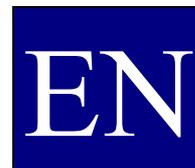




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Western Balkans

*2809th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 18 June 2007*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"SERBIA

1. The Council welcomed the fact that the new government in Belgrade had shown clear commitment and had undertaken concrete and effective action for full co-operation with the ICTY, and that this had enabled the Commission to resume negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia.
2. The Council encouraged the Serbian authorities to build on this positive dynamic, to vigorously pursue the necessary reforms to bring Serbia closer to the European Union and to continue its efforts to ensure that all remaining fugitive ICTY indictees are brought to justice. The Council recalled that the pace and conclusion of the negotiations on the SAA would in particular depend on Serbia's progress in developing the necessary legislative framework and administrative capacity to implement its obligations under the Agreement, and on full co-operation with ICTY. The Council and the Commission will jointly review Serbia's performance in these areas before the decision to sign is taken by the Council.
3. The Council reaffirmed that Serbia's future lies within the European Union and that the Union stands ready to work with Serbia towards this goal.

SERBIA/KOSOVO

4. The Council confirmed its support to UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and reiterated its view that his comprehensive proposal submitted by the UN Secretary General to the Security Council

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on March 26, 2007, provides the basis for the settlement of the Kosovo issue by a new Resolution of the United Nations Security Council. The Council expressed its support for intensified efforts to ensure that the Security Council can adopt such a resolution in a timely manner, also as a basis for a future EU and international presence.

5. The Council underlined the necessity of rapidly finding a solution to the Kosovo Status issue, which is essential as a basis for a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo committed to the rule of law as well as for maintaining and reinforcing regional stability.
6. The Council reaffirmed its conviction that resolving the pending status of Kosovo constitutes a sui generis case that does not set any precedent.
7. The Council underlined that the EU stands ready to play a significant role in the implementation of the status settlement. Preparations for a future EU and international presence in Kosovo are being intensified in coordination with other international actors.

VISA FACILITATION AND READMISSION AGREEMENTS

8. The Council welcomed the initialling of the agreements on visa facilitation and readmission with Albania¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The conclusion of such agreements will promote people-to-people contacts between the EU and the Western Balkan countries and will increase the opportunities for travelling, especially for the younger generation.
9. Recalling the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Council also acknowledged the importance the people of the Western Balkans attach to the perspective of visa-free movement. In this respect, it welcomed the efforts of the Commission to take these issues forward in concrete terms. Furthermore, the Council underlined the desirability of promoting people-to-people contacts by also making available more scholarships for the students of the region.
10. Therefore the Council looks forward to a prompt conclusion of all necessary procedures to ensure that the agreements enter into force as soon as possible. "

¹ The EC/Albania readmission agreement entered into force on 1 May 2006.

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