Resolution on the recent developments in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, including the situation in the northern municipalities in Kosovo

2023/2880(RSP) - 19/10/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the recent developments in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, including the situation in the northern municipalities in Kosovo.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR groups and Members.

The resolution noted that, over the past year in northern Kosovo, there have been numerous incidents including road blockades, election boycotts, attacks on municipal buildings and violent assaults on police officers and NATO soldiers by Kosovo Serbs and Serbs.

On 24 September 2023, a group of heavily armed ethnic Serb paramilitaries carried out a terrorist attack in the north of Kosovo, in which one Kosovan police officer and three attackers lost their lives. The Kosovan Government accused Serbia of organising the attack, later claiming that the goal was to annex the Serb-populated north of Kosovo. However, the Serbian authorities have denied any involvement in the attack.

Parliament condemned in the strongest possible terms the hideous and cowardly terrorist attack on Kosovan police officers by well-organised Serbian paramilitaries in Banjska/Banjskë in the north of Kosovo, which took place on 24 September 2023 and resulted in the murder of the Kosovan police officer Afrim Bunjaku and the injuring of two more Kosovan police officers.

Members stressed that this operation indicates a serious military build-up and constitutes a major escalation, which is illegal and goes against the EU’s repeated calls for a de-escalation in the north of Kosovo. They called on Serbia to refrain from any further escalation that undermines the constitutional order of the Republic of Kosovo, and to prevent any smuggling of weapons across the border.

Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to take measures against the Serbian Government if investigations reveal that the Serbian State was directly involved in the Banjska terrorist attack. In this context, the Commission is called to freeze the funding provided to Serbia under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance III if investigation findings indicate that the Serbian State was directly involved in these attacks. The Council, for its part, is called on to adopt targeted restrictive measures, including but not limited to asset freezes and travel bans, against destabilising actors in the north of Kosovo and the leaders of major organised crime networks.

Parliament called on KFOR to establish a containment plan in the north of Kosovo, incorporating robust elements that can act as a deterrent to further escalation. While welcoming the UK’s deployment of 200 soldiers to Kosovo to reinforce KFOR, the EU is strongly urged to **deploy additional troops** to the country without further delay.

Serbia and Kosovo are urged to:

- denounce all forms of violence and acts of provocation;

- actively work towards a peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue facilitated by the EU;

- participate in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue in good faith and in a spirit of compromise in order to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on the normalisation of their relations without further delay.

The Commission is called on to:

- act as an honest broker in the normalisation of relations and to avoid any policy of appeasement towards Serbia;

- draw up and present a transparent and ambitious roadmap for Kosovo’s path to integration by the end of 2023.

Lastly, the resolution called for an increase in international and cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo targeting organised crime.