



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 22 April 2013

8720/13

**PE 185
INST 198
ELARG 71
CRIMORG 68
RELEX 315
RS 2
VISA 91**

NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Plenary session of the European Parliament 2012 Progress report on Kosovo <i>Council and Commission statements</i> Strasbourg, 17 April 2013

Mrs. Creighton on behalf of the Council delivered the speech in Annex I.

Mr. Fulle on behalf of the Commission delivered the speech in Annex II:

The Rapporteur Mrs. Lunacek, Greens/EFA, AT recalled that the "Republic of Kosovo"¹ had declared its independence five years ago and was a young State that should be granted support towards EU integration. She considered that good progress had been made by Kosovo in a number of areas, but that progress was still needed, particularly on corruption and organized crime and issues related to the security of Serbs living in the north of Kosovo. She recalled that five Member States had not recognized Kosovo as an independent State and called on these MS to do so. She stated that both Serbia and Kosovo should accede to the EU and that normalisation was essential towards reaching this objective. She invited the Parliament to adopt her proposed amendment.

¹ Not recognized by all EU Member States

On behalf of the political groups:

Mr. Posselt, EPP, DE expressed the support of his group for the rapporteur and welcomed the reforms accomplished by Kosovo since it declared its independence, whilst considering that the EU had made little progress and had been dragging its feet. He called for the rapid conclusion of an EU-Kosovo Association and trade agreement. He called on the five Member States which had not recognized Kosovo's independence to do so in order to give more margin for action to the EU. he also called for a visa liberalization.

Mr. Panzeri, S&D, IT welcomed the excellent report by the rapporteur and support for its content, highlighted the challenges ahead and the need to improve the reform process. He mentioned the issues of minorities, gender, human rights, LGBT rights. On corruption and organized crime, he considered that the climate of impunity was slowing progress and that an Association agreement would allow for progress in this field. He referred to some critical issues with regard to the effectiveness of the EULEX mission in the fight against organized crime mentioned in the report.

Mr. Kacin, ALDE, SI considered that the moment was critical for Kosovo's future, referred to the need to tackle with more determination the serious issue of missing persons and invited EULEX to fight more decisively endemic corruption in Kosovo. He advocated visa liberalization and expressed support for the rapporteur's report.

Mrs. Miranda, Greens/EFA, ES expressed support for the process of self-determination of the people of Kosovo and regretted that five Member States did not recognize Kosovo as an independent State. She suggested that Kosovo should become an EU Member State just as it should be possible for e.g. Scotland.

Mr. Batten, EFD, UK underlined that billions of euros of EU money had been spent in the fight against corruption and organized crime in Kosovo, without any tangible progress since the 1990s. He referred to the report by the Council of Europe on this issue highlighting investigations under way on alleged close links between Kosovo leaders and organized crime related to human organs trafficking.

Mr. Angourakis, GUE/NGL, EL stated that the report aimed at legitimizing the past NATO "imperialist attack" and the creation of a de facto protectorate of Kosovo via EULEX mission's action. He considered that the people of the Balkans had nothing to gain from EU accession.

Mr. Gollnisch, NI, FR partly agreed with the previous speaker on the legitimization of the NATO intervention and added that the report aimed at encouraging the dismantling of Serbia via its support to Kosovo's self-determination, which would end up with widespread organized crime and the persecution of minorities in the region. He considered that there were other priorities in times of crisis.

Individual interventions by MEPs largely echoed statements by MEPs on behalf of political groups.

Mr. Fülle on behalf of the Commission stated that Kosovo needed to pursue progress on the rule of law and other issues identified in the report and that the Commission would support it in its efforts. He stated that it was not for the Commission to interfere in the decision of the Member States on the recognition of the independence of Kosovo, but that the Commission would provide all elements to help them form a well-founded decision. He considered that a normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, which was a new concept introduced in the debate, could certainly be an important argument in favour of an evolution of the issue of recognition. He referred in this context to the expectations raised by the high-level dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo; to the Commission proposal allowing Kosovo to benefit from EU aid programs as a means to contribute to the objective of "bring Kosovo into the mainstream", and to the structured dialogue on the rule of law.

Mrs Creighton on behalf of the Council stated that regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations were essential elements of the Stabilisation and Association Process, that the parties concerned in the Western Balkans had to ensure that any disputes between them did not have a detrimental effect on their shared goal of progress towards EU membership, that the process, although full of challenges, was work in progress, that the two parties should not lose sight of the ultimate goals of peace and prosperity and that the best way to achieve that was to continue the dialogue and to build momentum on this basis.

**European Integration Process of Kosovo
Speech by the Presidency of the Council
Plenary Session of the European Parliament
Strasbourg 15 - 18 March 2013
(*check against delivery*)**

President,
Honourable Members,

Having exchanged views on the situation in Serbia, I would now like to turn to Kosovo.

As you are well aware, the Council took note in December 2012 of the Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Kosovo. This was without prejudice to Member States' positions on status. The Council also noted that the Commission will propose negotiating directives for a SAA once Kosovo meets the short term priorities concerning the rule of law, public administration, protection of minorities and trade, which are identified in the Feasibility Study. This would be an important step in the EU's relations with Kosovo, and a step among several initiatives. The Structured Dialogue on the Rule of Law, the visa liberalisation dialogue and the Stabilisation and Association Dialogue, all play an important role in guiding Kosovo's reform efforts towards further progress on the EU path.

Let me also stress the importance of continued cooperation with EULEX and the work of the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force.

We believe that Kosovo has made progress on the EU agenda and the EU has set out an ambitious agenda for 2013. It is now particularly important for Kosovo to accelerate the pace of reforms. Major efforts are needed to strengthen public administration reform and consolidate rule of law, namely by providing evidence of the fight against organised crime and corruption, judicial reform and freedom of expression.

We stand ready to assist the economic and political development of Kosovo through a clear European perspective, in line with the European perspective of the region.

There should be irreversible progress towards delivering structures in northern Kosovo which meet

the security and justice needs of the local population in a transparent and cooperative manner, and in a way that ensures the functionality of a single institutional and administrative set up within Kosovo, respecting the particular needs of the local population. It is essential that Kosovo further develops an outreach plan for northern Kosovo.

The joint report of the Commission and the High Representative on progress in the areas outlined in the Council conclusions of December last year was scheduled to be issued today. Its publication has now been delayed in view of the on-going dialogue meeting today. Let me recall that a visible and sustainable improvement in relations between Kosovo and Serbia is needed so that both can continue on their respective European paths, while avoiding that either can block the other in these efforts. In this context, this process should gradually result in the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia with the prospect of both being able to fully exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities.

As I said in relation to Serbia, we recognize and commend the political courage and consistent and tireless efforts shown by both Prime Ministers: Mr. Thaci and Mr. Dačić. I would also like to thank the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, for her very active and solid engagement as facilitator of the process.

I encourage Kosovo to continue to engage in the ongoing efforts to reach a mutually agreeable solution on the proposal for an Association of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo. Agreement on this issue will hopefully lead to a possible decision to open negotiations for a SAA with Kosovo. Solid and continued efforts by Kosovo will further pave the way in the months ahead.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Remarks on the European integration process of Kosovo*
Štefan Füle
European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
European Parliament, plenary debate / Strasbourg
17 April 2013

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

President, Honourable Members,

I would like to thank rapporteur Ulrike Lunacek, Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and European Parliament as a whole for your continuing support for our efforts to move Kosovo's European Union perspective forward. As you know, 2013 is a crucial year for European Union – Kosovo relations.

In response to the December Council conclusions, the Commission has foreseen to adopt yesterday:

- Joint reports of the High Representative and the Commission on Serbia and Kosovo; and
- A Commission proposal for negotiating directives for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo.

Both the report on Kosovo's progress on the short-term priorities and the draft directives were discussed, but not adopted at yesterday's Commission meeting since a further meeting of the European Union-facilitated dialogue was announced by the High Representative for today. We are confident that this dialogue at Prime Ministers' level will result in a clear agreement.

Let me repeat what I said in my previous speech on Serbia. This is in the strategic interests of both Serbia and Kosovo, of the Western Balkans as a whole, and of the European Union itself. It is time for Serbia and Kosovo to move on from the past and look ahead to a common European future. We hope the two leaderships will seize the historic opportunity that lies before them – in the very interest of their citizens. The Commission will then revert to the issue and ensure that a positive outcome of the dialogue is reflected in the final version of both the report for Kosovo and that for Serbia, which will be rapidly adopted.

I would like to publicly commend Prime Minister Thaçi and Prime Minister Dačić for their efforts in the dialogue. The issues involved are complex and highly sensitive. The results of the dialogue are critically important for European Union relations with both Kosovo and Serbia. They should encourage our Member States to decide to open negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo, and accession negotiations with Serbia.

We will shortly submit our recommendation to the Council to agree to and sign a framework agreement with Kosovo allowing it to participate in European Union programmes, thus fulfilling a key wish of this house. Both agreements will eventually be submitted to this Parliament and I look forward to its consent.

Thank you for your attention.
