

## EU seals historic deal in Western Balkans

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Published at: 23-04-2013

Source: [Portal Europe](#)

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In a Foreign Affairs committee debate today on the outcome of the high level dialogue over the weekend which sealed a historic deal between Serbia and Kosovo, Jelko Kacin (LDS, Slovenia), EP rapporteur on EU-Serbia relations said:

"What happened on Friday was a historic breakthrough in the Western Balkans. Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaci managed to find common ground in spite of huge domestic political pressure to be tough. The mediation of Baroness Ashton as EU High Representative has also clearly been instrumental in bringing the high level dialogue to a successful conclusion."

"I believe that we should arrange an ad hoc mission to Belgrade and Pristina in the wake of the agreement and demonstrate our strong support for the efforts of both governments. Supporting the integration process strengthens pro-reform forces in accession countries and brings stability."

"Needless to say, full implementation of the agreements is expected now from both sides. An EU-facilitated implementation committee will soon be established which will have to address two outstanding issues - energy supply and telecommunications - that still need to be dealt with before 15 June."

"I want to underline that the EU should continue to be actively involved in the region. The EU's leverage is effective and should be used wisely. We should encourage Serbian and Kosovo leaders to take advantage of this positive impetus and look beyond the high-level dialogue. They need to build genuinely friendly and partner relations, not merely to establish a "normal" relationship. They need to reach out to each other, just as Pristina needs to reach out to the Serbian community in the north."