

Kosovo – building a common vision of its European future

Today, the European Commission is publishing its feasibility study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo.

This is a major step forwards for Kosovo on its chosen path to join the European Union. The European Union has given a clear perspective to the whole of the Western Balkans, including Kosovo. Next year, Croatia will join as the 28th Member State of the European Union. This confirms that when through a strong consensus on their European ambitions, the countries tackle the hard but necessary reforms, the European Union keeps its commitments. This also shows that the prospect of enlargement fosters reconciliation. This can help resolve the remaining challenges of the region.

In our study, we recognise the achievements of Kosovo to date. The key institutions and the main elements of the legal framework are in place. We know that many challenges remain. We suggest a number of short- and medium-term priorities on which Kosovo needs to focus going forwards: the rule of law, public administration reform, integration of minorities and trade / economic development.

We also acknowledge the difficult situation in the north of Kosovo. In this regard, we encourage both Pristina and Belgrade to continue to engage constructively on the full range of issues with the facilitation of the European Union. This is central to both progressing on their chosen European paths.

Kosovo is making great strides on its path to the European Union. This year, Kosovo has received a road map for visa liberalisation, has made progress towards participation in EU programmes and has now received a feasibility study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. In this study, the Commission makes clear that it will propose a mandate for an SAA once Kosovo meets the short-term priorities.

It is now up to Kosovo to maintain this momentum. The pace of Kosovo's progress forwards European integration does not depend on the European Union. It depends on Kosovo's hard work to meet its reform commitments and on the ability of all political parties to build a

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ

strong consensus around Kosovo's European goal and it is for them to create and to be part of this inclusive pro-European agenda.

We count on Kosovo's authorities to reach out to all communities in Kosovo and to build a Kosovo, which has a common vision of its future in the European Union.

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This article is published on the occasion of the publication by the European Commission of its Feasibility Study on Kosovo, on 10 October 2012.