Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 2237 (2022)[1]

Supporting a European perspective for the Western Balkans

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Strengthening democratic resilience and respect for the rule of law and human rights; promoting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations; and creating the conditions for stronger economic and social progress in the Western Balkans are a geostrategic investment in peace, stability and democratic security for the whole of Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly, therefore, firmly believes that helping Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*[2] meet their aspirations for closer European integration is important not only for the countries concerned but for the European continent and will benefit all European citizens.

2. Noting that the revised European Union enlargement methodology, introduced in 2020, puts an emphasis on democracy, the rule of law and human rights, areas in which the Council of Europe has an unparalleled expertise, the Assembly believes that the Council of Europe should redouble its efforts to help the countries of the Western Balkans make tangible and measurable progress towards meeting the European Union's enlargement criteria.

3. In addition, the Assembly considers that the Council of Europe, as a political organisation, should play a greater role in promoting dialogue and inclusive regional co-operation, in the normalisation of relations and in the solution of bilateral differences and disputes, in co-operation with the European Union and other like-minded stakeholders.

4. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:

4.1. strengthen the political dimension of the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union in relation to the Western Balkans;

4.2. further develop co-operation activities addressed to the countries of the Western Balkans in priority areas such as the rule of law and good governance, including efficiency, independence and accountability of the judiciary, anti-corruption, public administration reform and civil participation in public decision making;

4.3. support civil society initiatives in the region, especially those relating to reconciliation;

4.4. consider strengthening and expanding the Council of Europe's activities relating to confidence-building measures and conflict prevention in the region;

4.5. step up the political dimension of its engagement in the Western Balkans, for instance by creating ad hoc working groups, taking the lead in promoting regional or bilateral dialogue and supporting the implementation of agreements which are achieved thanks to the European Union's mediation or facilitation.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 11 October 2022 (28th sitting) (see Doc. 15609, report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr George Papandreou). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 11 October 2022 (28th sitting).
See also Resolution 2456 (2022).

2. *All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.