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Kosovo

European Parliament strengthens path of integration for Kosovo

The European Parliament today voted with a clear majority for the Kosovo resolution of Green MEP and Rapporteur Ulrike Lunacek (Austria). Commenting on the vote, **Ms Lunacek**, Greens/EFA Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, said:

"The European Parliament today sent a clear signal that the future of independent Kosovo lies in EU integration. This is a signal of encouragement for the government as well as the citizens of Kosovo. In addition, it is a clear request to the five EU member states which have not yet recognised Kosovo as a state to promptly do so in order to raise the effectiveness of our support.

A clear majority of MEPs rejected a further discussion on the question of Kosovo's status, keeping in mind that a statement from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is due in July.

With this resolution, the Parliament is in favour of starting talks on visa liberalisation as soon as possible. The people of Kosovo should no longer be refused the freedom of travel which the EU will have probably granted to the other states in the region by the end of the year. My resolution calls for this necessary step to urgently be implemented to free the Kosovars of their regional as well as international isolation.

The resolution further calls for increased cooperation in the fight against corruption. Without good cooperation between EULEX and the Kosovar authorities, no success in countering organised crime and corruption at the highest levels will be possible. Only in this way can the credibility of the rule of law be promoted.

Concerning the integration of the Serbian minority in Kosovo we demand the support of the government of Kosovo as well as the EU. Only with the unfettered participation in the social life of the state can the Serbian Kosovars be won over. The high participation in the local election in Partesh show that this is already a reality for a segment of the Serbian Kosovar community.

Moreover, the resolution demands that the government in Belgrade continue to support regional cooperation as well as taking action against the opaque Serbian parallel structures in Kosovo, as it has done recently in seven municipalities. Another point in my resolution, which is very important to me, is that the cultural and religious heritage of all ethnic groups be guaranteed and their monuments safeguarded."

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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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