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RECOGNIZED BUT NOT SUPPORTED: HUNGARY'S STANCE ON KOSOVO'S EU BID

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In light of Kosovo's recent application for membership in the European Union (EU), the issue of EU enlargement and the recognition of Kosovo's independence has been brought back into the spotlight. As Kosovo has formally submitted its application for candidacy status in the EU, the process towards potential membership has begun and is expected to be a long one. This process is hindered by the ongoing dispute with neighboring Serbia, which has called for the EU to cancel the accession process. Additionally, five EU countries, including Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus, have yet to recognize Kosovo as a state, citing their desire to see a resolution reached between Kosovo and Serbia before granting recognition. They believe that premature recognition could hinder efforts towards an agreement and reconciliation between the parties.

[On the 10 of January 2023](#), Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto announced that Hungary will vote against Kosovo's membership in European organizations, stating that such a move could hinder the possibility of reaching a compromise between Kosovo and Serbia. He mentioned that the premature acceptance of Kosovo by various European entities may obstruct efforts towards reconciliation and the ongoing EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Szijjarto emphasized Hungary's support for a peaceful resolution and dialogue as the means to achieve this. The Hungarian government led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has released [a set of proposals](#) on the future of the European Union, which include opposition to the creation of a "super state" in Brussels, emphasizing the need for common economic successes for the strength of European integration and the protection of European people from mass migration and pandemics, and suggesting Serbia's admission as a member state of the European Union.

While Hungary has recognized Kosovo as an independent state, it is not providing the same level of political support as other countries that have recognized Kosovo. The country's relationship with Serbia is important to its foreign policy, and Hungary is cautious not to take any action that could harm it. By not supporting Kosovo's EU membership bid, Hungary is trying to maintain a balance in its relationship with Serbia and Kosovo, and avoid taking sides in their ongoing dispute. Hungary receives 4 billion cubic meters of natural gas via the Turkish Stream from Serbia, which could be a possible reason for its cautious approach to supporting Kosovo's EU membership bid. Additionally, Hungary is concerned about the precedent that Kosovo's membership in the EU could set, as it is already facing autonomist movements within its own borders. The Hungarian Government's position is that integration is a mean and not an end in itself, and that decisions should be made by elected leaders and not by international NGOs. Therefore, Hungary is not fully supporting Kosovo's political aspirations within the EU, as it balances the need to maintain good relations with Serbia [and its own idea for the future of the EU](#).

One important aspect to consider in understanding Hungary's stance on Kosovo's EU bid is the role that the European Union plays in Hungary's domestic politics. The EU has been critical of the Orbán government's actions, particularly with regards to the erosion of democratic norms and human rights within the country. Some argue that this has led the Hungarian government to be more cautious in its support for EU enlargement and recognition of Kosovo's independence, as it does not want to further antagonize the EU and risk repercussions from the EU on issues such as rule of law and democracy within Hungary. Furthermore, it also illustrates that Hungary's foreign

policy is closely intertwined with its domestic politics, where it is trying to maintain a balance between its own interest and the EU's interest.

Kosovo's application for EU membership has brought to light the complex political dynamics surrounding the recognition of Kosovo's independence and the EU enlargement process. While EU membership for Kosovo may still be a remote possibility, it is clear that the issue is not a simple one and requires a nuanced understanding of the regional political landscape and the EU's values.

Another important aspect to consider when analyzing Kosovo's EU bid is the process of other Western Balkan states' accession to the EU. The Western Balkans region, of which Kosovo is a part, has a history of conflict and instability. In recent years, several Western Balkan states, such as Montenegro and Serbia, have begun the process of EU accession. These states have had to navigate a complex process of reforms and negotiations with the EU in order to meet the necessary criteria for membership. By comparison, Kosovo's path to EU membership is even more complex, as the country is still in the process of securing international recognition as an independent state. Furthermore, the EU's enlargement process has been slowed down in recent years due to the ongoing financial crisis and rising anti-EU sentiment in some member states. Additionally, another related topic is the current affair of north Macedonia, which also had an ongoing dispute with Greece over its name. The country's renaming to North Macedonia was a condition for the start of its EU accession talks, which began in 2020. The country has made significant progress on the rule of law, human rights and economic governance, but many challenges remain on its way towards EU membership. Also, The EU has made it clear that it will only open membership talks with Western Balkan countries that meet the conditions set by the European Council, including respect for the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. This shows that Kosovo's EU bid is not only affected by the recognition, but also by the ongoing internal and external challenges that the Western Balkan states have to face in order to meet the EU's requirements for membership and the challenges the EU faces internally regarding the enlargement process.

Ultimately, the question of whether Kosovo will eventually become a member of the EU is still up in the air and will depend on how these various factors play out in the coming years. However, what is certain is that the EU's and Hungary's stance on Kosovo highlights the complexity of the international relations and the multiple considerations and balancing act countries need to make in their foreign policy decisions.

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