

Press Release

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Kosovo: PACE President urges all parties to preserve peace and dialogue

Strasbourg, 17.02.2008 - Reacting to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence today, Lluís Maria de Puig, President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), called on all parties to keep their pledge to preserve peace and dialogue in all circumstances and to refrain from any incitement to violence as well as to fully comply with Council of Europe standards with respect to human rights, the rule of law, the rights of national minorities and the treatment of refugees, displaced and stateless persons.

"Whatever its status, Kosovo should be an area which is safe for all those who live in it regardless of their ethnic origin, and in which the values of democracy, tolerance and multiculturalism are shared by its population and institutions," he said.

"I regret that the two sides have been unable to reach compromise on the status of Kosovo – as the Assembly has repeatedly called for," he said.

Recalling the texts adopted by PACE on 22 January, Mr de Puig stressed the need for Kosovo to be an area where Council of Europe instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Anti-Torture Convention and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities are fully applicable and their respective control mechanisms fully operational.

In connection with the EU's attitude to Kosovo's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, the President invited those EU member states which are also members of the Council of Europe to agree on a single position.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) ; Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); SOC (Socialist Group); EDG (European Democratic Group); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).