



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council Conclusions on the Western Balkans**

**(2744th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting - Brussels, 17 July 2006)**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

### **"Serbia/Kosovo**

1. The Council reiterated its full support for UN Status Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his efforts in conducting the political process to determine Kosovo's future status. The Council welcomed his intention to move forward into direct political talks on the status issue. It called upon both sides to engage constructively in this phase of the negotiations.
2. The Council noted the report on the implementation of standards for Kosovo presented to the UN Security Council by the SRSG on 20 June 2006. It noted progress reported and stressed again the crucial importance of and the need for further accelerated and effective implementation of the Standards. The Council urged Belgrade to encourage Serbs in Kosovo to participate in Kosovo's institutions, in which they can most effectively advocate their own interests.
3. The Council welcomed the joint report by the SG/HR and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement on the Future EU role and contribution in Kosovo. It asked the SG/HR and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement to continue examination of these issues, in the light of the European Council conclusions of 15-16 June 2006, in coordination with other international actors and to keep the relevant Council bodies actively engaged in order to ensure continuing timely preparation of the future EU role in Kosovo. The Council stressed the need for a well coordinated EU presence in Kosovo. The Council welcomed the early deployment of the planning team in preparation for an ESDP mission in the broader field of rule of law and asked the SG/HR to continue informing on progress made.

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4. The Council expressed appreciation for the work of the outgoing Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, in Kosovo and looked forward to the appointment of his successor.

### **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

5. The Council welcomed the generally peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 5 July and the International Election Observation Mission's preliminary assessment that the elections were conducted largely in accordance with international standards. It noted with concern the incidents of violence especially during the beginning of the electoral campaign and the other shortcomings observed by the International Election Observation Mission in certain constituencies. It stressed the need that all such irregularities be investigated and addressed so that they do not occur in the future.
6. The Council looked forward to the smooth formation of a new Government. Once it is formed, the Government should begin to work resolutely on the European reform agenda in line with the European Partnership. In this context, the Council recalled that further steps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's progress towards the EU will be considered in the light of the fulfilment of the conditions and requirements set out in European Council's conclusions of 16 December 2005. The EU remains committed to supporting the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in its European course.

### **Montenegro**

7. The Council took note of the fact that all EU Member States have recognized the Republic of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent state. In line with the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Council decided to extend bilateral political dialogue at ministerial level to Montenegro. A joint declaration will be prepared to that end. The Council also agreed to invite Montenegro to align itself with EU demarches, declarations and common positions on CFSP issues.

### **Regional co-operation**

8. The Council underlined the importance of regional co-operation in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process. In this context, the Council welcomed the Energy Community Treaty that entered into force on 1 July 2006 which will be of mutual benefit for both the EU and the Western Balkan states. This treaty is an important step towards secured energy supply that is crucial for social and economic development of the region. The common framework established by the treaty will also increase the transparency and attractiveness of the region for investors."

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