Press release | 07.10.2010

# EU visa liberalisation

## Bosnia and Albania belatedly included in EU visa-free scheme, Kosovo must follow

The European Parliament voted today to include Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania in the EU visa liberalisation scheme, clearing the way for their inclusion by the end of the year. Green MEPs welcomed the belated decision but called for Kosovo to be included. After the vote, Dutch Green MEP **Marije Cornelissen** said:

***"Today's vote clears the way for the belated but very much welcome inclusion of Bosnia and Albania in the EU's visa-free travel scheme. It will clearly give a boost to their citizens, giving them the same rights and privileges as their neighbours. The Council should now move swiftly to approve their inclusion, however we are concerned about the reluctance of some member states, notably France, to do so. Bosnia's and Albania's compliance with the EU criteria for lifting the visa requirement is actually better now than Serbia's and Maceconia's at the time they got visa free travel one year ago. If the Council fails to follow the position of the European Parliament and European Commission, it would be a completely wrong signal to send out to the citizens of Bosnia and Albania."***

Austrian Green MEP and EP rapporteur on Kosovo **Ulrike Lunacek** added:

"The Council must now swiftly give the green light and help to further strengthen the relationship between the EU and the western Balkans. However, the elephant in the room that is Kosovo remains. The whole of the western Balkans with the exception of Kosovo will now benefit from the EU's visa-free travel scheme. We must move to immediately resolve this anomaly. While a small minority of member states still does not recognise Kosovo as an independent state, this is no reason to deny its citizens the right to visa-free travel that is now offered to all others in the region."

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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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