

Delegation for relations with Albania,  
Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo

Committee on European Integration

### **5th Inter-parliamentary Meeting**

**18-19 April 2011  
Brussels**

### **JOINT STATEMENT**

**by the Chairpersons of the Delegations**

At the conclusion of the 5th European Parliament - Serbia Inter-parliamentary Meeting, held in Brussels on 18-19 April 2011, the two delegations:

1. Reaffirmed that Serbia's future lies in the EU and in this regard recalled the Council Conclusions of 25 October 2010 inviting the Commission to prepare its opinion on Serbia's application for membership; welcomed the ongoing ratification procedure of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and urged all the Member States to speed up the ratification procedure of the agreement in order for it to enter into force before 2012;
2. Acknowledged that full cooperation with ICTY is a fundamental condition for Serbia to progress further on the path to EU membership and called on the Serbian government to continue working closely with the Court; noted that Serbia had handed over 44 people out of the 46 wanted by the ICTY and stressed that the most recent assessment by the ICTY Chief Prosecutor was that Serbia's efforts to apprehend the two remaining fugitives continue to be of concern; stated that EU candidate status for Serbia is dependent upon the Prosecutor's assessment of full cooperation;
3. Expressed, in this respect, its support for the RECOM<sup>1</sup> initiative with a view to moving the process of awareness and reconciliation forward throughout the Western Balkans and called for support for it from the authorities in Serbia and other countries concerned;

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Commission for Truth Seeking and Truth Telling about War Crimes and Other Serious Violations of Human Rights in the former Yugoslavia

4. Welcomed the start of the Belgrade - Pristina dialogue and expressed their confidence that a step-by-step and pragmatic approach can be employed to the benefit of both parties and life of citizens on their path towards European integration; underlined that the dialogue, in order to be successful, will require commitment and political will to find solutions from both sides; stressed that the process must be facilitated by promoting links between Belgrade and Serbian citizens in Kosovo;
5. Recalled that the efforts to strengthen the rule of law should constitute the utmost priority for the authorities; noted the progress in the fight against corruption, but underlined that it is still a subject of serious concern in the country and called for more efforts to reduce it; noted that Serbia must continue to combat corruption in the private sector and urged Serbia to be more mobilized and proactive in detecting and prosecuting corruption cases and keeping the investigation within a reasonable time frame according to the best EU-standards; underlined the need for more transparency and sound application of public procurement rules;
6. Recalled the need for a better supervision in the political parties funding and in the financing of election campaigns and thus welcomed the provisions of the new draft law on the financing of political parties;
7. Welcomed the first stage of reform of the judiciary and called for further energetic efforts in this regard; called on the government to swiftly send the remaining draft laws to the parliament, to provide transparency in the administration of justice and to guarantee as a priority financial and administrative resources for the courts;
8. Expressed their concern about the changes to the Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency, and called on the authorities to give the Agency all necessary political and administrative support;
9. Welcomed the democratic election of national councils of national minorities as a forward looking step towards the effective protection of these minorities, noted however the continuous failure to establish the Bosniak National Council and that non-observance of the legally guaranteed competencies of the councils by some local authorities raise concerns; underlined that the implementation of minority rights by the executive is as important as the legislative Act itself;
10. Welcomed the opening of the regional representation office of Vojvodina in Brussels;
11. Recalled that the existence of some monopolies severely hampers the development of a fully functioning market economy; called on the government to take active measures to ensure that an effective competition policy is pursued by abolishing them; welcomed the establishment of market regulators in various fields and called on the authorities to ensure their independence;
12. Stressed that competition in information of all kinds is a necessary condition of both democracy and market freedom; to this end encouraged the Serbian authorities to widen access to the internet and other electronic media;

13. Encouraged the Serbian authorities to continue and strengthen actions to create and support a political and cultural climate of tolerance in the country, with increased respect of all persons with a disability and of all minorities, especially the rights of LGBT people; called on the authorities to continue to combat and effectively ban the extremist organisations which pose a danger to these groups and for the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the democratic order as a whole;
14. Welcomed the adoption of the Gender Equality Act and the adoption of the national action plan for improving the position of women; recalled, however, that the implementation of these measures is still not complete and that women remain in a disadvantaged position, notably in the labour market; therefore called on the Serbian authorities to swiftly put the new legal framework on gender equality into practice;
15. Encouraged the Serbian Parliament to immediately abolish the practice of ‘blank mandates’, which allows the political parties to control the activities of members of parliament, thus endangering the division of powers; called for a balanced solution in line with the ruling of the Constitutional Court, which will conciliate the parliamentary mandate and the citizens' political choice; furthermore, called for a halt to the arbitrary allocation of seats in the parliament;
16. Encouraged further strengthening of the parliamentary scrutiny over the government's activities including an oversight of secret services and welcomed amendments to the Rules of Procedure which addressed previous concern about the parliament's oversight of independent bodies;
17. Welcomed Serbia's good progress in the field of the environment; encouraged however, intensified efforts in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, noting that the main elements of the *acquis* on renewable energy remain to be transposed and that a legislative framework on energy efficiency is still to be adopted;
18. Called for further efforts to develop a sustainable network of public transport inside Serbia and throughout the whole of the Western Balkans and in particular to improve rail and inland waterway transport as well as the road infrastructure, including swift completion of Corridor X; encouraged efficient implementation of the Danube Strategy in order to improve connection and communication systems (covering in particular transport, energy issues and the information society), preserve the environment, prevent natural risks and reinforce socioeconomic development;
19. Stressed that good-neighbourly relations and the peaceful resolution of bilateral issues are fundamental factors which determine the progress towards the EU of candidate and potential candidate countries; in this regard emphasised the important role played by Serbia for the stability of the whole of the Western Balkans;
20. Underlined the commitment of Serbia to finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons and welcomed all the Serbian initiatives in this regard like the Regional conference which was held in Belgrade on 25th of March 2010 and the upcoming Donor Conference;
21. Stated their concern about the current political situation and the social discontent in Serbia and invited all political parties to work together to avoid political instability which could bring damaging effects for Serbia's EU perspective and called for joint enhancement of the political support for the European integration