

## Parliamentary Cooperation as Facilitator of Normalization

CIG organized an in-person discussion on March 4, 2021, in Belgrade for a number of members of parliament of Serbia on the prospects of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina in 2021 and how the parliamentary cooperation could advance it. CIG has organized a series of discussions over the seven years between members of parliaments of Kosovo and Serbia aiming at helping the normalization of relations. The Serbian parliamentarians were optimistic about the normalization process, though they do not expect a final settlement anytime soon. However, the absence of a final deal should not be an obstacle to the resolution of daily life issues. They concluded that the parliamentarians through their experience and influence in their institutions and on their political leaders could help advance the normalization of relations. Specifically, they suggested the following topics.

- Agree to a set of principles and standards that enable unhindered cooperation between Pristina and Belgrade and promote cooperation and understanding between the two societies in general. An example of good cooperation was when Belgrade and Pristina, during the first Kurti government in 2020, agreed to assist the Serb community in Kosovo and the Albanian community in Serbia unhindered. The ministries of health had also agreed to share experience and information on the pandemic.
- Promote cooperation between Pristina and Belgrade in the context of the regional cooperation. Issues to be addressed include the common market (explain and understand the initiative and help to make the common market work for all), diplomas, and freedom of movement.
- Advance the environmental agenda. All Western Balkan governments, including the governments of Serbia and Kosovo, signed the Green Agenda for the region at the Sofia Berlin Process summit in 2020. The Agenda is directly linked to the EU Green Deal. Members of parliaments could discuss how to cooperate on these issues. Sustainable development is a critical element of economic progress that cannot be ensured without a healthy environment. Environmental issues, such as pollution recognize no borders.
- Foster social understanding and cooperation between the young people. Members of parliaments could create more opportunities for the young people of Serbia and Kosovo to interact, understand, and cooperate with each other. The participants suggested inviting to their meetings representatives of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. Inclusion of the youth in the discussions could help improve perceptions among the youth. There is a whole new generation of people born after the war that knows very little about the past or each other.

The participants agreed that in-person discussion between members of parliaments of Kosovo and Serbia should resume as soon as the pandemic conditions allow.

## **Participating Members of Parliament**

**Dubravka Filipovski**, Serbian Progressive Party

**Uglješa Marković**, Socialist Party of Serbia

**Vesna Marković**, Serbian Progressive Party

**Snežana Paunović**, Socialist Party of Serbia

**Dragan Šormaz**, Serbian Progressive Party

**Danijela Vujičić**, Serbian Progressive Party