



# KOSOVO

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## **Lehne: EU will not force Serbia to recognize Kosovo**

KosovoCompromise Staff

The European Union will not force Serbia to recognize Kosovo's independence but expects its cooperation regarding the deployment of the EULEX mission, EU Council Director for Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Stefan Lehne said Thursday addressing the international conference “Serbia and the EU - Strengthening Serbia's European Perspective”.

“The stand of the new Serbian government is now more positive and endeavors are underway to get Belgrade to agree to EULEX deployment”, he said.

“Kosovo is an unclear issue from various aspects and will be a great challenge to the international community in the future too”, he said.

The EU expects Serbia to enable Kosovo to take part in regional initiatives and to encourage Kosovo Serbs to take part in Kosovo institutions and thus end their self-isolation, Lehne said.

The situation is not good, but Kosovo Serbs will have to establish dialogue with Kosovo Albanians and Pristina institutions sooner or later, he said.

State Secretary in the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo Oliver Ivanovic said that the only way EULEX could improve its image would be to investigate the crimes committed against Serbs in Kosovo.

He pointed to the importance of improving communications between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, in which the business and civil sectors can play a crucial role.

The creation of the Kosovo Security Force can be a potential source of problems, he said, noting that NATO was wrong to sponsor something that Serbs cannot trust.

Meanwhile, the member of the European Parliament Adrian Severin that the European Union had no right to count on Serbia's support in the realisation of the political project of independent Kosovo because Belgrade had neither accepted nor supported this solution.

“When Kosovo declared independence, the European Union told Serbia not to react with violence and Belgrade exceeded its expectations in this, but we cannot expect Serbia to support a solution it did not accept”, said Severin.



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Severin said that Serbia had gone a very long way and helped consolidate stability and security in the country and region and that the European Union should recognise Serbian efforts, for a change, instead of imposing new conditions all over again.

“The EU accession should be used neither as blackmail nor as an award for good behaviour”, said the Romanian MEP and added that Serbia was the key country for consolidating security in the West Balkans.

French Ambassador to Belgrade Jean Francois Terral, whose country currently presides the European Union, said that the EU is ready to accept confirmation of EULEX mandate by the UN Security Council and that Kosovo is not a pre-condition for Serbia's progress towards EU integration.

“The EU also accepts that Eulex should be status neutral and that there should be no references to Martti Ahtisaari's plan”, Terral said.