



6th Inter-parliamentary Meeting

30-31 October 2013

Pristina

JOINT STATEMENT

by the Chairpersons of the Delegations

At the conclusion of the 6th European Parliament - Kosovo Assembly Inter-parliamentary Meeting, held in Pristina on 30-31 October 2013, the two delegations:

1. Congratulated the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia, and the High Representative/Vice President for their dedication and progress within the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue; welcomed the recent agreements on telecommunications and energy; recalled once again the need for utmost transparency in communicating the outcomes of the dialogue and for involvement of parliaments and civil society in the implementation process;
2. Stressed the need for a major improvement in conduct of the upcoming local elections and underlined the necessity to guarantee their regular and fully democratic character; expressed concern about some cases of disproportional increase of people on voters' lists; emphasised that the participation in the 3 November elections of the Kosovo Serbs living in the North, will be an important test for the normalization of relations between Pristina and Belgrade; encouraged Kosovo Serbs and their political representatives to use all the possibilities to play a constructive role in politics and society, particularly by participating responsibly in the elections; expressed concern about threats towards Serb voters, especially in north of Kosovo;
3. Expressed concern about lack of implementation of electoral reform since 2011, when a promise to do so was given by political parties to Kosovo citizens;

4. Welcomed the opening of the negotiations between the Government of Kosovo and the European Commission for the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) on the 28th of October, following the decision of June 2013 European Council, which approved the SAA negotiating mandate; acknowledged the significance of this important step for Kosovo on its path towards the European Union;
5. Called upon the Kosovo institutions to improve the effectiveness, accountability and impartiality of the judiciary and to respect its independence; urged the institutions to proactively strengthen the rule of law, in particular by prosecuting organized crime and corruption, including within their own ranks; expressed their concern about the lack of significant progress in these areas;
6. Repeated their call for improving the legal and organisational framework for witness protection, particularly important in prosecution of high profile cases;
7. Supported the continued prosecution of war crimes in Kosovo; deeply regretted the fate of persons who are still missing as well as victims of the sexual violence resulting from the war in Kosovo; noted that the revealing the truth about their fate and bringing those responsible to justice requires a prompt response, as one of vital preconditions for peace in the region;
8. Encouraged local responsibility and ownership of the reconciliation process; considered that the Kosovo institutions and the Serbian institutions should take further steps to reach out to the respective minorities, including by providing access to all official services in their own languages;
9. Stressed the importance of the work of EULEX; called upon EULEX to increase the transparency and accountability of its work; invited the Kosovo authorities to continue respecting EULEX's mandate and exercise of its executive powers until the establishment of preconditions for the full transfer of competences to the Kosovo institutions;
10. Stressed the importance of visa liberalisation for the citizens of Kosovo and encouraged Kosovo institutions to step up efforts in meeting the priorities established in the Visa Action Plan and undertake and implement the necessary reforms; called on EU institutions to proceed swiftly with the process of enlisting Kosovo on the visa white list of the Schengen area;
11. Stressed that membership of Kosovo in regional cooperation organisations should be promoted and encouraged by all countries in the region;
12. Emphasized the need to avoid and overcome the political and procedural obstacles that cause the citizens of Kosovo to be the only ones in Europe to be deprived from the opportunity to address the complaints to the European Court of Human Rights.