



THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONDEMNS VANDALISM OF CULTURAL SITES

Pristina 21 June 2006

The Council of Europe Office in Pristina strongly condemns the recent vandalism and stripping of materials to the Church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Obiliq/Obilic and other Serbian Orthodox sites. The Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG), the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Institutes for the Protection of Monuments in Kosovo and Serbia are working together through the Reconstruction Implementation Commission (RIC) towards the protection and reconstruction of 34 sites in Kosovo. The continued vandalism of these sites is in direct conflict with all the efforts taken by the PISG and the international community to preserve cultural heritage in Kosovo. These attacks of vandalism promote a negative image of Kosovo and hinder progress towards a peaceful future.

The Council of Europe urges communities to respect these sites and support the Kosovo government in its commitments. Equally, the Council of Europe hopes the PISG and the municipalities will endeavour to find more effective mechanisms for the protection of cultural heritage in Kosovo.