



Civil Society asks the European Commission to reconsider its decision on visa liberalization for Kosovo

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The civil society appeals to European parliamentarians and European leaders that Kosovo gets included in the visa liberalization process, too. The undersigned of this appeal, like the EU member states, have different opinions about Kosovo's status, but agree that leaving Kosovo outside this process is a disastrous policy.

19 people from the civil society, among them Rada Trajkovic from the Gracanica Hospital, signed this appeal, in which they ask the Commission to reconsider its decision not to include Kosovo in the visa liberalization process.

Luan Shllaku, from the Kosovo Foundation for Open society, showed that with this appeal they are asking the EU to offer a roadmap which leads to visa liberalization.

"We are aware of the fact that the EU member states do not agree among each other regarding Kosovo's status. The undersigned in this letter also disagree in this point. However, we can all agree that leaving Kosovo residents, whatever their ethnicity, trapped in a visa ghetto, when all other Balkan people from the Adriatic to the Black Sea are able to travel freely, would be a disastrous policy" Mr. Shllaku said.

Veton Surroi from the Foreign Policy Club highlighted the contradiction between the positions of the European Mission to Kosovo and the European Commission.

"The EU mandated EULEX cannot produce an environment where more intensive communication on the visa

issue can take place. This is a contradiction which has to be solved in a partnership between Kosovars and the EU. And it is precisely in this direction that we are trying, together with ESI and the two well known former interior ministers in Europe, Amato and Schily, to show this basic contradiction" Surroi said.

Verena Knaus from the European Stability Initiative (ESI) talked about how important it is for Europe that Kosovo gets a process going.

"I would like to inform you that that former Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato and former German interior minister Otto Schily confirmed in their letter that safety in Europe cannot be ensured with visas anymore, but by offering Kosovo and other countries a [visa liberalization] process and by encouraging reforms, since only cooperation and reforms will make Kosovo a safer place," said Verena Knaus.

The undersigned of this Appeal wait for other Kosovar intellectuals to join the campaign.