

**WB6 OHRID SUMMIT
10 November 2019**

**ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE EU FOUR FREEDOMS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

Building on the Joint Declaration signed in Novi Sad on 10 October, 2019 setting the intention to further deepen the Regional Economic Area by implementing the Four Freedoms of the EU in the Western Balkans;

Stressing that enhanced regional economic cooperation is an integral part of all our individual efforts for securing progress, economic prosperity and fighting current challenges; recalling also the importance of enhanced and facilitated people-to-people contacts;

Welcoming the achievements made in the regional economic area via the Multiannual Action Plan for Regional Economic Area, as well as the ongoing work therein, but also in various relevant regional initiatives, including RCC, CEFTA and the Transport Community Treaty and others;

Noting the role of the Berlin Process as significant catalyst of the regional cooperation;

Confirming that the objective of membership to the European Union remains a goal of the Western Balkans 6, and that no alternatives to this goal for the Region are viable; and to this end, reiterating our commitment to implement all necessary reforms and to gradually achieve full alignment with the acquis;

Recognizing that the accession process is the best transformative tool available for securing prosperity and progress of our societies, but also provides structural and effective convergence between EU and WB;

Therefore, we, the leaders of Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, remaining committed to work with all the leaders from the Western Balkans, agree to accelerate the implementation of Regional Economic Area by identifying a **list of priority measures**, which can be further expanded, in order to achieve practical and visible results for our citizens as soon as possible:

FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS

Priority 1: Enhancing Border Crossing Point Procedures and Infrastructures

In order to implement the Novi Sad commitments, we are developing an Action Plan focused on priority border crossings that will include the following measures:

Measure 1: introduction of 24/7 business hours for all inspections on border crossings, including Phytosanitary and Veterinary Agencies, by our next meeting;

Measure 2: Enhancing cross border e-commerce among countries with establishment of platform for E-commerce

Measure 3: Begin to improve infrastructure of border crossing points and, where possible, add additional infrastructure facilities for trucks in T1 and TIR regime, for perishable goods, for holders of AEO certificates, regardless of the regime and for empty trucks; (short term priority – six months)

Measure 4: Establishment of accompanying facilities, and the provision of appropriate and necessary equipment for control and measuring, as well as employment of additional number of border officers with suitable professional training (short term priority – six months and on-going),

Priority 2: Mutual Recognition of Documentation Accompanying Goods

Measure 1: Expedite the process of implementation of internal procedures for 'paperless system' for relevant documentation accompanying goods.

Measure 2: Identify a model of incentives to support the use of the 'paperless system'

Measure 3: Minimizing, with the view to eliminate, documentation requirements in written form for data that have already been entered into the system

Measure 4: Commit to adopt mutual recognition of documents accompanying goods (phytosanitary, veterinary and other certificates) at the next CEFTA Joint Committee meeting.

FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND FREEDOM TO PROVIDE SERVICES

Priority 1: Movement of people with possession of an identity card in 2020

By our next meeting, reach agreements between all parties involved, and expeditiously seek all necessary approvals for their entering into force.

- Harmonization of Legislation on Travel Documents in line with the EU acquis.

Priority 2: Ensure unique stay and working permits in order to enable equal treatment for the stay and employment of all citizens

- Completion of legislative framework on unique-unified stay and working permit
- Harmonization of Law on Foreigners in line with the EU acquis

Priority 3: Regulating social security and employment requirements

- Assess national legislation, by the next meeting, with a view to harmonize social security and employment requirements

Priority 4: Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Mobility

Measure 1: Conclusion of agreements on recognition of professional occupational qualifications for scarce occupations

- Harmonize the list of scarce occupations

Measure 2: Intensify our joint efforts to reach agreements on automatic recognition of academic qualifications

Measure 3: Enabling mobility of students and researchers

- Developing programs for student and researcher exchange
- Prepare a joint working Plan with a view to expediting the process of implementation of European Standard Guidelines (ESG) and the registration of respective agencies for quality assurance in EQAR, to be presented at the Regional Education Ministerial in mid-December.
- Strengthen collaboration in drafting, reviewing and implementing of individual Smart Specializations Strategies.

Priority 5: Strengthen cross border cooperation in the field of security

Measure 1: Strengthen cross-border cooperation among police authorities in fighting transnational crime, and in the area of fight against terrorism

Measure 2: Strengthen cross-border police cooperation in the area of migration and civil emergencies

FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITAL

Priority 1: Increase investment across the region

Measure 1: For our review for the next meeting, prepare a draft plan for developing investment prospects in the region.

CONCLUSION

The measures included in this declaration shall not replace and shall fully respect existing commitments taken in the framework of CEFTA, REA MAP or the Transport Community Treaty but shall build upon them in the spirit of deepening regional economic integration.

We agree that we will meet in Durres on 21 December, 2019, and we invite the other Western Balkan Six leaders to join. We will circulate this plan of measures to them in advance.

To prepare that meeting, we are establishing a joint working group that will meet in advance to prepare the papers for our next meeting. This group will be led by our personal representatives and we invite the rest of the region to join. In addition, we ask the RCC, EC, EBRD, WB, EBRD, EIB, and other relevant actors to support the working group.

Each of us will identify the financial resources needed for the work above, and we will seek additional resources where needed, included by approaching International Financial Institutions, and other sources of capital and investments.

We reiterate that this initiative is to accelerate the region's integration and its European perspective, and we ask the working group to put forward ideas and initiatives for the next phase of MAP REA and on the future of the Berlin Process, with a view to bring the region closer to the European Union.