Resolution on Kosovo and the role of the EU

2008/2663(RSP) - 05/02/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 4 February, the European Parliament adopted by 424 votes to 133 with 24 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on Kosovo and the role of the EU. It recalls that on 17 February 2008 the Assembly of Kosovo declared Kosovo's independence. Thus far 54 countries, including 22 of the 27 EU Member States, have recognised Kosovo's independence,

Parliament welcomes the successful deployment of EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) throughout the territory of Kosovo. Recalling its willingness to assist the economic and political development of Kosovo by offering clear prospects for EU membership, as it has for the region as a whole, Parliament encourages those EU Member States which have not already done so to **recognise the independence of Kosovo**. It calls on the international community to be fully supportive of EULEX. Members welcome the Serbian Government's agreement to the deployment of EULEX, the most important of the ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) missions to date, and its readiness to cooperate with it.

Parliament discusses in the resolution a number of issues facing Kosovo. It begins by urging EULEX to address urgently the backlog of court cases under international supervision, giving priority to cases involving inter-ethnic violence, war crimes and high level corruption. It regards the establishment of a functioning witness-protection programme as essential for effective legal action against high-level offenders in Kosovo, in particular with regard to war crimes. Accordingly, it calls on the Head of the EULEX KOSOVO mission and the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) to work hand in hand on a day-to-day basis. Members also urge the EU family to act collectively in making greater efforts to promote the **participation of Kosovo Serbs** in the political, economic and social life of Kosovo. It asks the EUSR to ensure that the Kosovo Government takes tangible steps in this respect, including by means of specific economic development measures for the Mitrovica region, once the rule of law has been restored there.

On the matter of reconciliation, Parliament considers that projects aimed, for example, at restoring vandalised graveyards with the direct involvement of local actors would have considerable symbolic value for the communities in Kosovo and would contribute to a better inter-ethnic climate. It calls on the Commission and the EUSR to ensure that such initiatives rank high on the Kosovo Government's agenda. It also takes the view that the establishment of a multi-ethnic European University College, in addition to the existing university centres in Pristina and Mitrovica, and of cultural, social and healthcare amenities catering specifically for the Serb community in central Kosovo would constitute a major incentive towards promoting the integration of the Serb community in Kosovo. Academic exchanges must be supported through programmes such as Erasmus Mundus.

With regard to **Kosovo's governance**, Parliament underlines the vital need for a multi-ethnic police force in all areas of Kosovo, and welcomes the return of some Serb officers to the Kosovo police force. It urges the Kosovo authorities to support the reintegration of those police officers who have yet to return.

Members go on to urge the authorities to settle the legal status of the stateless **Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians** living in Kosovo, including their rights of ownership. They call on the authorities to guarantee their equal access to mainstream quality education and, where possible, to education in their mother tongue, by granting access to the labour market and to healthcare, by providing adequate sanitary and housing conditions and by ensuring participation in social and political life. Parliament also expresses grave concern at the acute ill-health of Roma families in the Osterode and Cesmin Lug refugee camps,

believing that this is directly linked to the improper siting of those camps, which are located on the highly toxic tailing stands of the Trepça lead mines, and urges the relocation, as a matter of urgency, of the families concerned.

Turning to the **economy**, the resolution expresses concern at the economic situation in Kosovo and the adverse influence which the slow pace of reforms, widespread corruption and organised crime are having on the economy and on the credibility of Kosovo's institutions. The Kosovo Government is asked to use both public and international donors' money in a transparent and accountable manner, and the Commission is asked to help Kosovo move closer to European standards in the fields of public-sector accountability and economic transparency. This is essential for creating an attractive environment for investment and business development.