Press release | 28.02.2012

Serbia - EU candidate status

EU decision to delay vindicated as Serbia makes extra effort

EU ministers in the general affairs council today recommended granting EU candidate status to Serbia. The decision on candidate status had originally been expected in December but was postponed pending delivery by Serbia of progress in improving its relations with neighbouring Kosovo. The Greens welcomed the recommendation, as a vindication of the EU strategy, which the Greens were the only group in the EP to support. Commenting on the decision Greens foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"Today's decision to recommend EU candidate status is an important recognition of the major progress made by Serbia in recent years, as it moves closer to its European destiny.

"Serbia has followed up its significant progress on internal reforms, with efforts to improve its relations with Kosovo over recent weeks, notably under an agreement finalised last week (1). Against this background it is right for the EU to now extend candidate status, with the extra effort from Serbia as regards Kosovo a vindication of the EU decision to delay recommendation last December. However, it is regrettable that it took pressure from Brussels to bring Serbia to engage in a rapprochement with its neighbour Kosovo, as this is clearly in the interest of Serbia and Serbian people, as well as being crucial for European integration.

"Candidate status is far from the end of process however, and the real work will now begin to ensure Serbia is ready to become an EU member. Membership negotiations will begin as soon as all the conditions outlined by the European Commission in October have been realised."

(1) See the Green press release from last week: http://www.greens-efa.eu/serbia-kosovo-5411.html

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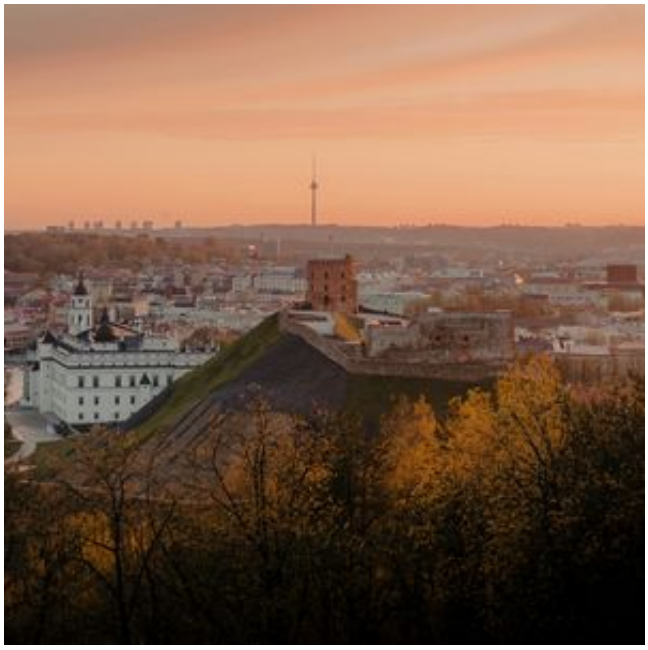
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