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## Texts adopted by Parliament

Thursday 16 February 2006 -  
Strasbourg

Provisional edition

Outlook for Bosnia and Herzegovina

P6\_TA-PROV(2006)0065

B6-0095, 0097, 0098, 0100 and 0101/2006

### ► European Parliament resolution on the outlook for Bosnia and Herzegovina

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular that of 14 April 2005 on the state of regional integration in the western Balkans<sup>(1)</sup>, that of 17 November 2004 on the European Union military operation 'Althea' in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>(2)</sup> and that of 7 July 2005 on Srebrenica<sup>(3)</sup>,
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council on the progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing the priorities identified in the 'Feasibility study on the preparedness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (COM(2003) 0692)' (COM(2005)0529),
  - having regard to the Council Decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina (15267/2005), namely the short- and medium-term priorities identified as regards political requirements,
  - having regard to the Commission's 2005 enlargement strategy paper (COM(2005)0561),
  - having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'The Western Balkans on the road to the EU: consolidating stability and raising prosperity' (COM 2006)0027),
  - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Thessaloniki agenda sets a clear perspective for European integration and states unequivocally that the future of the western Balkans lies in the European Union, once they meet the established criteria, and whereas the Stabilisation and Association Process is the initial phase of the European integration process,
- B. whereas on 25 January 2006 the EU started negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and whereas the European Union continues to present itself as a reliable partner for its neighbours, committed to promoting stable democracies and prosperous economies with a view to integration into the EU, especially for the western Balkans,
- C. whereas the start of the negotiations adds further pressure for institutional reform and for creating fully efficient, transparent and stable state institutions which can take the necessary decisions for adopting and implementing EU standards and values in the legislation,
- D. having regard to the urgent need to develop an efficient state administration and judiciary, establish modern, non-segregational education systems and promote social and economic inclusion measures for returnees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in general, to the need for further vigorous reform efforts in order to make the economy more competitive,
- E. whereas, despite huge progress in many fields, the country is still deeply divided along ethnic lines and the reconciliation process is not complete,

F. whereas talks have started between the main Bosnian political forces with a view to amending the constitution following the Brussels talks of 12-14 November 2005 and the Washington Declaration of 21 November 2005 in consultation with the United States Institute for Peace; whereas these talks, due to end by March 2006, must lead to a constitutional and institutional model that gradually moves away from ethnic divisions and recognises individual rights instead of collective rights,

G. whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be able to achieve the necessary incorporation of the EU *acquis* and integration into the EU with its present institutional framework, although significant progress has been made, including the establishment of new institutions at state level,

H. whereas the newly appointed EU Special Representative/High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, who has inside knowledge of the country, has declared that preparing Bosnia and Herzegovina for European integration and focusing on economic development are now crucial,

I. whereas NATO successfully concluded the mission of the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and the European Union took over responsibility on 2 December 2004, launching the European Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) Operation Althea,

J. whereas the Austrian Presidency has made the western Balkans region one of its priorities and is planning to hold a substantial discussion on the western Balkans during the informal meeting of foreign ministers to be held on 10 and 11 March 2006 in Salzburg,

1. Welcomes the opening of negotiations on an SAA and stresses that the pace of negotiations will depend on the ability of the country's three main communities – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats – to agree on the schedule of reforms, and on the country's ability to implement them,

2. Notes the breakdown, in mid-January 2006, of the talks between the Serb, Croat and Bosniak political party leaders initiated by an American non-governmental organisation on the revision of certain constitutional mechanisms, although they partially reached agreement on the strengthening of the Prime Minister's powers and the expansion of the central government;

3. Asks the government, the parliament and all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue actively to engage in discussions, building on what has already been agreed regarding possible institutional reforms, which should be aimed at inclusion of the values of democracy, human rights and equality among citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the simplification of State structures and at consolidation of the State's self-sustainability, overcoming ethnic division in a spirit of local ownership;

4. Calls on the Council and the Commission to involve themselves more actively in the joint reflection on institutional reforms by supporting the country's political forces and citizens in their search for a consensus;

5. Welcomes the decision of the Council to appoint Christian Schwarz-Schilling as the EU Special Representative/High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and calls on him and the Commission to find ways to provide the necessary political, technical and legal assistance to the Bosnian leaders in their efforts to reform the existing institutional framework;

6. Underlines that the pace of reforms and their implementation will be determined by the ability of domestic political actors to assume responsibility and increased ownership of the political process in the country; calls on the new EU Special Representative/High Representative to use his powers with restraint so as to encourage the development of genuinely strong and democratic domestic institutions;

7. Recalls the importance for Bosnia and Herzegovina of a resolute transition from peace-building to state-building, of which the constitutional evolution forms part; recalls that the speed of SAA negotiations will depend, in particular, on progress in developing a proper legal framework and efficient public administration;

8. Calls on the country's competent authorities and institutions that they must, in particular, honour their commitments to implement and complete the public broadcasting, police, defence and intelligence reforms, in accordance with the agreed contents and schedule, and adopt and implement all the necessary laws;

9. Reconfirms that full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is a precondition for closer relations with the EU and a basic element for full reconciliation between all the different components of Bosnian society with a view to healing the wounds of the recent tragic past;

10. Asks the government authorities to redouble their efforts to complete the process of return of refugees and displaced persons, especially from the point of view of implementation of the conditions to make return sustainable

(safety of individuals, access to reconstruction assistance, employment, health care, pensions, utilities and education); expresses concern about the situation of the Posavina region in this respect and asks that appropriate help be provided to those wishing to return;

11. Stresses that constitutional reform is not a precondition per se and cannot be imposed, but that the completion of SAA negotiations will require significant progress in implementing the conditions set out in the European partnership document;

12. Supports the initiative to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission aimed at coming to terms with the recent past and dealing with the problems of justice and compensation, with a view to achieving reconciliation between all the components of Bosnian society;

13. Stresses that the forthcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2006 will be crucial for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and progress on its path towards European integration, and calls on all political leaders, parties and authorities to prepare and adopt the necessary reforms and take all measures to guarantee free, fair and democratic elections once again;

14. Welcomes the police, defence, value-added tax (VAT) and public broadcasting reforms; emphasises the need for a comprehensive action plan for public administration reform that is able to increase the capacity for the implementation of reforms; calls for the preparation and implementation of an adequate anti-corruption action plan, and the rapid implementation of VAT law and police reform;

15. Points out that the functional review of policing financed by the EU has confirmed that the level of classic crimes is very low in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the percentage of solved crimes is quite high;

16. Asks the government to pay more attention to the special needs of rural areas and to work with the Commission on implementation of the reforms identified as being necessary for an effective agriculture and rural development policy;

17. Welcomes the new Commission communication on the western Balkans, which aims at fostering trade, economic development, movement of persons, education and research, regional cooperation and civil society dialogue as a further step forward towards the integration of the countries of the region into the European structures;

18. Reiterates its calls for strengthened cooperation with the countries in the region on border control, as part of a wider EU justice and home affairs strategy for the region, and looks forward to the progressive easing of visa requirements which this process entails;

19. Welcomes the recently signed agreement between Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro on the return of refugees and property reparations as an important step towards tackling the legacy of about three million refugees and internally displaced persons; urges the Commission and the Member States not to further decrease their contributions to housing reconstruction and economic sustainability projects and, where possible, to make donations, loans and investments conditional upon employment opportunities for returnees;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the governments of its entities, and the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(1) OJ C 33 E, 9.2.2006, p. 565.

(2) OJ C 201 E, 18.8.2005, p. 77.

(3) *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2005)0296.



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## Texts adopted by Parliament

Thursday 16 March 2006 - Strasbourg

Provisional edition

2005 enlargement strategy paper

P6\_TA-PROV(2006)0096

A6-0025/2006

### ► European Parliament resolution on the Commission's 2005 enlargement strategy paper (2005/2206 (IN))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission's 2005 enlargement strategy paper (**COM(2005)0561**),
- having regard to the Commission's proposal for a Council decision on the Principles, Priorities and Conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia (**COM(2005)0556**),
- having regard to the Commission's proposal for a Council decision on the Principles, Priorities and Conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey (**COM(2005)0559**),
- having regard to the Commission's opinion on the application from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for membership of the European Union (**COM(2005)0562**) and its related proposal for a Council decision on the Principles, Priorities and Conditions contained in the European Partnership with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (**COM(2005)0557**),
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council on the progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing the priorities identified in the Feasibility Study on the preparedness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (**COM(2005)0529**),
- having regard to the Commission's Progress Reports on Albania (SEC(2005)1421), Kosovo (SEC(2005)1423), Bosnia and Herzegovina (SEC(2005)1422), Serbia and Montenegro (SEC(2005)1428), Turkey (SEC(2005)1426) and Croatia (SEC(2005)1424),
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 27 January 2006 entitled 'The Western Balkans on the road to the EU: consolidating stability and raising prosperity' (**COM(2006)0027**),
- having regard to its resolution of 28 September 2005 on the opening of negotiations with Turkey<sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolutions of 16 September 2004<sup>(2)</sup> and 29 September 2005<sup>(3)</sup> on the situation of ethnic and national minorities in the Serbian region of Vojvodina and the report of its fact-finding mission to the region of January-February 2005,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (**A6-0025/2006**),

1. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's Strategy Paper advocates an outward looking Union which continues to present itself as a reliable partner for its neighbouring countries, committed to promoting stable democracies and prosperous economies;

2. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to work in close cooperation in drawing up a communication strategy so as to meet the legitimate concerns of the European public regarding European enlargement and integration;

3. Notes with satisfaction that the incentive offered by the European Union enlargement strategy has undeniably contributed to the commencement of reforms in Turkey, Croatia and the western Balkan countries;
4. Approves and supports the emphasis placed by the Commission on fair and rigorous conditionality, whereby the Commission will lay down clear and objective requirements for each phase of the accession process and will allow negotiations to proceed only if it is fully satisfied that all the relevant conditions have been met; reiterates, therefore, that the progress made by each candidate country will depend on that country's own merits;
5. Recalls that the capacity for absorption of the Union, as set out at the 1993 Copenhagen European Council, remains one of the conditions for the accession of new countries; believes that defining the nature of the European Union including its geographical borders, is fundamental to understanding the concept of absorption capacity; requests the Commission to submit a report by 31 December 2006 setting out the principles which underpin this concept; invites the Commission to factor this element into the overall negotiation timetable; calls for the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, together with its Constitutional Affairs Committee, to be authorised to draw up an own-initiative report on this issue;
6. Is of the opinion that the stalemate in the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe is preventing the Union from enhancing its absorption capacity;
7. Reminds the Council that, before taking a final decision on any new Member State joining the European Union, it must ensure that adequate budgetary resources are available to allow the proper financing of the European Union's policies;
8. Reiterates its call for an increase of EUR 2,5 billion and a redeployment of EUR 1,2 billion under Heading 4 (The EU as a global partner) as compared to the relevant Commission proposal in particular for Pre-accession (IPA) and Neighbourhood and Partnership (ENPI) instruments;
9. Recalls that the long-term European perspective remains the objective to be pursued on the basis of the criteria and conditions already referred to, including the absorption capacity of the Union, as well as on the basis of the commitments made by the Union, which must all form part of a possible negotiation timetable;
10. Therefore calls on the Commission and the Council, should this perspective require a broader spectrum of operational possibilities, to submit, for all European countries currently without membership prospects, proposals for a close multilateral relationship with the EU; underlines that it is up to all countries with recognised membership prospects to join this multilateral framework as an intermediate step towards full membership;
11. Is of the opinion that such an option would also offer the European perspective which is necessary in order to promote the many internal reforms required in the countries in question;
12. Reaffirms that the EU integration process cannot be guided by purely technocratic criteria but requires a wholehearted commitment to the fundamental principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law; will consider compliance with these values a decisive factor in assessing preparedness to join the Union;
13. Calls on the Member States of the European Union to respect their commitments regarding the possible accession of the countries concerned; points out that the effective application of political conditionality depends also on belief in the European Union adhering firmly to its decisions regarding European prospects for those countries;
14. Reminds candidate and potential candidate countries, however, that the rigorous implementation and enforcement of legislation adopted to comply with EC law is crucial; is convinced, in this context, that a truly independent, well-functioning public administration and judiciary system, endowed with the necessary logistical and financial resources, are essential pre-requisites; therefore calls on those countries, with the assistance of the Commission, to take concrete measures in this direction;
15. Considers that the candidate countries have to demonstrate their capability to protect the outside borders of the Union once they have become parties to the Schengen Agreement;
16. Reiterates the need to promote regional cooperation on crucial issues affecting the western Balkans, such as ethnic and religious reconciliation, cross-border cooperation and free movement of persons, fighting organised crime, facilitating refugee returns, establishing a free trade area capable of attracting foreign investment, sharing environmental resources and developing integrated trans-border networks; believes that the Commission should, in the different negotiating fora and via the different assistance programmes at its disposal, actively pursue this objective by providing real incentives; recalls the contribution made by the Stability Pact in this respect and supports its efforts to promote greater ownership, amongst western Balkan countries, of the regional integration process;

17. Considers that regional development and investment programmes, joint education and employment initiatives and common transport and tourism projects should result in the establishment of joint mechanisms, such as a Western Balkan Customs Union, well before all the countries concerned join the EU;

18. Urges the western Balkan countries to secure the rights of minorities and the right of members of those minorities to return to their place of origin;

19. Welcomes the declaration by Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro on the return of refugees and property reparations, signed on 31 January 2005 in Sarajevo, as an important step towards tackling the legacy of some three million refugees and internally displaced persons; urges the Commission and the Member States not to further decrease their contributions to housing reconstruction and economic sustainability projects and, where possible, to make donations, loans and investments conditional on employment opportunities for returnees;

20. Notes that, despite economic growth, unemployment is still unacceptably high in the western Balkans; calls, therefore, on the Commission to include job creation as one of its priorities in its overall policy concerning the region;

### **Turkey**

21. Believes that a democratic and secular Turkey could play a constructive role in promoting understanding between civilisations;

22. Notes that, while Turkey's process of political transition is under way, the pace of change has slowed in 2005 and that implementation of the reforms remains uneven; expresses the hope that the opening of negotiations will act as leverage for further necessary reforms which should be pursued by Turkey in order to fully satisfy all political and economic criteria; expects the Commission to conduct a rigorous and thorough scrutiny of the developments on the ground regarding the effective implementation by Turkey of legal provisions regarding, in particular, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and democracy;

23. Urges Turkey to remove all existing legislative and practical obstacles to full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by all Turkish citizens, notably freedom of expression, religious freedom, cultural rights, the rights of minorities in general and in particular the rights of the Ecumenical Patriarch as well as the rights of the Greek minorities in Istanbul, Imbros and Tenedos;

24. Expects Turkey to ensure full independence of the judiciary and its proper functioning, to eradicate torture and ill-treatment immediately, to pursue vigorously efforts to promote women's rights and to prosecute violence against women; urges Turkey to provide shelters for women at risk of being victims of violence;

25. Welcomes the positive remarks of Prime Minister Erdogan on the need to resolve the Kurdish issue by democratic means; deplores the degradation of the current security situation in the south-east, in particular the increase in violence after the resumption of terrorist attacks; reminds all parties concerned that further provocation or an escalation of violence would not only seriously affect the people of this region, but would also form an obstacle in the negotiating process;

26. Welcomes the decision by the Turkish judicial authorities to discontinue the prosecution of Orhan Pamuk, but denounces the further prosecution of others for non-violent expression of opinion; therefore urges the Turkish authorities to revise the legal provisions sometimes applied by the judiciary, even on the basis of the recently adopted Penal Code, to prosecute and, in some cases, convict individuals despite the fact that they have expressed their opinions in a non-violent way;

27. Regrets the unilateral Declaration made by Turkey on the occasion of the signature of the Additional Protocol to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement); reminds Turkey that recognition of all Member States is a necessary component of the accession process;

28. Calls on the Turkish authorities to fully implement the provisions stemming from the Ankara Agreement and the priorities in the Accession Partnership and to remove without delay all restrictions on the free movement of goods affecting, inter alia, vessels flying the flag of the Republic of Cyprus or ships approaching Turkish ports from harbours in the Republic of Cyprus, or Cypriot aircraft; calls on the Turkish government to state clearly that the above-mentioned unilateral Declaration is not part of the ratification process in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, thereby enabling the European Parliament to ratify the above-mentioned Additional Protocol;

29. Welcomes the agreement reached at the General Affairs Council of 27 February 2006 on the adoption of the regulation establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community; calls on the Council to make renewed efforts, based on the Council conclusions of 26 April 2004 and taking into account the consultations held under the Luxembourg Presidency, and on the basis of Protocol No 10 to the Act of Accession of the Republic of Cyprus, to reach an agreement on trade facilitation regulation

30. Reiterates its position that those priorities in the Accession Partnership which relate to the political criteria have to be accomplished in the first phase of the negotiations; notes with satisfaction that the Commission now supports this view as well by stating that those criteria have to be fulfilled within one or two years; calls on Turkey to present as soon as possible a plan including a timetable and specific measures to meet these deadlines; urges the Commission and the Council to make the progress of the negotiations conditional on the timely accomplishment of those priorities;

## Croatia

33. Welcomes the capture of General Gotovina by the Spanish authorities; hopes that this will put additional pressure on Serbia and the Republika Srpska to cooperate fully with the ICTY and that his trial will contribute to an open discussion on the events of the war in the former Republic of Yugoslavia in which General Gotovina was involved;

35. Recognises that there has been progress in the area of regional cooperation as regards both relations with Croatia's neighbours and regional initiatives; considers that what is needed is a major push to resolve on-going bilateral issues, particularly border- and property-related ones; asks Croatia and Slovenia to solve their bilateral problems in an atmosphere of good neighbourhood and mutual respect; regrets the fact that, despite the decision of the Croatian Government to send to the Parliament for ratification the draft Agreement on the State border between the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agreement could not be ratified given the Republika Srpska's opposition to certain aspects of the Agreement; encourages the governments of both countries to pursue diplomatic efforts towards a final settlement of the border issue;

37. Welcomes the fact that Croatia can be regarded as a functioning market economy and that it will be able to cope with competition as long as it continues to implement its reforms; draws Croatia's attention to the remaining weaknesses such as excessive state intervention in the economy, and the complex rules and deficiencies in public administration which are hampering development in the private sector and in the field of foreign direct investment; calls on the Croatian authorities to permit all European Union citizens, without discrimination, to have access to the housing property market;

*Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

40. Considers that particular attention must be paid to the development of further strategies aimed at strengthening

the Ohrid Agreement and thus the country's future stability;

41. Notes with satisfaction the progress made by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in complying with EU standards and EU law; is concerned by delays in areas such as the free movement of goods, intellectual property law, competition policy and financial control; joins the Commission in urging the authorities of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to step up efforts to implement legislation in several key areas, including justice and home affairs, and to implement the recommendations made by the OSCE/ODHIR before the next parliamentary elections; emphasises in this respect the need to ensure that the Election Commission and its subsidiary bodies are fully independent of any political interference whilst remaining mindful of the interests and views of all political parties;

42. Is convinced that the pace of adoption of the *acquis communautaire* should go hand in hand with the development of the required implementation and enforcement capacities lest the credibility of EU legislation in the public eye be otherwise compromised; commends in this context the increasing cooperation between the Republic of Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a view to sharing experience and expertise;

43. Calls on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to seek in a constructive and flexible manner, together with Greece, a prompt, mutually acceptable solution to the unresolved problem of the country's name; takes the view that the question of the name of the republic does not constitute an obstacle to its further integration into the European fold;

#### ***Other western Balkan countries***

44. Recalls and fully endorses the presidency conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council of 19-20 June 2003, when the Heads of State and Government reiterated their determination to fully and effectively support the European perspective of the western Balkan countries, which will become an integral part of the EU once they have met the established criteria;

45. Believes that the European integration strategy, with its prospect of EU membership, is the ultimate incentive to achieve the reforms which are necessary to create lasting peace and stability in the western Balkans, a European region on which will soon be completely surrounded by EU Member States;

46. Considers that the future accession of the western Balkans is to be seen as a next phase in the reunification of Europe after the Cold War;

47. Notes that the pre-accession Road Map for the western Balkans needs both a detailed and a concrete approach, as well as a more policy-driven, incentive-based approach that is tailored to the countries concerned, which share weak central-state institutions, and is capable of keeping up the momentum for reform over a foreseeably long period;

48. Encourages the Commission to continue its re-orientation of Community assistance in this region and to focus EU support on the development of an efficient state administration and judiciary, the establishment of modern, non-segregational education systems and, finally, the promotion of social and economic inclusion measures for returnees; believes that this assistance should also be used to pursue a more future-oriented visa policy towards those countries, targeted at fighting organised crime but not hindering trans-border exchanges between the business community, social partners, academic staff and students;

49. Notes that Albania is close to finalising negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which bears witness to the efforts undertaken by that country to meet European standards, but urges the political authorities to implement the laws adopted and expects them to achieve tangible results in the fight against corruption and in the promotion of free independent media before the conclusion of an SAA; urges the Government and the Parliament of Albania to change the electoral law before the next elections in order to guarantee fair representation in Parliament of the political forces supported by the Albanian citizens and to prevent existing practices of tactical voting;

50. Urges the Commission to help Albania to put an end to the ongoing blood feud which, inter alia, hinders children from attending school and others from exercising their right to vote;

51. Welcomes the decision by the General Affairs and External Relations Council to open SAA negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) but urges the BiH authorities, with the support of the Commission and the incoming High Representative, to review Dayton's constitutional arrangements by further consolidating State-level institutions whilst ensuring that the transfer of competences in the justice, defence and police sectors are matched by commensurate financial transfers; emphasises that such constitutional reforms must seek to combine democracy and effectiveness with representativeness and multi-ethnicity; notes with regret the stalemate in the cross-party negotiations on constitutional reform of the country and calls on the new High Representative to use his good offices in order to relaunch this process; reminds the BiH authorities that full cooperation with the ICTY remains a



fundamental requirement for SAA negotiations with the EU:

52. Recalls the statements by the former High Representative that BiH is finally leaving Dayton behind and moving resolutely towards Europe; welcomes the resolution shown by the new High Representative Mr Christian Schwarz-Schilling to assist that country in making substantial political, social and economic progress; believes that, in this crucial phase, Community assistance programmes and CFSP missions should be closely co-ordinated; therefore urges the relevant EU actors to take the appropriate steps to ensure that the European Union speaks with one voice;

53. Considers that in the framework of the negotiations for the conclusion of an SAA, priority must be given to further reducing the need for international intervention in the governance of Bosnia-Herzegovina; calls on the Council and the Commission carefully to pave the way for winding down the Office of the High Representative;

54. Respects the wish of the Montenegrin authorities to submit to a popular vote, in compliance with the constitutional provisions of Serbia and Montenegro and with European standards, the question of Montenegro's status within the State Union; is confident that the government and the opposition will succeed, with the mediation of the European Union, in jointly defining the terms and procedures for holding the referendum, so that the result may enjoy full national and international legitimacy; whatever the final outcome, urges the authorities of the two republics to cooperate closely and constructively in the context of the negotiations for an SAA and to adopt the measures required to achieve full economic integration of their respective markets;

55. Recognises the significant progress made by Belgrade's authorities in cooperating with the ICTY; endorses and repeats the call by the UN Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, for former commander Ratko Mladic and former leader of Republika Srpska Radovan Karadzic to be immediately handed over to the ICTY; recalls that full and active cooperation with the ICTY is an essential prerequisite for pursuing negotiations on an SAA; therefore urges the Serb authorities not to miss the window of opportunity which is being offered to them and to pursue resolutely their policy of further European integration; reminds them that it is vital to ensure that the government's policy towards the ICTY enjoys the full support, at all levels, of the administration, police, judiciary and army;

56. Notes the strategic importance of preserving the present multiethnic nature of the Vojvodina region;

57. Welcomes the fact that the first negotiation talks have taken place in a climate of mutual respect; is concerned, however, by the fact that, as described in the report of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, the situation of inter-ethnic relations and minority rights, particularly with regard to the Serb and Roma minorities, remains "grim"; calls on the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to submit proposals, in the framework of the decentralisation talks, in order to address this problem;

58. Joins the Commission in emphasising the progress made by Kosovo but also the many shortcomings in the implementation of UN standards;

59. Reiterates that the conclusion of the status negotiations presupposes full compliance with the UN standards and agrees with the Council that the solution to the status question can only be a multi-ethnic Kosovo where all citizens are free to live, work and travel, a Kosovo whose territorial integrity is safeguarded by the UN and the European Union; emphasises that the final settlement should be acceptable to the people of Kosovo; takes the view that the question should be considered in the light of Kosovo's integration into the EU and must contribute to strengthening peace, security and stability in the region;

60. Furthermore believes that the decision on the final status should be accompanied by a roadmap for its implementation, detailing the conditions necessary to avoid destabilisation in the region;

61. Urges the European Union and the Commission to play a leading role, in close cooperation with the United Nations and all members of the Contact Group (France, Germany, Russia, UK, USA), in the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo; believes that these negotiations are a challenge for the whole region and that it is for all the countries concerned to support the process and to endorse its final outcome;

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62. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the parliaments and governments of Turkey, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo and the United Nations Mission to Kosovo.

(2) OJ C 140 E, 9.6.2005, p. 163.

(3) Texts Adopted, P6\_TA(2005)0369.

Last updated: 21 March 2006

**Legal notice**

