



## Ahead of this week’s European Council, progressive MEPs and MPs urge EU leaders to take resolute actions toward the Western Balkans



On 17 and 18 June, the **‘Friends of the Western Balkans’**, the newly established network of social-democratic Members of Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament from across the EU, met for the first time in Sarajevo. They committed to joining forces and promoting action to revitalise the EU enlargement to the Western Balkans, engaging with like-minded people all over the region and strengthening mutual understanding and friendship.

Ahead of the upcoming European Council, which shall decide on the candidate status of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, **the Friends of the Western Balkans urge the European Heads of State and Government to also take resolute actions toward the Western Balkan countries, which for too long have been stuck in different ‘waiting rooms’**, while the EU member states hesitate to move on the accession process.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine brought war back to Europe and reminded us how important it is to preserve peace, and protect and support democratic forces across the continent. For this reason, the opportunity to make the European Union’s commitment to the Western Balkans credible must not be lost.



**It is high time for the European leaders to remove the obstacles that keep stalling the accession process. It is time for negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania to start. It is time for the EU to concretely support Bosnia-Herzegovina's effort to overcome its political stalemate and put in place democratic reforms, so that the country can be ensured candidate status as soon as possible. And it is time for Kosovo to be granted visa liberalisation, whose criteria were fulfilled in 2018.**

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