Press release | 24.02.2015

Eu-Kosovo

Visa liberalisation and recognition by all EU countries crucial

The European Parliament's foreign affairs committee today voted to adopt a report assessing the situation in Kosovo, drafted by Green MEP and EP vice-president **Ulrike Lunacek**. Commenting after the vote, Ulrike Lunacek stated:

"This vote by a clear majority shows strong support for Kosovo's European future and signals that it can someday, as an independent state, look forward to entering into the EU integration process. The report encourages both the government in Pristina and the European Commission to play a more active role in the implementation of visa liberalisation for Kosovars. Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkans whose citizens are not allowed to travel freely in the EU for three months. This frustrating situation has to change.

"MEPs have called for the EU to complete its official recognition of Kosovo and urged the 5 member states refusing to recognise Kosovo to drop their blockade. The EU's positive influence in Kosovo has been significantly weakened by its disunity.

"The report also calls on the government in Pristina to take concrete steps towards providing its citizens with a future in a thriving Kosovo and to stabilise the country both economically and socially, against a background of high emigration. It also urges both the authorities in Kosovo and Serbia to clamp down on criminal gangs that traffic undocumented migrants through the region and on to the EU. It also includes calls for tangible progress on rule of law, media freedom and the fight against corruption and organized crime as well as for the continuation of constructive dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. There can be no progress on the fight against corruption without positive cooperation between EULEX and the Kosovo authorities, including the government."

The report was adopted by 45 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions. The European Parliament plenary will vote on the report by the end of March.

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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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