

To:

Joseph Borrell

Vice President - High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Dear High Representative,

We, Members of Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, would like to call your attention to Kosovo, as we believe that you have a key role to play in this crisis situation and must contribute to the stability of the Western Balkans region in both the short and the long term.

The current global pandemic affects the Western Balkans as well as the European Union. In Kosovo, however, the health crisis is combined with a political crisis, the collapse of the government and a high level of uncertainty both in Kosovo's internal and external affairs. The citizens of Kosovo hence need to face a two-sided crisis. You are in a position to help alleviate at least part of their hardships.

The dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade is crucial for the future of the entire Western Balkans region and the European Union. You, as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, need to take up a proactive role in the current situation. It is not enough to listen and to facilitate you need to take the initiative and make the Union's position and interest clear. It is more than the need for our mediation in the process, right now the EU needs to show leadership in the Western Balkans.

Our reputation has been deteriorating in the past few months and we must not risk becoming a marginal actor in the region. Especially now, the EU must act, take the lead again and not leave the process to other actors who would use it only for their own political advantage.

In these days, the first priority, of course, should be to save lives. We need to get prepared for the worst in this pandemic and we need to help our neighbours and partners as much as we can. Therefore, we would like to call on you and your colleagues in the Commission to make sure that our Union's response and fight against the virus is coordinated with our immediate neighbours and partners. Specifically, we believe that the Western Balkan countries need to be included in the EU+ export authorisation scheme that currently covers EEA members, the UK and the EU member states. The EU must also find a solution regarding the inclusion of all Western Balkan countries in the Joint Procurement Agreement, while red tape has to be reduced for these measures to be effective.

The Union's stand must be very clear regarding the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We are in favour of an agreement, but we are strongly against land swaps, as it would not serve the interest of the local population or of the region as a whole and would even set a very harmful precedent. You have to ensure that the EU position on the issue is loud and clear: land swaps are not an option.

You need to support all proactive steps towards normalisation, and you need to work for building up more trust among the players in the region. That is why we believe that the abolishing of tariffs can serve as an important first step and a sign of good will from the side of Kosovo's government. We expect Serbia to do its share of the efforts and you to make sure that all positive steps receive the reactions they deserve.

Despite the number of calls from member states' governments, officials, politicians and other stakeholders, we could not avoid the collapse of the government in Kosovo. However, we still need to do more and try to help all our partners to make sure that the institutions of Kosovo are fully functioning and support the smooth and well-organised response of the authorities in this crisis. WE believe that the initiative of President Macron and Chancellor Merkel to host a summit would be a great opportunity to start the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. You can make sure that many member states are actively supporting this process, as this is a vital interest for our continent. We hope that you can play a proactive and helpful role in the stabilisation in Kosovo.