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May 29, 2008

Presence of Kosovo's flag in the European Parliament causes scandal

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The presence of the Kosovo flag at a meeting in the European Parliament on Wednesday and Thursday caused a wave of protests, with a Greek MEP calling it a “scandalous” and “totally illegal” move.

The flag was put next to the EU flag on the occasion of the meeting called “First interparliamentary meeting EP-Kosovo” on the premises of the European Parliament in Brussels, with the participation of Pristina officials and parliamentarians.

On the EP side, the meeting was run and dominated by three long-term lobbyists for the secession of Kosovo – German MEP Doris Pack, rapporteur for Kosovo Joost Lagendijk and rapporteur for Serbia Jelko Kacin.

Greek Socialist MEP Anni Podimata warned at the beginning of the meeting that “it is not our competence to decide on the legal status of Kosovo as an independent state”, but Pack rejected her objection.

In Belgrade, Serbia's Foreign Ministry immediately issued a formal protest to the European Parliament, with Serbia's Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic calling the move “absolutely unacceptable”.

“This is Belgrade's reaction, but it is not up to them to decide what we are doing here in the EP. We had decided last year to support Ahtisaari's plan and what is happening this year is the continuation of that. This is why we have the right to use the flag of the new country”, Pack said.

Podimata called Pack's view “absolutely wrong” and dubbed the act “scandalous” and “totally illegal”.

“The resolution adopted last year by the EP required the Ahtisaari plan to first have the approval of the UN Security Council, which never happened”, Podimata told KosovoCompromise.com on Thursday.

She said she planned to raise the issue immediately with the Greek government as well as to issue a formal protest to the president of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pottering.