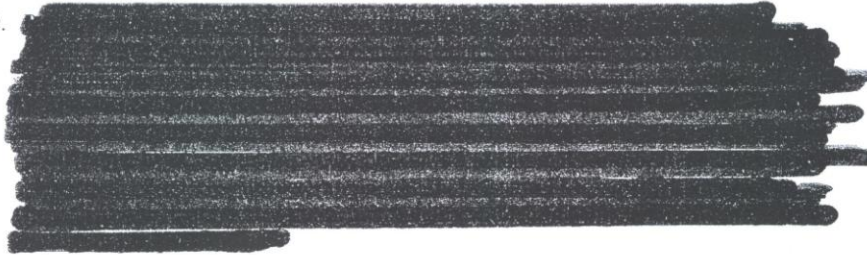


6. The evidence also demonstrates that **tackling the status issue serves as a stimulus to badly needed progress on standards**. The UN Secretary General has pointed out that the ongoing status process had led to renewed impetus on standards. He has also observed that this progress is likely to stall if the political perspective offered by the status process falls away.

The status quo does not serve regional interests.

7. Kosovo is the last remaining unresolved status issue from the break-up of Yugoslavia.
8. So long as the Kosovo status issue remains unresolved it **prevents the region from drawing a line under the nationalist conflicts of the 1990s**. Equally, it **slows down the region's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures**. As the Foreign Secretary and French Foreign Minister said in their Le Monde article of 7 September, "it is difficult to envisage Serbia being able to enter the EU without the question of Kosovo having been resolved". There will be no appetite within the EU to import unresolved and unstable status issues. Tackling Kosovo is essential if we are to realise the vision of integrating the Western Balkans into the EU.

9.



10. Serbia aside, most countries in the Western Balkans – including those neighbouring Kosovo (Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro) are clear in their view that stability in the region is best served by speedy resolution of the Kosovo status issue.

The UK is in good company in judging the status quo to be unsustainable.

11. The UN Secretary General said in his statement endorsing the launch of the Troika process on 1 August this year: 'The international community must find a solution that is timely, addresses the key concerns of all communities living in Kosovo and provides clarity for Kosovo's status. The status quo is not sustainable.' He reiterated this point in his opening remarks to the Contact Group Ministerial on 27 September, and this view was explicitly shared by the entire Contact Group, including Russia, in its subsequent joint statement.