

## **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Delegation for relations with  
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo**

## **ASSEMBLY OF KOSOVO**

**Delegation to  
the 3rd Interparliamentary  
Meeting EP-Kosovo**

### **JOINT STATEMENT**

**At the conclusion of the 3rd Interparliamentary Meeting European Parliament - Assembly of Kosovo, held in Brussels on 22 and 23 June 2010, Eduard Kukan, Chairman of the EP delegation, and Jakup Krasniqi, President of the Assembly, made the following statement:**

1. Recognised the achievements of the Kosovo institutions, including accession to key international organisations i.e. World Bank, International Monetary Fund and others. Stressed however that key reforms must be addressed in a systematic manner regarding problems with corruption, decentralisation in Northern Mitrovica and weakness of public administration; recalled that particular attention should be paid to efficient implementation of laws and not only their adoption;

#### **On institution building**

2. Stressed the utmost importance of the reform of the judicial and prosecution institutions as a major prerequisite for building a functioning democratic system in Kosovo; underlined that impartial and efficient judiciary would allow citizens to gain trust in the rule of law; called for the adoption and swift implementation of the Law on Courts and for the establishment of an effective protection system of witnesses and judges. Called for more secondments of international judges and prosecutors within the existing EULEX framework;
3. Welcomed the good atmosphere during the first local elections organised under the political responsibility of the government of Kosovo on 15 November 2009 and congratulated the Kosovo Serb community for electing its representatives, but stressed that a series of irregularities have been reported and called on the authorities to swiftly implement the recommendations of the international community, including the necessary changes to the electoral law;
4. Urged the government to fully support the newly elected local leadership in municipalities where the local Serbian community won elections. This support should facilitate cooperation between neighbouring ethnic-Albanian and ethnic-Serbian municipalities and include sufficient financial and political assistance so that they could establish the necessary structures in order to start delivering the important public services. Stressed that effective functioning of the municipalities is fundamental to demonstrate to the minorities the value of accepting Kosovo and of participating in its political and administrative functioning;

5. Emphasized the importance for political parties' statutes to ensure an adequate multi-ethnic representation, in order to allow the full participation of minorities in political life;
6. Welcomed the recent approval of the basic legislation on civil service and called for further reforms aimed at the creation of a pluralistic and independent civil service. Stressed that a professional and corruption-free administration can be formed only on a strong legal basis, including stable financial resources for its personnel; pointed out that the practice of political appointees in public administration seriously undermines the functioning of the administration and is contrary to that goal;
7. Called for support to strengthen the Assembly in its scrutiny and legislative capacities and at the same time requested the EU institutions and Member States to adopt twinning programmes for the Members and staff of the Assembly including internships in national parliaments and in the European Parliament;

### **On rule of law**

8. Welcomed the legislative and organisational steps taken by the Kosovo institutions, i.e. adoption of laws on the functioning of the judicial system and setting up a department for organised crime, expressed however its concern about the corruption phenomenon which remains one of the biggest problems in Kosovo together with organised crime and called for actions to combat it, not only by improving the legal framework but by implementing it and bringing corrupt officials to justice. Expressed the view that for the purpose of combatting corruption it is of great importance to ensure the transparency of the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns;
9. Underlined the importance of the EULEX mission and acknowledged progress in developing its role in providing technical support to the Kosovo authorities; called for a revision of the general EULEX priorities, in order to improve the current capacity of local institutions to deliver justice and security by moving resources to the judiciary and prosecutors, while reducing the policing component, as the Kosovo Police has significantly improved its ability to protect its citizens;
10. Supported EULEX's most recent actions, which raised high hopes amongst the population that EULEX would deliver on its promises to fight corruption at all levels; expressed their trust that EULEX would not back down in the face of political pressure and an unwarranted fear of instability and therefore called on the Member States to unconditionally support the ongoing investigations;
11. Called on EULEX to reinforce its activities in building the rule of law in the North of the country in order to build without further delay judicial and law enforcement framework in concerned municipalities, in particular as the functioning of the court in Northern Mitrovica is only partial and the border crossings with Serbia are only monitored and no customs revenues are collected;
12. Stressed that adequate cultural heritage protection is of importance to all communities in Kosovo and called on the government to proceed with the planned institutional reform of the cultural heritage sector;

## **On cooperation with neighbours**

13. Repeated that membership to the EU is a strategic goal for Kosovo and regional stability of the Western Balkans and the integration of these countries into the EU are priorities for the European Union; stressed at the same time that these priorities can only be sustained if the EU membership is a tangible prospect for all the countries in the region;
14. Welcomed the recognition of Kosovo's independence by most of its neighbouring countries and good neighbourly relations with them; noted with satisfaction the fact that during the regional summit in Sarajevo in June 2010, representatives of all countries of the region, including Serbia and Kosovo, were present and expressed the hope that future meetings of this kind will continue in this manner and allow the discussion of substantial challenges for the region; expressed their hope that the ICJ advisory opinion would present a crucial window of opportunity for Serbia to find a new approach towards Kosovo;
15. Invited the countries, which have not recognised Kosovo's independence so far, to send representatives to the next regional summit in an attempt to find a new approach towards the status issue;
16. Welcomed the signing of the police protocol between Serbia and EULEX and called on Serbia to be pragmatic on the status issue and not to take steps which might be harmful to the Kosovo economy and consequently the well-being of people living on both sides of the border including the Serbs; called on all sides to show a pragmatic approach to allow for Kosovo's regional integration and to refrain from blocking the membership of Kosovo in international organisations;
17. Encouraged Serbia and Kosovo to strengthen the cross-border cooperation, particularly at the local level, on the issues which are important for the citizens, such as environment, infrastructure and trade and, in particular, called for the inclusion of Kosovo in CEFTA;

## **On facilitating movement of people with Schengen area**

18. Congratulated the Kosovo authorities for enhancing bilateral relations with Schengen area countries by negotiating and in many cases concluding bilateral readmission agreements and stated that an EU compatible law on readmission needs to be adopted by Kosovo as soon as possible while its efforts on reintegration need to be stepped-up to make the process sustainable;
19. Stressed the need to overcome Kosovo's isolation, as the citizens of all the other countries of the region should be allowed to travel to the Schengen area without visas by the end of 2010 and called on the Commission to formally launch the visa dialogue with Kosovo defining the relevant roadmap as soon as possible;
20. Urged the neighbouring country Bosnia and Herzegovina, to follow the example of Greece and Slovakia and to allow Kosovo citizens to cross its borders on the basis of travel documents issued by the Kosovo institutions and without visas;
21. Noted that some Member States apply unilaterally visa facilitation measures while others continue to charge full visa fees; called on EU Member states and the Commission to make all efforts to quickly adopt uniform provisional facilitated

procedures in order to ease travel for Kosovo citizens, especially in light of the possibilities offered under the new visa code;

### **On protection of human rights**

22. Welcomed the progress in the adoption of the legislation protecting human rights and minorities, however reiterated the need for improving implementation of the legislative framework, for example in the case of the anti-discrimination law and stated that overall progress in this regard is not sufficient; called in particular for the strengthening of civil society and media freedom and for continuing the enhancement of women's rights;
23. Underlined the difficult situation of those who return from abroad and face lack of reintegration programmes and insufficient protection by law enforcement institutions; expressed their concern in particular about the rights and freedoms of the Roma population and in this regard urged Kosovo institutions to rapidly improve the conditions in the country for returnees from the Member States;
24. Expressed concern about the fact that domestic violence, especially against women, is a major problem and is not always followed up by proper investigation by the police; therefore encouraged the Kosovo institutions to make further efforts in addressing this wide spread crime;

### **On the economy**

25. Welcomed agreements between Kosovo and international donors and financial institutions which should guarantee necessary economical reforms on the one hand and a flow of international aid from the other; expressed however its concern about an increase of the budget deficit caused mainly by substantial growth of public expenditure which could prove to be an even greater instability factor when international donations would diminish; called on the government to balance the need to improve the public infrastructure and address social issues while bearing in mind the financial stability of the country;
26. Stressed that foreign investments would flow in to the country and remain only if the government will be able to provide the most competitive conditions in the region, in particular transparent and clear rules on privatizations and tenders, and therefore advised to learn from successes and mistakes of neighbouring countries, at the same time bearing in mind the importance of rule of law and environmental sustainability for a strong economy;
27. Called for active steps to be taken in the field of energy in order to ensure the energy security necessary for the development of Kosovo and underlined the necessity to adapt the energy supply towards renewable sources, to modernise and step up the energy efficiency of the electric grid and to implement the best available technologies including in the planned coal-fired plants.