

MEPs call on Kosovo and Serbia to normalise relations

- Parliament supports Kosovo's EU membership application
- Good results in fighting corruption and organised crime in Kosovo, but improvements necessary in the judiciary
- Serbia must align with EU sanctions against Russia
- MEPs criticise anti-EU rhetoric in Serbian government-controlled media

Parliament stresses normalising relations between Belgrade and Pristina is a priority and a precondition for the EU accession of both countries.

In two reports adopted on Wednesday, MEPs urge Serbia and Kosovo to engage in the [Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue](#), and secure without delay a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on the normalisation of relations based on the principle of mutual recognition.

Serbia has to align with EU sanctions against Russia

In their report on Serbia, MEPs say accession negotiations with Belgrade should advance only if the country aligns with EU sanctions against Russia and makes significant progress on EU-related reforms. They specifically mention progress on the rule of law and fundamental rights, the functioning of democratic institutions, and a commitment to shared European rights and values. MEPs stress the importance of aligning with the EU's common foreign and security policy, especially with regards to Russia's war against Ukraine.

Disinformation and dissemination of anti-EU rhetoric

The EU is Serbia's main political and economic partner and by far its largest donor, MEPs say. They are concerned about the recent decrease in public support for EU membership in Serbia, which they consider is a result of long-standing anti-EU/pro-Russian political rhetoric spread via government-controlled media and government officials. It is also, MEPs, say, the result of a gross failure from government representatives to face up to and come to terms with Serbia's past. MEPs want the EU to reconsider the extent of its financial assistance to Serbia if support for anti-democratic politics continues, and call on the European Commission to ensure all EU

expenditure is fully in line with the EU's own strategic goals and interests. The report on Serbia was adopted by MEPs with 508 votes for, 76 against and 37 abstentions

Kosovo: Good results in fight against corruption, but improvements necessary in judiciary

MEPs welcome Kosovo's application for EU membership and the conclusion of the long-awaited agreement granting visa liberalisation to its citizens. Commending Kosovo's achievements in EU-related reforms, such as the fight against organised crime and corruption, they stress that the pace of the accession process will depend on progress on the rule of law, fundamental rights and improvements in the country's legal order.

MEPs regret the fact that initiatives to involve the Serb community in Kosovo's political, social and economic structures remain very limited and call on Kosovo's government and the representatives of Kosovo Serbs to overcome intercommunal divisions.

The report on Kosovo was adopted with 452 votes for, 87 against and 76 abstentions

Quotes

Rapporteur for Serbia [Vladimír Bilčík](#) (EPP, Slovakia) said: "This report makes a number of criticisms while supporting Serbia's EU path, one to which its leaders committed after the 2022 elections. I welcome the return of the opposition to the Serbian National Assembly. Serbia must align with the EU's external relations, continue domestic reforms and normalise relations with Pristina. If Belgrade achieves this, it will be a common European success."

Rapporteur for Kosovo [Viola von Cramon-Taubadel](#) (Greens, Germany) said: "We are finally happy to confirm that the long-awaited visa liberalisation will be granted to all citizens of Kosovo as of 1 January 2024. The report also clearly calls for the full implementation of all relevant agreements in the Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue, including the establishment of the Community/Association of Serbian-majority municipalities. I genuinely hope that the [Ohrid Agreement](#) will deliver benefits for Kosovo and contribute to a further normalisation of relations with Serbia."

Further information

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Adopted texts will be available here, 10.05.2023

Video recording of the press conference with the rapporteurs after the vote will be available here, 10.05.2023

Video recording of the plenary debates on Serbia and on Kosovo, 09.05.2023

EP Research Service. 2022 Serbia Report

EP Research Service. 2022 Kosovo Report

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