



Plenary sitting

B9-0437/2023

16.10.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the recent developments in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, including the situation in the northern municipalities in Kosovo (2023/2880(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on the recent developments in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, including the situation in the northern municipalities in Kosovo (2023/2880(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Serbia and Kosovo, in particular those of 10 May 2023 on the 2022 Commission Report on Serbia¹ and of 10 May 2023 on the 2022 Commission Report on Kosovo²,
- having regard to the previous EU statements on Serbia and Kosovo, in particular to the European Council conclusions of 9 February 2023 on the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina,
- having regard to Serbia’s application for EU membership, submitted on 22 December 2009,
- having regard to the Commission opinion of 12 October 2011 on Serbia’s application for membership of the European Union (COM(2011)0668), the European Council’s decision of 1 March 2012 to grant Serbia candidate status and the European Council’s decision of 27-28 June 2013 to open EU accession negotiations with Serbia,
- having regard to Kosovo’s application for EU membership, submitted on 14 December 2022,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1 244 of 10 June 1999, to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion of 22 July 2010 on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo, and to UN General Assembly Resolution 64/298 of 9 September 2010, which acknowledged the content of the ICJ opinion and welcomed the EU’s readiness to facilitate dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo,
- having regard to the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations (the Brussels Agreement) between the Governments of Serbia and Kosovo of 19 April 2013, to the agreements of 25 August 2015, and to the ongoing EU-facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations,
- having regard to the agreement on free movement between the governments of Serbia and Kosovo of 27 August 2022, and to the agreement on licence plates of 23 November 2022, as well as to the Energy Agreements’ Implementation Roadmap in the EU-facilitated Dialogue of 21 June 2022,
- having regard to the Brussels Agreement of 27 February 2023 and the Ohrid Agreement of 18 March 2023 and to the Implementation Annex thereto,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0192.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0193.

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 24 September 2023, a group of 30 heavily armed ethnic Serb paramilitaries engaged in a major weapons’ smuggling operation carried out a terrorist attack in the north of Kosovo, in which one Kosovan police officer and three attackers lost their lives;
- B. whereas the Kosovan Government accused Serbia of organising the attack, later claiming that the goal was to annex the Serb-populated north of Kosovo; whereas they presented evidence showing the group’s connection to Serbia;
- C. whereas on 24 September 2023, Milan Radoičić, Vice-President of the Belgrade-backed Serb List Kosovan political party, which is linked to the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), claimed responsibility for organising the attack, denying that the Serbian Government was involved; whereas he was detained, but released from custody in Serbia and is yet to be prosecuted;
- D. whereas the Serbian authorities have denied any involvement in the attack;
- E. whereas following the events there was a large Serbian military build-up along the border of Kosovo; whereas Serbia later withdrew part of its forces;
- F. whereas following these events, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) increased its presence on the ground; whereas it had already increased its presence after the previous escalation of 29 May 2023 following the local elections held in the northern municipalities of Kosovo, when ethnic Serb protesters, many of them coming from and organised by Serbia, armed with clubs and stun grenades, clashed with KFOR troops in Zvečan, leaving dozens – including over 30 KFOR soldiers – injured, some seriously, on both sides;
- G. whereas on 14 June 2023 three Kosovan police officers were detained by Serbia; whereas officials from Kosovo and Serbia gave different locations for the arrest, accusing each other of crossing the border illegally; whereas the officers were later released by Serbia;
- H. whereas the first agreement on principles governing the normalisation of relations between the Governments of Serbia and Kosovo was concluded on 19 April 2013, followed by other agreements, most recently the Agreement on the Path to Normalisation of 18 March 2023, which, however, Serbian President Vučić refused to sign;
- I. whereas the EU-facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations has been ongoing ever since, without the agreement’s most important and substantial points having been implemented; whereas only three elements have been addressed from the latest Implementation Annex: the Declaration of Missing Persons, the presentation of the Management Team statute for the Association/Community and the announcement of the Joint Monitoring Committee;
- J. whereas the most recent high-level meeting on the EU-facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations took place on 14 September 2023;

- K. whereas following the local elections held in the northern municipalities of Kosovo on 26 May 2023, negative measures were put in place against Kosovo both by the EU and the United States; whereas similar EU measures against Serbia have been proposed, including the suspension of high-level meetings and the suspension of funding under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) III programme and of major infrastructure projects;
1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the hideous and cowardly terrorist attack on Kosovan police officers by a Serbian armed gang engaged in a major weapons' smuggling operation in Banjska/Banjskë in the north of Kosovo, which left one police officer dead and two injured; calls on all EU Member States that have not already done so to also condemn the attack;
 2. Calls for calm and stability to be restored; calls for all the facts about the attack to be established and is closely following the ongoing investigations by the Kosovan authorities; calls for the perpetrators responsible to face justice; calls on the Kosovan authorities to disclose all the evidence regarding the incident; calls on international institutions in Kosovo, including the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), to assess the evidence;
 3. Expects Serbia to fully cooperate with the investigations and to bring those responsible for the attack who are currently residing in Serbia to justice in accordance with the law and to consider their extradition to Kosovo;
 4. Stresses that this massive weapons' smuggling 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; calls 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;
 5. Strongly denounces the Serbian army's military build-up in the south of Serbia; takes note of the important step that Serbia's withdrawal of part of its troops from the border with Kosovo represents; calls on Serbia to do more to de-escalate the tensions caused by its military build-up, including the withdrawal of all the military forward bases located near the border with Kosovo and to refrain from this repetitive pattern of escalation in the future;
 6. Deplores the fact that the Belgrade court rejected the call by the Belgrade Chief Public Prosecutor's Office for the detention of Milan Radoičić, in view of the risk of his flight, given that Radoičić claimed responsibility for organising the 24 September 2023 attack;
 7. Stresses that both Kosovo and Serbia should refrain from any action that could further escalate the situation; deplores, in this context, the rhetoric from Serbia about the 24 September 2023 attack, as well as the manner in which the day of mourning was observed;
 8. Supports the normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia; calls on Kosovo and Serbia to engage in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue in good faith and in the spirit of compromise to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on the normalisation of their relations, based on mutual recognition and in accordance with

international law and without further delay; recalls that the failure to act constructively and in good faith on the normalisation of relations will have consequences for the countries' accession to the EU;

9. Calls for the full implementation, in good faith and in a timely manner, of all the relevant agreements by both sides, including the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities; stresses that the attack of 24 September 2023 should not serve as an excuse to divert attention from the dialogue on normalisation; recognises that Serbia has to make an effort to regain its credibility in the dialogue, as a result of its harmful role in the events of 24 September 2023;
10. Calls for the EU to propose a new, innovative and balanced approach to the mediation between the parties in order to overcome the current stalemate, given that business as usual is no longer possible following the 24 September 2023 attack and that confidence in the process has to be restored;
11. Recalls that the failure of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue would also have consequences for the EU's role as a credible foreign policy player;
12. Stresses that it remains crucial to hold early local elections in the four municipalities in the north of Kosovo to help defuse the tensions; reiterates that Serbia also needs to publicly commit to the participation of Kosovan Serbs in the elections;
13. Calls for the EU to act as an honest broker in the normalisation process and to urgently change its appeasement policy towards Serbia; regrets the negative measures the Council has taken against Kosovo and calls for them to be lifted immediately; stresses the importance of holding Serbia accountable for its role in the 24 September 2023 attack and the need to impose negative measures against Serbia;
14. Remains very concerned by the destabilising influence on the whole region of the Serbian authorities led by President Vučić; deplores the continuous EU support for the Serbian authorities and lack of vocal criticism, despite the country's non-alignment with EU sanctions against Russia, the continued and frequent high-level meetings with Russian authorities, including in Russia, the country's democratic backsliding and lack of progress on its EU-related reforms, and despite the destabilising effect of Serbian policies for the whole region;
15. Calls on the Serbian authorities to refrain from hate speech against Kosovans and the dissemination of lies about 'ethnic cleansing' and 'pogroms' in the Republic of Kosovo, for which there is no evidence;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the presidents, governments and parliaments of Kosovo and Serbia.

