

Leaders' Meeting On The Western Balkans

Conclusions by the co-chairs

Berlin, 29 April 2019

Today, leaders of the Western Balkans, together with the Prime Ministers of Croatia and Slovenia and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, came to Berlin, at the meeting hosted by the President of France and the German Chancellor.

They recalled the common European perspective of the Western Balkans. They commended the successful agreement between Greece and North Macedonia regarding the name dispute as an outstanding example of successful conflict resolution.

They underlined the importance of a final legally binding agreement on full normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina for the stability in the region. Such an agreement is key for the respective European paths of Serbia and Kosovo. They agreed that any such agreement must be comprehensive, politically sustainable and contribute to regional stability.

Serbia and Kosovo agreed to speed up efforts to implement existing agreements and to re-engage constructively in the normalization dialogue with the facilitation of the EU, with the aim to reach a comprehensive and definitive agreement.

Participants underlined the importance of an inclusive and transparent negotiation process, which should be accompanied by confidence building efforts.

Participants agreed to intensify their efforts to establish a regional economic area in line with the 2018 Sofia summit declaration and the Chair's Conclusions of the London Western Balkans Summit 2018.

All participants reconfirmed their commitment to co-operate in the framework of the so called Berlin Process. Connectivity, economic cooperation, free trade, cooperation on security issues, youth exchanges and reconciliation constitute core pillars of the process. They reaffirmed the support to the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO). They are looking forward to the upcoming Summit in Poznan, Poland.

Participants agreed to step up their co-operation to prevent radicalization and to fight terrorism and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as illegal migration.

Participants emphasized their unwavering commitment to democracy, including the central role of elections and parliamentary institutions, the rule of law and good governance, the fight against corruption and organized crime as well as strengthening the role of the civil society and independent media. They agreed

that sustainable reforms are key for the European perspective of the region and strengthening the resilience of societies against the challenges of our time, both internal and external. They reaffirmed their commitment to the stability of the region.

To that end, participants welcomed the intention of Croatia to host an EU-Western Balkans Summit during its EU Presidency in 2020.