

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Delegation for Relations
with the Countries of
South East Europe**

**PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY OF KOSOVO
Delegation to the 2nd
Inter-parliamentary
Meeting EP-Kosovo**

JOINT STATEMENT

At the conclusion of the 2nd Interparliamentary Meeting European Parliament-Kosovo Parliamentary Assembly, held in Pristina on 6 and 7 April 2009, Doris Pack, Chairwoman of the EP delegation, and Jakup Krasniqi, President of the Kosovo Parliamentary Assembly, made the following statement:

On the political situation in Kosovo and steps towards European integration

1. Expressed satisfaction for the overall stability of the political situation in Kosovo, one year after the declaration of independence and the adoption of the Constitution, which marked the start, for Kosovo, of a challenging state-building era, including establishing diplomatic relations; recalled however that reported incidents and other events point to the continuous fragility of the situation, which should not be under-estimated;
2. Reiterated that Kosovo's institutions should resolutely head towards ownership of political responsibility and implementation of the standards for a functioning multi-ethnic and democratic European society, which is the only way for Kosovo to obtain self-sustainability and European integration; stressed that the provisions of the Constitution of Kosovo must be continuously, honestly and resolutely implemented;
3. Expressed their support for the plan of Kosovo's Government to carry out a census in the country; in view of municipal elections to be held in 2009, called on the Kosovo authorities and all international players to work towards obtaining of a significant participation of the Serbs, thereby avoiding that the electoral process becomes a divisive experience; recalled that setting up the date of municipal elections should be consistent with the progress achieved in decentralisation and, at the same time, should allow a smooth and democratic passage of duties at the expiration of current mandates;
4. Underlined the European Union's commitment to playing a leading role in ensuring the stability of Kosovo and of the Western Balkans as a whole; recalled the European Union's willingness to assist the economic and political development of Kosovo by offering to it, as well as to the other countries of the region, clear prospects for EU membership; compared to these perspectives, noted with concern that the pace of reforms is regrettably slow in Kosovo and that the Government should make a genuine effort for transparency;
5. Welcomed the decision of the Commission, announced in the "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009", to present, in the autumn of 2009, a feasibility study evaluating means to further Kosovo's political and socio-economic development, and

examining how best Kosovo can progress as part of the region towards integration with the EU in the context of the Stabilisation and Association process;

6. Took careful note of the most recent Commission's Progress Report on Kosovo of November 2008 which highlights that some progress has been made in addressing key European Partnership priorities, in civil and political rights, in minority and cultural rights legislation but also the numerous critical aspects, linked to the political and economic criteria for EU integration, giving cause for concern, such as weakness and inefficiency of public administration and of the judiciary, widespread corruption and organised crime and urged the responsible authorities to immediately tackle, with the help of the international community, the most worrying weaknesses and inefficiencies of Kosovo Institutions; reforms should be intensified;
7. Recommended that EU integration matters be continuously discussed and the relative problems tackled, especially through a better coordination between the Government and the Parliament of Kosovo, which should resolutely address its insufficient capacity to scrutinise draft legislation and to exercise control over the Government, and an increase of interaction between the state Institutions and civil society. Political interference in public administration and corruption should not be tolerated; called on the government and the international institutions in Kosovo to be firm in implementing their respective anti-corruption policies. Combating corruption and crime is of utmost importance for gaining people's trust in the institutions and should be supported by the necessary legal measures; Institutions should act in a transparent and fair manner;
8. Urged the European Commission and the EU Member States to assist the Kosovo Government in resolving the acute staff shortages in key sectors of public administration, to support the training of civil servants and to assist with the improvement of communication infrastructure, in order to secure a smooth running of the administration;

On EULEX

9. Urged the Government of Kosovo and all the relevant local and international Institutions to enhance their action for the establishment of the rule of law and to concretize the fight against corruption and crime into specific measures; welcomed the successful deployment of EULEX throughout the territory of Kosovo; called on the European Union Member States to maintain unity in their support to the EULEX Mission's authority in the whole territory of Kosovo, as they showed unity at the time of launching it;
10. Expressed concern for possible operational challenges still to be faced by EULEX, be it on the level of material and IT infrastructure or on the level of human resources and invited the Council of the EU to address any observed inadequacy without delay;
11. Expected EULEX to function in accordance with its EU mandate with a view to promoting the stable political development of Kosovo and guaranteeing the rule of law for all communities throughout Kosovo; underlined in this regard that EULEX also serves the interests of ethnic minorities in Kosovo and will address, amongst others, complaints concerning discrimination, harassment, violence, interethnic crimes and property issues;

12. Welcomed the Serbian Government's agreement to the deployment of EULEX and encouraged Serbia to continue in its constructive attitude and to reinforce its readiness to cooperate with the Mission;
13. Shared the view that the current and future relationship between EULEX and the reconfigured UNMIK, towards the phasing out of UNMIK, and the perception of this situation by the Kosovo authorities, should be inspired by pragmatism, an open exchange of experience and a constructive attitude for the benefit of all citizens, all communities and all areas of Kosovo, in view of the goal of unifying Kosovo under a single rule of law; in this context, took note of the UNSG announcement that the reconfigured UNMIK will maintain a small field presence, until a commonly agreed alternative will be available; considered that in this delicate phase a reinforcement of the OSCE presence in Kosovo might be helpful;

On decentralisation, the communities and the North

14. Expressed the view that the Kosovo authorities should continue to facilitate gradual decentralization and define and clarify the relationships and the competencies, including budgetary allocations, between central and local levels, in the interest of ownership of public affairs, transparency and efficiency at the local level and in the superior interest of local population, with the aim of improving their living conditions; underlined that decentralisation is not merely in the interest of the Serb community, but will work for the benefit of all Kosovo citizens;
15. Reiterated that reconciliation, respect of the rights of all Kosovo communities and their members and building of mutual trust and confidence are absolute priorities. Freedom of expression and freedom of movement, sustainable returns continuously promoted by the Kosovo government, local government reforms, delivery of essential services for all the communities, and in particular for the minorities, will have to be ensured along with active Kosovo Serbs and other minorities' participation in the Kosovan Institutions and public administration. The result of this evolution should be that all parallel structures become obsolete and can be dismantled. The presence of the European Union in Kosovo is also a guarantee for minority communities that their rights will be fully respected and their living conditions will have to improve considerably, especially for the Roma in the camps in Northern Kosovo, while the main responsibility for meeting these targets lies with the Kosovo authorities and civil society; in this context, positively evaluated and appreciated the Prime Minister of Kosovo's personal engagement in a series of roundtables with representatives of the communities on cultural and other rights, on decentralisation and on practical issues;
16. Stressed the need for Kosovo authorities to accelerate their efforts towards reconciliation and for reaching out to minority communities, as well as the need to implement the minority protection provisions enshrined in the Constitution of Kosovo; regretted that the reluctance of the Kosovo Serb community to participate in the implementation of the new framework on local governance adopted by the Kosovo authorities continues to hinder the creation of Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities and progress in decentralisation throughout Kosovo; applauded the participation of Serb representatives in the Assembly and Government of Kosovo and encouraged them, as

well as the representatives of other minorities, to participate in the political, economic and social life and to continue towards full integration in Kosovo society;

17. Acknowledged the extreme complexity and sensitivity of the situation in the North of Kosovo, where Kosovo authorities cannot exercise their competencies in the fields of the judiciary and of customs, amongst others, and called on EULEX to intensive commitment in order to quickly achieve progress in the fight against organised crime and the establishment of the rule of law in Northern Kosovo, with the target of normalised neighbourly relations;
18. Urged all the concerned parties, in particular the local authorities, the representatives of minorities and the central Government, to engage in a technical dialogue on the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and promotion of cultural and religious heritage and cultural identity in Kosovo;

On education, training and social welfare

19. Encouraged the Government of Kosovo to pursue a much more ambitious strategy in the education field, which should first of all focus on enforcement of mandatory education, substantial improvement of physical infrastructure, prime quality rather than quantity of supply, continuously monitor the school programmes and curricula and contain inclusive and progressive measures targeted on minorities; were convinced that training, and in particular vocational training, is a sector of vital importance for building up appropriate human resources for the economic development of Kosovo and for establishing a competitive European labour market and is one of the most important tools to fight effectively the high unemployment amongst young people; took the view that the establishment of a multi-ethnic European University College in central Kosovo, in addition to the existing Universities of Pristina and Mitrovica, would be a project worth considering, in partnership with the European Commission;
20. Urged the Government to focus on the improvement of the social benefit system which is much needed for the most vulnerable groups of society and still shows lack of coordination, administrative capacity and funds;

On economy and energy

21. Reiterated that Kosovars should become more attentive to the urgency of taking responsibility of their own economy, welfare and environment to ensure sustainable development; economic development of Kosovo, investment, employment should boost its long-term stability and sustainability. For this purpose, the Government should rapidly submit a detailed economic development strategy, paying special attention to mining, energy and agriculture and rural development; the use of these potential sources of economic growth should be managed together with tightened fiscal policies, job creation policies, promotion of exports and improvement of the education and social benefits systems; having taken note of the resumption of the privatisation process, asked that the Privatisation Agency of Kosovo acts in a more transparent manner, and consistently with international and European provisions on the protection of property rights; urged the Kosovar authorities to implement the necessary legal and institutional framework to guarantee the restitution of the properties to their legal owners or to compensate them in the event of property damaged or destroyed;

22. Underlined the importance of a well functioning energy supply as a pre-condition for foreign investment; admonished the extremely low level of electricity billing and collection; welcomed the government's initiative to focus on promoting renewable energy sources; referred in this regard to the 2008 pre-feasibility study which found that there is a considerable potential for solar and biomass;
23. Welcomed the Commission's commitment to use all available Community instruments, in particular IPA, to foster Kosovo's socio-economic development; called on the Kosovo Government to use both public and international donors' money in a transparent and accountable manner and urged the Commission to help Kosovo to move closer to European standards in the field of public sector accountability and economic transparency; regarded these features as essential for the creation of an attractive environment for investment and for business development;

24. Were firmly convinced of the necessity to pursue and intensify EP-Kosovo inter-parliamentary relations, on a regular basis, in the years to come; emphasized that intensive inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, especially between the European Parliament and the Kosovo Parliamentary Assembly, but also between this and the other parliaments of the region, are of special importance in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association and the EU accession processes.