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## Slovenia Recognizes Kosovo

**Ljubljana, 5 March**

**Parliament voted to recognise the independence of Kosovo on Wednesday with an overwhelming majority. Out of the 67 deputies present at the vote, 57 backed the government proposal and four voted against.**

Only the opposition National Party (SNS) and its breakaway faction Lipa, who have six deputies in the 90-seat Assembly between them, opted against the recognition, saying it was rash and damaging to Slovenia, while some other opposition deputies suggested the decision was too hasty and should consider Slovenia's interests in Serbia.

The Slovenian Democrats (SDS), New Slovenia (NSi), the Pensioners' Party (DeSUS) and the opposition Social Democrats (SD) and Liberal Democrats (LDS) announced their support in the preceding debate, while the coalition People's Party (SLS) said the majority of its deputies would back the proposal. The SLS has 7 MPs in the 90-member parliament.

Addressing parliament on behalf of the government, Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel said that in its decision to recognise Kosovo the government had followed the conclusion of the Kosovo negotiations troika that a continuation of talks between Pristina and Belgrade would not yield a new solution due to differences in views when it came to the key question of Kosovo's sovereignty. The government was also guided by the finding that the Kosovo Assembly adopted on 17 February the declaration of independence as a legitimate expression of the will of the majority of Kosovo's population.

The decision was moreover based on specific historical circumstances, such as the status of an autonomous province within Yugoslavia given to Kosovo by the 1974 constitution, the systematic repression of Kosovo Albanians and the years of international administration of Kosovo.

Rupel added this were circumstances that made Kosovo a "unique" case, and which suggested that "no alternative solutions were possible or realistic".

Other reasons for the yes to Kosovo's independence include the right of peoples to self-determination, the concern for the stability of Kosovo and the region, as well as the conclusions of the February EU General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting, he added.

Rupel stressed that this decision was not directed towards Serbia and that Slovenia was adopting it as part of the EU's policy and the policy of the international community.

Most MPs who announced support for the government motion were united in the view that the decision was

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difficult but necessary.

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