

Situation in Kosovo

The Council of the ELDR Party,

- Having regard to its previous resolutions on Kosovo and former Yugoslavia,
- Having regard to the "Policy paper on former Yugoslavia", adopted by the General Affairs Council 30-31 October 1995, which states that "the immediate and full respect of human rights in Kosovo has to be safeguarded" and links the granting of long term measures to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to the restoring of a large degree of autonomy for Kosovo,

A. whereas the violence in the Drenica region of Kosovo, on 28 February - 1 March, where some 20 Kosovar Albanians and four Serb police officers reportedly were killed, is the worst in years,

B. whereas an already grave situation in Kosovo is becoming increasingly explosive, as shown by the latest out-break of violence as well as by the students' protests in recent months and the emergence of the Kosova Liberation Army,

C. whereas elections have been scheduled by Mr Rugova, for 22 March 1998,

D. whereas discrimination against Albanian-speaking students systematically has been carried out for years, as has discrimination in most other spheres of society,

E. whereas the FRY authorities' policy of transferring Serbs to Kosovo, where more than 90 percent of the population is Albanian, increases tensions,

F. whereas normalization of the education system could be a first step towards an overall political solution for the region,

G. whereas only a negotiated agreement between the Serb authorities and representatives of the Kosovar Albanians can lay the ground for a stable peace in the region,

H. whereas the conflict in Kosovo risks spreading into surrounding areas,

I. whereas the Foreign Affairs Committee through the President of Parliament has recommended the Council to nominate a Special Envoy to Kosovo,

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J. taking note of the Franco-German initiative on Kosovo and a visit paid to the region last October by Foreign Ministers Mr Kinkel and Mr Vedrine,

K. noting that the Council Presidency visited Belgrade 4 and 5 March to deliver a message of disapproval to Mr Milosevic and that the Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos has also scheduled a visit to Belgrade,

1. deplores the lack of initiatives to date on Kosovo at EU level and the demonstrated weakness of the common foreign and security policy in preventing conflicts;

2. Condemns the violent incidents which took place in the beginning of March, and calls on all parties to refrain from use of violence;

3. Condemns the continuous repression in Kosovo, and urges the Serbian authorities to without further delay implement the education accord signed in 1996, to safeguard the full respect of human rights for both ethnic groups in Kosovo and to start negotiations with representatives of the people of Kosovo on the future status of the region;

4. Finds it natural that the people of Kosovo want to have their own democratically elected representatives and urges the Serb authorities not to create obstacles for the elections and to grant access to those international observers, who wish to attend;

5. Calls on the Council to prepare to reimpose economic sanctions and to make clear to the Serb authorities that new sanctions will be introduced if they don't make rapid and constructive efforts to find a solution for the future status of Kosovo and to restore civil and human rights for its population;

6. Calls on the Council to make every effort to launch a strong political initiative; to suggest confidence building measures, to achieve the opening of negotiations between the parties and to offer a mediator who could be acceptable to both parties; furthermore supports its Foreign Affairs Committee's proposal to nominate an EU Special Envoy to Kosovo, and calls on the Council to act on its recommendation;

7. Calls on the Council also to make preparations for international mediation, in the form of a Dayton-like international conference on Kosovo, to be put in place if other initiatives should fail;

8. Calls on the EU, OSCE, NATO and WEU to immediately make preparations for the dispatch of a preventive deployment force to Kosovo so that it will be ready as soon as the political decisions are taken;

9. Urges the United Nations to reverse plans to withdraw the UNPREDEP force from Macedonia;

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10. Calls on the FRY authorities to immediately respond positively to the ED's request to open an office in Prishtina;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to Mr Ibrahim Rugova and to M. Bujar Bukoshi, Prime Minister of the government in exile of Kosovo.

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