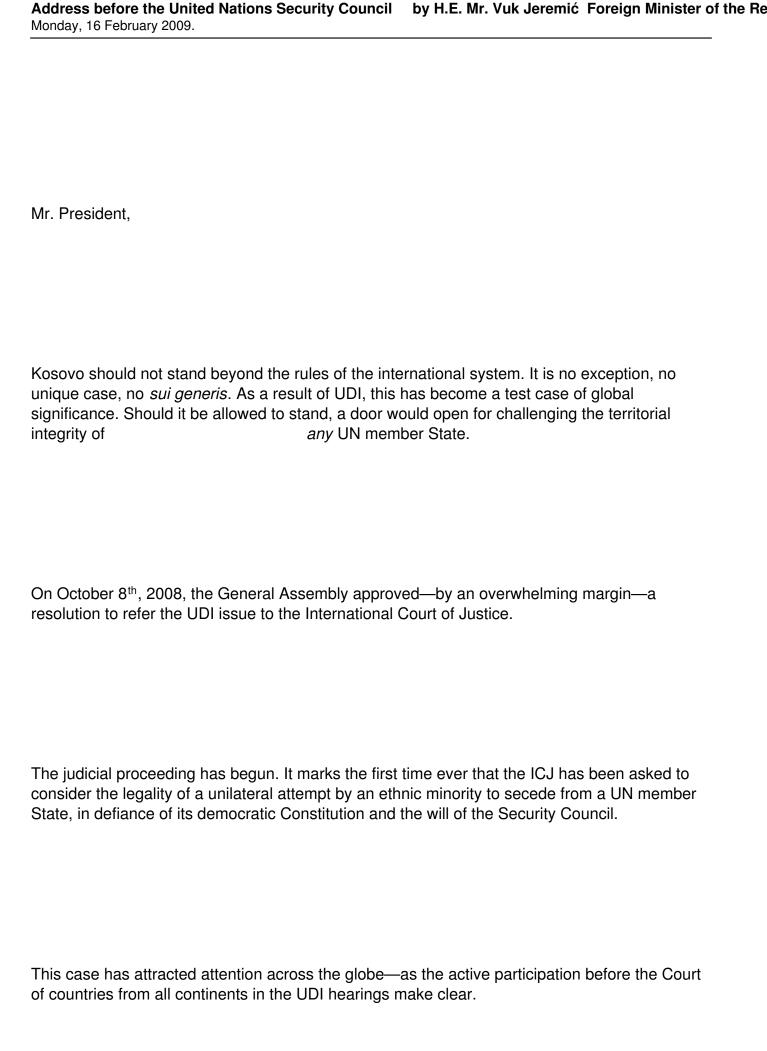


the Secretary-General's observation, contained in his latest report, that the cooperation, constructive engagement and "continuing support of the Security Council and of the broader international community for a reconfigured UNMIK is of crucial importance."
Reconfiguration has been brought to its end-state, as the report indicates. Therefore, no further reduction in UNMIK's resources should be undertaken.
The United Nations remains the overall authority in Kosovo, as mandated by this Council in resolution 1244 (1999). It must continue to play a vital role in coordinating all the international organizations that operate under its umbrella. UNMIK's capacity to cooperate effectively with EULEX in particular, must not be constrained. Our amendments to the UNMIK budget for the next fiscal year have sought to reinforce this essential element of its mandate.
Mr. President,
At the very beginning of my remarks, I would like to express my country's deep gratitude to the substantial majority of UN member States that respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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The solidarity we have received from all over the globe encourages us to persevere in our efforts to resolve the future status of Kosovo in a way that is acceptable to all responsible stakeholders.
It is my sincere hope that we will continue to work together in defense of the basic principles of international law, thus strengthening the universal case for the consensual resolution of disputes in the world.
At the same time, we note with deep regret the dismissal of resolution 1244 (1999) by Pristina. As the Secretary-General's report makes plain, the ethnic-Albanian authorities in Kosovo assert that—here I quote—"they have no legal obligation to abide by it."
Mr. President,

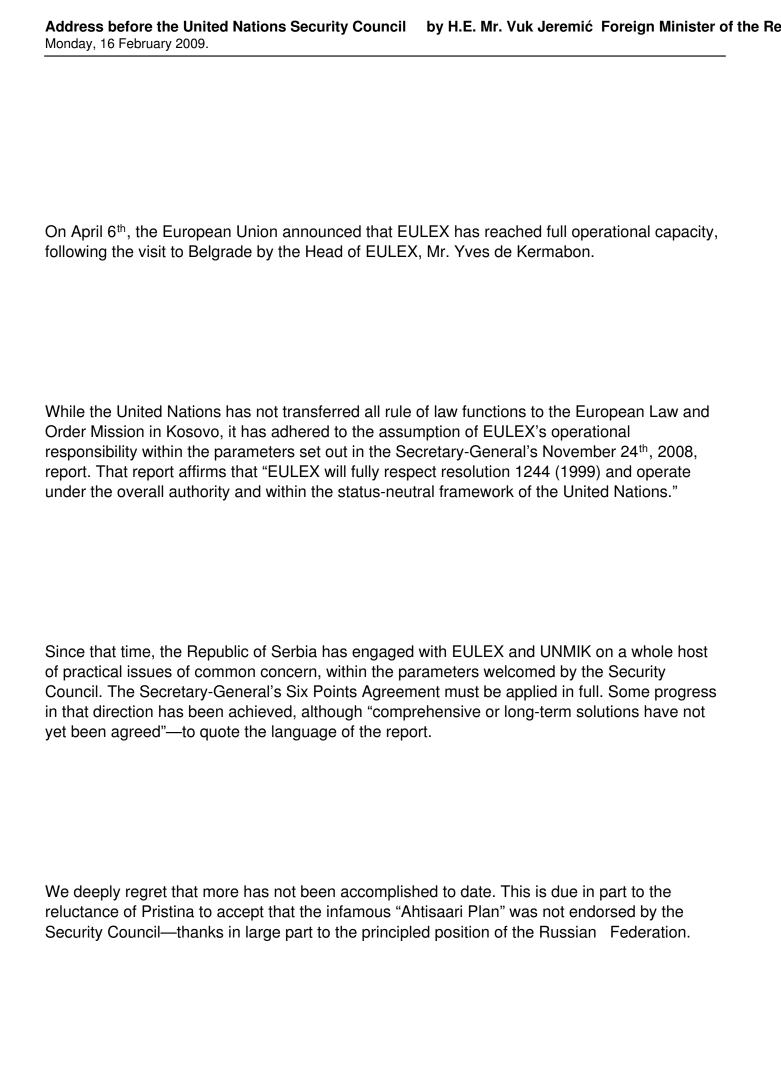
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	vill have far-reaching consequences for the international system as a ally important that the legal process be allowed to run its course, free of
ecognitions should not	ne fact that the Court is deliberating on the issue. Therefore, new UDI be encouraged. And multilateral bodies should refrain from extending essionist authorities in Pristina.
Once the ICJ hands down by the findings of the Co	wn its opinion, we will have cause to look again into the issue, informed ourt.
	resident, we should find strength to put our differences on status to one ace and stability, and the residents of the province.

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than thirty. This is a failure of monumental proportions.
Kosovo Serb IDPs want to exercise their right of return, and we must do everything to bring them back home. That means improving conditions on the ground for them to feel safe. Few destroyed houses have been rebuilt, and most remain empty. This is not, however, where the biggest problem lies. More than 40,000 claims have been filed by Kosovo Serb IDPs for the return of illegally-seized private property. And they have not heard back.
The first step, therefore, is making sure these are delivered. Right now, that's impossible. Sadly, the UNMIK-administered Kosovo Property Agency has ceased to exist.
We urge the international community to embrace the SRSG's initiative with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enable the UNHCR to take over the functions previously performed by the KPA. Through its Office in Belgrade and others in Serbia, this UN agency can serve as a focal point of our engagement.
Mr. President,



On Customs, preliminary meetings have taken place resulting in certain technical progress on this delicate matter. Resolving it will require enhanced coordination, and a renewed dedication to work together on achieving acceptable operating modalities—such as co-location and the distribution of revenues.
This brings me to the Central European Free-Trade Agreement, or CEFTA. The success of this important regional trade agreement depends on the consistent application of unanimously-agreed rules. UNMIK is a signatory to CEFTA, as the report states plainly. The introduction of new customs stamps by the so-called "Kosovo Customs Director-General" has regretfully politicized this commercial issue.
We hope that in the months ahead, we will be able to arrive at a set of practical arrangements acceptable to responsible stakeholders. It is clear that a more active role by EULEX, consistent with its mandate, will be required—as will closer coordination with UNMIK.
Mr. President,

I would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to a critically important issue—namely, facilitating the entry of Serbian officials into the province. This question has unfortunately been accumulating ill-will for several months, and threatens to derail constructive efforts on all other fronts.
It is difficult to imagine how we can positively contribute to developments on the ground, if our ability to work closely with the Kosovo Serb community throughout the province is hindered.
Serbian officials must be able to visit churches and monasteries, assist in the return of IDPs to reconstructed homes, provide food and medical aid, help maintain educational standards, and engage on a whole host of other, similar activities.
Operational responsibility to EULEX was welcomed on the presupposition that it would make use of its executive functions when required. Now is such a time. We demand that all necessary measures are taken to swiftly resolve this issue of paramount importance.
Mr. President,

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KFOR in Kosov	to the end of my remai o. It has the responsib n UNESCO's List of Wo	oility to protect our	enclaves and holy sit	es—including
security needs	neutral presence in the of the local population, stances, a troop reduct	, irrespective of eth	nnicity. We believe that	
	e to be a reliable partn ovo Military-Technical	•	cordance with resoluti	on 1244 (1999)
activities, prese	Kosovo Security Force nt and future, constitut Vestern Balkans. It mu	te a direct danger	to the consolidation o	

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"All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time," a world leader said. "The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort—a sustained effort—to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to choose the right path, not just the easy path."
Taking the right path will not be easy. Unfortunately, there are those who are not yet ready to begin the journey towards compromise. But we must not be discouraged. We must cease pushing each other apart. We <i>must</i> find that common ground.
Mr. President, the Republic of Serbia has taken the first step. The next one, we cannot take alone. We await with patience for a partner to join us in turning away from the painful past towards a hopeful future.
Thank you.