Press release | 16.01.2014

EU enlargement

Kosovo must not be on separate accession track

The European Parliament today voted on reports assessing the accession progress of both Serbia and Kosovo. Commenting after the vote, Green foreign affairs spokesperson and parliament's rapporteur/draftperson for Kosovo **Ulrike Lunacek** said:

"The EU under the leadership of Catherine Ashton has played a major role in ensuring the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, with the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue the clear and concrete result. The resulting positive development of the EU accession perspectives of both countries is to be welcomed, with the opening of accession negotiations with Serbia and negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo.

"However, the EU must not put Kosovo on some separate track to other Balkan countries. To this end, it is a source of regret that the negotiating mandate for Kosovo differed from that of previous Stabilisation and Association Agreements. The EU should accelerate the process that will lead to visa liberalisation for Kosovo, the only country in the region whose citizens are not allowed to travel freely to the EU. In this sense it is particularly welcome that the EP has again issued a clear call to the five recalcitrant EU member states who have not yet recognised the state of Kosovo to do so without delay.

"Clearly, there is a need to be vigilant in monitoring the progress in both countries. Corruption remains a major problem in Kosovo, as it is in the entire region, and this must be addressed.

"The report strongly condemns the murder last night of a municipal councillor in Mitrovica North and calls for an immediate investigation. It makes clear that such crimes jeopardise stability and security in the broader region and urges the relevant authorities to do their utmost to facilitate bringing the perpetrators of violence to justice."

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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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