EC/Serbia agreement: Stabilisation and Association Agreement

2007/0255(NLE) - 25/10/2010

The Council adopted the following conclusions :

In December 2009, President Mr Boris Tadic presented the application of the Republic of Serbia for membership of the European Union. The Council decided to implement the procedure laid down in Article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union. Accordingly, the Commission is invited to submit its opinion.

Recalling the renewed consensus on enlargement as expressed in the conclusions of the European Council of 14/15 December 2006, the Council reaffirms that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union. It reiterates that each country's progress towards the European Union depends on its individual efforts to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and the conditionality of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The Council reiterates that a constructive approach towards regional cooperation is essential.

It also calls for progress in the process of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, under the facilitation of the EU and its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, welcomed in the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 9 September 2010 as a factor for peace, security and stability in the region.

It recalls that Serbia’s full cooperation with ICTY is already required by the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, as well as by the Interim Agreement. In line with the political criteria of Copenhagen full cooperation with ICTY is an essential condition for membership of the EU. In the context of Serbia’s application for membership of the European Union, the EU underlines that at each stage of Serbia’s path towards EU accession, further steps will be taken when the Council unanimously decides that full co-operation with the ICTY exists or continues to exist. In this context, the Council will closely monitor the progress reports by the Office of the Prosecutor. The EU and its Member States recall their readiness to assist Serbia in this respect.

The Council calls upon Serbia to implement recommendations presented by the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor to the United Nations Security Council in June 2010 concerning Serbia’s support in ongoing trials and appeals and Serbia’s assistance in the key matter of the arrest of the two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic, which would be the most convincing proof of Serbia's efforts and cooperation with the ICTY.