Future of Kosovo and the role of the European Union

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Joost LAGENDIJK (Greens/EFA, NL) on the future of Kosovo and the role of the EU. MEPs in the committee supported the UN-led process to determine the final status of Kosovo and endorsed the proposal put forward by the UN Special Envoy (former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari) for a Kosovo Status Settlement, while avoiding any explicit mention of Kosovo's independence.

The committee said that the "only sustainable settlement" for Kosovo is one which includes the following aspects:

- access to international financial organisations;

- an international civilian and security presence in Kosovo, with a clear definition of its role and mandate;

- clear provisions on decentralisation which grant substantial autonomy in key areas;

- full respect for human rights;

- retention of Kosovo's multi-ethnic character, with protection for cultural and religious sites;

- the establishment of a limited, multi-ethnic internal Kosovar Security Force;

- international guarantees for the territorial integrity of all neighbouring states.

Addressing fears, especially in Russia, that granting Kosovo any form of independence would exacerbate other separatist tensions around the globe, the report "underlines that the solution in Kosovo will set no precedent in international law, as Kosovo has been under UN rule since 1999" and concluded that "the situation regarding Kosovo is in no way comparable with the situation in other conflict regions which are not under UN administration."

The committee also supported the view that, "in the long run, the solution regarding the future status of Kosovo lies also in the fact that both Serbia and Kosovo are due to become part of the EU, together with their neighbours, since the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union." It stressed that the EU Member States should speak with one voice on the Kosovo issue, by adopting a common position in Council "spelling out the minimum requirements of a sustainable, EU-compatible solution for Kosovo", and maintaining it in international fora, especially the UN Security Council. The committee also argued that "the European Union should have a decisive say on the final terms of the settlement." Finally, the report stated that the EP "is prepared to make available the additional resources required in order to finance the future EU involvement in Kosovo with a view to implementing the status settlement and supporting Kosovo's EU prospects."