same time, we have seen developments that raised concerns, particularly with regard to the situation on the ground. Several negative events took place during the period of report that Ambassador Davenport presented today.

The Banjska attack in September last year was, by far, of greatest concern, and must be fully investigated. The perpetrators must be

held accountable based on an impartial investigation.

We underscore the importance of communication regarding policies that have a significant impact on stability in the region and people's daily lives, such as currency-related measures.

Also, we deplore the boycott of the recent referendum which is a grave negligence preventing the people from their fundamental right to express their will.

Nonetheless, despite the ongoing issues, what is important is to look to the future. Fomenting distrust is not a constructive approach. In that regard, any unilateral actions that could lead to further escalation should be avoided. And inter- and intra-community dialogue needs to be amplified to enhance the trust among communities.

Therefore, Japan commends the significant contributions of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in promoting human rights including those at the community level with the focus on non-majority communities. We have been supporting Kosovo institutions such as national broadcast media and local institutions of healthcare and education to strengthen the services to non-majority communities.

Madam Chair,

Japan urges all relevant parties to continue to engage in the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, as we believe that advancing inclusive society in Kosovo is essential for peace and stability in the Western Balkans. Japan stands ready to work with all stakeholders, including the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, to achieve peace, stability, and reconciliation in the region.

I thank you.