



Regional Women's Lobby For Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe

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EP RESOLUTION ON ENLARGEMENT

On November 26, 2009 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the strategy of European enlargement. The strategy refers to the western Balkans, Iceland and Turkey. In the Southeast Europe region, the strategy mentioned several specific issues for each country. The resolution applauded **Montenegro** and **Albania** for their progress thus far and encouraged both to continue with reforms. The resolution warned **Bosnia and Herzegovina** that it is falling behind due to a lack of agreement between its political leaders. The unstable political climate in BiH was also noted in the resolution as well as the lack of a common vision, shared by both parts of the country.

Regarding **Macedonia**, the EP's resolution expects EU accession talks to start "in the near future", however, the country needs to continue reforms, especially those in public administration and judiciary, anti corruption policy, women's rights and relations between ethnic groups. **Serbia's** progress and unilateral implementation of the trade agreement was welcomed, however it was noted that full cooperation with the Tribunal in The Hague is the real condition for the movement towards the EU, with the added appeal that countries from the West Balkans solve their disputes and not to turn them into obstacles for European integration. The MEPs welcomed the signing of the protocol on co-operation between Serbian authorities and EULEX but called on further development in relations, especially in the north part of Kosovo.

The EP welcomed intentions to strengthen its relations with **Kosovo**, including consideration of the possibility for Kosovo to join certain EU programs. The EU expects the process of decentralization to be closed by the end of the year and welcomed the optimistic turnout of Kosovo Serbians for the elections on November 15, 2009. For **Croatia** the EU accession talks could be completed by mid 2010 if Croatia increases efforts to fulfill all criteria, especially the critical area of judicial reform. Leaving time for member states to ratify the accession, this means Croatia could join the EU in 2012.

Noting once more that as of January 1, 2010, citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia will be able to enjoy visa-free travel to the EU.

CROATIA

Croatia and Slovenia signed the border arbitration treaty on November 4, paving the way for accession talks to restart. In the Croatian public the treaty is not viewed very favorably as skeptics are arguing that the arbitration will ultimately accede Croatian territory. At the end of November Croatia closed a further three chapters, bringing the total to 15 closed chapters. Croatia hopes to open the remaining chapters by the end of this year and conclude negotiations with the EU on these chapters by March 2010.

BOSNIA

In **Bosnia**, during the month of November, EU and US officials sponsored high-level constitutional talks between the Bosnian leadership of all three ethnic groups. Discussions centered on how to phase out the office of the OHR but leave reserve powers with the EU Special Representative. The talks led to disagreement and stalemate on all issues and EU officials have expressed deep concern over the chances for progress towards EU integration if cooperation is not initiated soon.

SERBIA

Serbia has made serious overtures this month towards its new goal of joining the EU. At the beginning of the month Foreign Affairs Minister Vuk Jeremic officially announced that Serbia would seek membership candidacy by the end of the year. However the fact that Ratko Mladic is still at large is seen in Brussels as a major obstacle to Serbia's European aspirations. The decision over whether to unblock the Stability and Association Agreement with Serbia is to be made at the EU summit scheduled for December 10. Prior to this summit it is expected that the Chief Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal, Serge Brammertz, will present to the UN Security Council the most positive report ever on cooperation by Serbia with the Hague Tribunal. President Tadic has stated the EU application will be submitted only once the EU unblocks the SAA.

ALBANIA

Albania was declared mine-free in November, ahead of the 2010 goal. The mines and unexploded ordinance contamination resulted from mines laid by JNA along the Kosovo border, and from cluster bombs dropped by NATO forces during that time. Since 1999, 34 people have been killed and 238 injured by leftover explosives in northeast Albania. Regarding EU integration, in mid-November, the foreign ministers of the EU agreed that Albania's bid to achieve candidacy status could proceed in the near future.

KOSOVO

On Nov 15 **Kosovo** held local elections that were welcomed as "orderly" by the EU. The participation of Kosovo Serbs was the highest so far in post-war Kosovo. The second round of elections will be on December 13. International monitors said the poll met many international standards. Final turnout exceeded 45 per cent, compared with only 40 per

cent in the last, pre-independence parliamentary elections two years ago. Turnout in Serb districts, although lower, came to nearly 31 per cent in Strpce, for example, and 25% in Gracanica. But those in the north, where Belgrade exerts stronger influence, still disregarded the elections and did not vote. Also this month, the number of countries recognizing Kosovo climbed to 63 of the UN's 192 members.

MACEDONIA

Macedonia and Greece held a bilateral dialogue November 27 to try to find a resolution to the name dispute. Macedonia would like to open EU accession negotiations with the dispute resolved in order to avoid using the FYROM title in the negotiations. However in the talks Greece stated its position would not change but that they were open to further meetings. Greece has threatened to block Macedonia's EU accession process pending a solution to the name dispute, as was done with NATO accession. UN mediation on the issue is expected next year.

LISBON TREATY

At the beginning of November the **Lisbon Treaty** was ratified by Ireland Poland and Czech Republic, paving the way for new changes to EU institutional structure. These changes included a series of new posts in the EU top leadership. Gender advocates in Europe have long been waging a campaign for gender parity to be represented in this new leadership. Of the two main positions, President and Foreign Policy Supremo, the second is a woman. Of the other 26 newly created ministerial positions 8 women have been nominated, which is 30%.