









Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2016/2314(INI)	Procedure completed
2016 Commission report on Kosovo		
Subject 8.20 Enlargement of the Union		
Geographical area Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/1999		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 LUNACEK Ulrike	27/10/2016
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 ADAKTUSSON Lars	
		 PANZERI Pier Antonio	
		 DZHAMBAZKI Angel	
		 VAUTMANS Hilde	
		 CASTALDO Fabio Massimo	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	3511	13/12/2016

Key events			
13/12/2016	Debate in Council	3511	
19/01/2017	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/02/2017	Vote in committee		
09/03/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0062/2017	Summary
13/06/2017	Debate in Parliament		

14/06/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/06/2017	Decision by Parliament	T8-0262/2017	Summary
14/06/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2016/2314(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/8/08488

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE594.160	19/12/2016	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE597.480	19/01/2017	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A8-0062/2017	09/03/2017	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T8-0262/2017	14/06/2017	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2017)574	20/11/2017	EC	

2016 Commission report on Kosovo

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Ulrike LUNACEK (Greens/EFA, AT) on the 2016 Commission Report on Kosovo.

Members recalled that the European Union has repeatedly reiterated its willingness to assist in the economic and political development of Kosovo through a clear European perspective, in line with the European perspective of the region and Kosovo has shown aspiration in its path towards European integration.

In this regard, they welcomed the launch of the European Reform Agenda on 11 November 2016 and the adoption of the national strategy for the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) as a platform to facilitate implementation of this Agreement.

They called on the government of Kosovo to focus on the implementation of the comprehensive reforms that are required to meet its obligations under the SAA, in particular holding free, fair and transparent municipal elections in 2017 which are crucial for the democratic future of Kosovo as well as for the future of its EU integration process.

Political situation: Members expressed concern at the extreme polarisation of the political landscape in Kosovo. They urged the leaders of the Kosovo-Serbian community to take full ownership of their place and role in the institutions of the country, acting independently from Belgrade and constructively for the benefit of all the people of Kosovo.

Members strongly condemned the violent disruption of activities by some members of the opposition which occurred in the parliament of Kosovo and stressed the importance of political dialogue, the active and constructive participation of all political parties in the decision-making processes.

Recognition of Kosovo: Members noted that five Member States have not recognised Kosovo. According to Members, this recognition would be beneficial to the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and increase the EU's credibility in its own external policy. They welcomed the proposal by the Commission to grant visa liberalisation, which would be a very positive step for Kosovo on the path to European integration.

Relations with Serbia: Members welcomed the progress made in implementing the various agreements signed since August 2016 in the normalisation process with Serbia. They called on both Kosovo and Serbia to show more engagement and sustained political will as regards the normalisation of relations. They stressed the importance of good neighbourly relations with all countries in the Western Balkans.

They also condemned the act of sending a Serbian nationalist train from Belgrade to Northern Kosovo and expressed serious concerns about warmongering statements and anti-EU rhetoric. They urged both parties to refrain from provocative steps and unhelpful rhetoric that could hamper the normalisation process.

Reconciliation process: Members welcomed the establishment of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor Office in The Hague as an essential step for ensuring justice and reconciliation. They called on Kosovo to address the issue of missing persons, including: guaranteeing property rights effectively, barring the usurpation of properties and guaranteeing the return and reintegration of displaced

persons.

Political reforms: Members noted that the administration of justice remains slow and inefficient and is hampered by the remaining shortcomings of criminal legislation, political and economic expediency.

They encouraged Kosovo to reform their legal system and tackle corruption.

They also called on the authorities of Kosovo to strengthen:

- the protection of freedom of expression and media freedom, and at the increased political interference and pressure and intimidation on the media;
- efforts to protect the rights of all minorities in Kosovo, including Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani communities, as well as the LGBTI community;
- the fight against drug use and trafficking in human beings;
- gender mainstreaming and the fight against domestic violence;
- the combat against violent extremism and radicalisation.

Economic reforms: while Members welcomed the improvement of the economic situation and the increase of tax revenues in Kosovo, they expressed concern about the sustainability of Kosovos budget.

According to Members, it is urgent to:

- bolster local industry while focusing on the competitiveness of locally manufactured products;
- improve the regulatory environment of SMEs;
- increase the level of employment and improve labour market conditions in particular as regards recruitment procedures.

EULEX: Members welcomed the extension of the mandate of EULEX Kosovo and called for continued EU efforts in further strengthening independent justice, police and customs systems beyond 2018 with a view to Kosovo taking full ownership of these functions. They noted the termination of the criminal investigation into allegations of corruption in the EULEX mission.

Refugee crisis: Members noted that so far Kosovo has not become a major transit route for refugees and migrants travelling along the Western Balkan route. They urged the Kosovar authorities to ensure that those passing through are treated in accordance with European and international law.

Cultural heritage: lastly, Members acknowledged Kosovos commitment to protect cultural heritage sites and called on the authorities to implement all UN conventions on cultural heritage at all levels regardless of the status of Kosovo vis-a-vis UNESCO. They welcomed the EU-funded programme aimed at protecting and reconstructing small cultural heritage sites with a view to fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue in all multi-ethnic municipalities.

2016 Commission report on Kosovo

The European Parliament adopted by 474 votes to 134, with 64 abstentions, a resolution on the 2016 Commission Report on Kosovo.

Parliament recalled that the European Union has repeatedly reiterated its willingness to assist in the economic and political development of Kosovo through a clear European perspective, in line with the European perspective of the region and Kosovo has shown aspiration in its path towards European integration.

Political situation: Parliament welcomed the entry into force of the EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on 1 April 2016 as the first contractual relationship and an essential step in order to continue the process of the integration of Kosovo into the EU. It welcomed the launch of the European Reform Agenda on 11 November 2016 and the adoption of the national strategy for the implementation of the SAA as a platform to facilitate implementation of the SAA.

It called on Kosovo to continue to show clear political will and determination to implement the agreed roadmap including the setting up of the coordination mechanism for the implementation of the SAA, and to seize the positive momentum created by the SAA.

Parliament noted how free, fair and transparent early general elections and municipal elections in in the second part of 2017 are crucial for the democratic future of Kosovo as well as for the future of its EU integration process.

It welcomed the overall peaceful and orderly conduct of the early general elections of 11 June 2017 even if it expressed concern at the problems observed by EU monitors during the election campaign. Members urged parties to swiftly form a government to continue Kosovos path towards the EU and to commit to ratifying a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro and to continuing to build up a track record of convictions for high-level corruption and organised crime.

It expressed concern at the persistent extreme polarisation of the political landscape and called on all the parties to show responsibility and ownership and to create the conditions for a fruitful, solution and result-oriented dialogue with a view to defusing tension. It urged the leaders of the Kosovo-Serbian community to take full ownership of their place and role in the institutions of the country, acting independently from Belgrade and constructively for the benefit of all the people of Kosovo. It urged Kosovo to continue to support the access of Kosovo Serbs to Kosovo institutions.

In general, Parliament strongly condemned the violent disruption of activities by some members of the opposition which occurred in the parliament of Kosovo and stressed the importance of political dialogue, the active and constructive participation of all political parties in the decision-making processes.

It underlined that the path towards EU integration requires a strategic long-term vision and sustained commitment in the adoption and implementation of the necessary reforms.

Recognition of Kosovo: Parliament noted that five Member States have not recognised Kosovo. According to Parliament, this recognition would be beneficial to the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and increase the EUs credibility in its own external policy. It welcomed the proposal by the Commission to grant visa liberalisation, which would be a very positive step for Kosovo on the path to European

integration.

It strongly condemned the act of sending a Serbian nationalist train from Belgrade to Northern Kosovo as well as warmongering statements and anti-EU rhetoric.

It took note of the decision of the court of Colmar (France) to refuse the extradition to Serbia of and to release Mr Ramush Haradinaj, who was acquitted in 2008 and 2012 by the ICTY and arrested in France on 4 January 2017 on the basis of an international arrest warrant issued by Serbia in 2004 according to its law on the Organisation and Competences of State Authorities in War Crime Proceedings. It regretted that this law has hitherto been misused to pursue citizens of countries that belonged to the former Yugoslavia, as proven by this recent case and urged both parties to refrain from provocative steps and unhelpful rhetoric that could hamper the normalisation process.

Relations with Serbia: Parliament welcomed the progress made in implementing the various agreements signed since August 2016 in the normalisation process with Serbia. It called on both Kosovo and Serbia to show more engagement and sustained political will as regards the normalisation of relations. It stressed the importance of good neighbourly relations with all countries in the Western Balkans.

Reconciliation process: Parliament welcomed the establishment of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor Office in The Hague as an essential step for ensuring justice and reconciliation. It called on Kosovo to address the issue of missing persons, including: guaranteeing property rights effectively, barring the usurpation of properties and guaranteeing the return and reintegration of displaced persons.

Parliament welcomed the efforts made by the Commission to bring about the unblocking of the power interconnection grid between Albania and Kosovo, which has been blocked for months by Serbia, and called for constructive cooperation between the Serbian and Kosovar electricity authorities.

Plenary called on the Commission to make further efforts to support a true reconciliation process in the region, notably through support for cultural projects dealing with the recent past and promoting a common and shared understanding of history and a public and political culture of tolerance, inclusion and reconciliation.

Political reforms: Parliament noted that the administration of justice remains slow and inefficient and is hampered by the remaining shortcomings of criminal legislation, political and economic expediency. It encouraged Kosovo to reform their legal system and tackle corruption.

It also called on the authorities of Kosovo to strengthen:

- the protection of freedom of expression and media freedom, and at the increased political interference and pressure and intimidation on the media;
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