

15 October 2018

Tom Tugendhat MP  
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee  
Committee Office  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 31 August requesting an urgent statement of the UK government's position regarding a possible land swap between Serbia and Kosovo. I am glad that you were able to discuss this with Sir Alan when he appeared before the Committee on 5 September.

In that session, Sir Alan set out the UK government position. We share your concerns over border changes between Serbia and Kosovo, concerns that others have also strongly expressed including Chancellor Merkel. We also recognise progress on relations between Serbia and Kosovo is crucial to the future of both countries and to regional stability. That is why we support the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, and have worked very closely bilaterally with both countries over the last decade on efforts towards normalisation.

We also believe that for any settlement to be sustainable, it must come from the two countries themselves. We believe an approach that rested on changing borders would carry risks of instability in Serbia and Kosovo, of contagion within the region and beyond and, in extremis, movement of people along ethnic lines, which would be unthinkable in a modern Europe, and which could have serious consequences.

Whilst it is for two sovereign countries to decide what they want to discuss and agree, the international community has an interest in the deliverability of an agreement. It is incumbent on those of us who contribute to the forces responsible for security in the region, whether the EU, NATO or the UN, to take this responsibility seriously.

The EU has made clear that normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia is necessary for both countries to make progress towards joining the European Union. Joining the European Union would also require respect for European values, including the principle of multi-ethnicity.

The EU-facilitated Dialogue has tried to promote broader cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo, on a range of issues such as energy, rule of law, culture, telecoms and transport, which are practical issues that would improve the quality of life for the people who live there.

Since you saw Sir Alan on 5 September, he has had meetings in Belgrade with Serbian Prime Minister Brnabic and Foreign Minister Dacic, where he registered our misgivings about border changes and agreed to have further discussion with Dacic in the weeks ahead. We are stepping up our diplomatic efforts with international partners on the Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue, and would be happy to provide more information to you and your Committee should you wish.

**THE RT HON JEREMY HUNT MP**