

# Resolution on the 2012 progress report on Serbia

2012/2868(RSP) - 18/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the 2012 Progress Report on Serbia.

It strongly believes that **the start of EU accession negotiations in June 2013 is an achievable objective**, and urges Serbia to continue with the democratic, systemic and socio-economic reforms that will allow it to take on effectively the obligations of membership. The opening of accession negotiations with Serbia will be possible as soon as the key priorities are satisfactorily met and **provided the reform processes continue, particularly regarding the rule of law**. Parliament emphasises that this will demonstrate both the EU's commitment to the enlargement process and the Western Balkans countries' EU perspective. Members welcome the commitment of the new government to a continued EU integration course as well as the **progress made by Serbia towards meeting the political Copenhagen criteria**, as recognised in the Commission's 2012 progress report. They highlight, however, the need to deliver reforms, on the functioning of democratic institutions, upholding the rule of law, ensuring respect for human rights and the equal protection of all minorities throughout Serbia, maintaining good-neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, including peaceful resolution of bilateral issues, as well as on improving the functioning of the market economy. They emphasise that **Serbian accession to the EU is of crucial importance** for the quality of the economic and social development in the country.

Parliament notes with regret that the **9th round of the high-level Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue ended without a comprehensive agreement** on the scope of authority of the community of Serbian municipalities. It calls on both parties to intensify talks in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to all outstanding issues as soon as possible. Members also stress the need to ensure the **involvement of Serbia's and Kosovo's parliaments and civil societies in the dialogue process**.

They call for the **dismantling of the parallel institutions** maintained by the Serbian state in northern Kosovo, and for the withdrawal of security services and judicial organs.

On the **ICTY**, Members welcome Serbia's cooperation with the Tribunal, but note that more efforts need to be made by the authorities to obtain justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Serbia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans.

Parliament stresses the importance of strengthening independent institutions in the **fight against corruption**, and emphasises that political will is crucial for establishing a solid track record of investigation and conviction for high-profile corruption cases, including 24 **controversial privatisations**. It also stressed the need to continue with **judicial reform**, and for the continued **training of prosecutors and police**. Members also call for a **regional strategy and enhanced cooperation between all the countries** for purposes of tackling corruption and organized crime more effectively.

The resolution raises concerns about several issues, including:

- the legal and political uncertainty regarding the **autonomy of Vojvodina** and the rising political tensions between the central and the provincial authorities;
- the need to speed up the implementation of the **Media Strategy** adopted in October 2011, noting that Parliament is deeply concerned about the continued violence and threats against journalists;

- **more progress on the fight against discrimination** affecting vulnerable groups, especially minorities, Roma, women, LGBT persons and persons with disabilities.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the agreement reached between Serbia and Croatia on forming a joint mixed commission addressing outstanding issues, and calls on the Council, in this regard, to **strengthen EU-funded, joint cross-border projects** with a view to further developing good neighbourly relations and enhancing regional cooperation.