

Serbia - EU progress

Serbia must end politicking and implement Kosovo agreement

The European Parliament today adopted a report assessing Serbia's progress towards EU membership, just one month after the decision to grant EU candidate status to the country. The Greens supported the EP report, which welcomed the candidate status decision but highlighted the need for Serbia to continue with its reform efforts. However, the group criticises the failure of the Serbian government to sign an agreement with Kosovo, which was a condition of the decision on candidate status. After the vote, Greens foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"The EP has today acknowledged the reform progress being made by Serbia but underlined that outstanding problems will not be simply brushed under the rug. This balanced message aims to strengthen the hand of reform-oriented actors ahead of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Serbia."

"However, the latest foot-dragging of the Serbian government is casting a shadow over the overall positive developments of recent weeks. A key factor in the decision to extend candidate status was the agreement between Serbia and Kosovo on an EU-brokered deal on regional cooperation and border control at the end of February (1). Regrettably, the Serbian government is stalling and refusing to sign this agreement, even though the signature was understood to be a mere formality. The failure to do so is against the interests of the people in the region and ridicules the EU's goodwill. Belgrade should end this pre-electoral politicking and ensure this key agreement is implemented without any further delay."

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

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