Press release | 25.10.2010

EU-Serbia

Greens welcome positive but conditional signal on Serbian EU accession

EU foreign ministers today gave the go-ahead for the next step in Serbia's EU accession by calling on the European Commission to assess Serbia's application for membership. Green MEPs welcomed the decision, which maintains the pressure on Serbia to arrest key war criminals wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Commenting on the outcome, German Green MEP and foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"EU foreign ministers have made the right decision: giving a clear signal to the Serbian people that their future lies in Europe but underlining the need for full cooperation with the tribunal on the former Yugoslavia. Serbian president Boris Tadic has already admitted that arresting Ratko Mladic and other war criminals is a matter of political will: it is time for this will to be demonstrated and acted on.

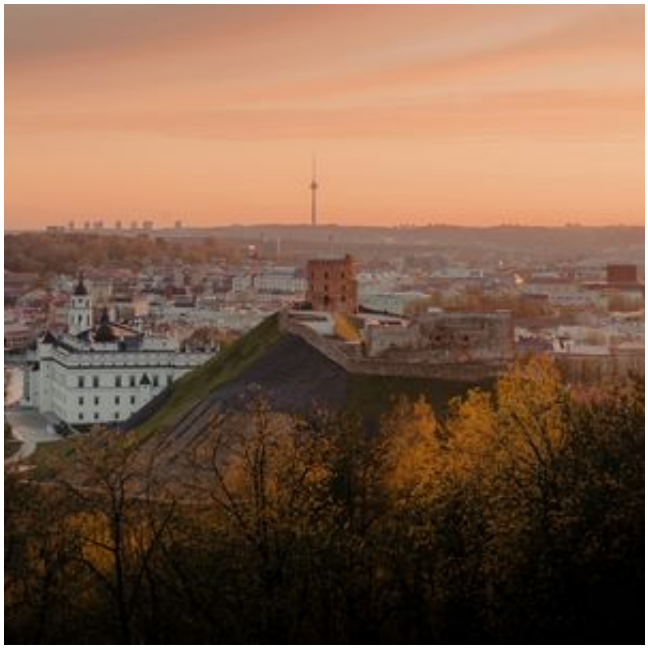
"Today's decision must also be viewed in the context of Serbia's more constructive engagement on the issue of Kosovo's status, and a vindication of the approach of the Belgrade government. The EU must now also make sure that Kosovo doesn't remain the only country in the region isolated from Europe. The Commission must therefore urgently come forward with a road map for visa liberalisation for Kosovo."

Dutch Green MEP **Marije Cornelissen** added:

"Today's decision shows that the EU is serious about Serbian accession but makes clear to the Belgrade government that Serbia can only become an official candidate by taking more concrete steps to fully cooperate with the ICTY and provide for the arrest of war criminals like Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic. We urge the Serbian government to step up its efforts to this end and thereby copper-fasten its future as an EU member state."

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