



WESTERN BALKANS IN 2020: THE YEAR OF ACTION AND DECISIONS

Friday, 20 March 2020 10:00 - 15:00 , National Palace of Culture (Hall 8), Sofia, Bulgaria

ABOUT THE EVENT

2020 will be pivotal for the enlargement and the engagement with the Western Balkans countries and their perspective within the European Union. European prosperity and security is closely linked to the integration process and the advancement of peace, democracy, respect for human rights and rule of law in the Western Balkans region and their future in a strong and reformed EU. The Western Balkans, racked by war and tragedies throughout the 1990s, has recently seen a surge of significant political, social and economic progress. Yet the need for reforms and transformation is still crucial. We should not forget the fact that after a long stretch of ethnic instability, the region needs an accelerated pace of reforms to help countries moving towards the EU. The new methodology proposed by the EU commission should reassess and inject new dynamism into the enlargement process and provide a new impetus for the transformation of accession countries.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday, 20 March 2020

09:30

Arrival of participants and registration

10:00 - 10:30

Opening remarks:

Ilhan Kyuchyuk MEP, Vice President of ALDE Party

Goran Nerealic, Board Member of European Liberal Forum

Mustafa Karadayi MP, Chairman of MRF



10:30 - 12:00

Getting it Right: Towards a positive decision with a renewed accession process?

Chaired by **Ilhan Kyuchyuk MEP**, Vice President of ALDE Party

H.E. Nikola Dimitrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

H.E. Gent Cakaj, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Albania

Željana Zovko MEP, EP Committee on Foreign Affairs

Nathalie Loiseau MEP, Chair of the EP Subcommittee on Security and Defence

Irena Joveva MEP, Vice-Chair of the EU-North Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee

Discussion

12:00 - 13:00

LUNCH

13:00 - 13:30

Keynote speech by Olivér Várhelyi

EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood

13:30 – 15:00

Regional cooperation: Economy, connectivity and people-to-people contact

Chaired by **Iskra Mihaylova MEP**,

Vice-Chair of the Renew Europe Group in the EP

Lilyana Pavlova, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank

Goran Milevski, Minister for local self-government of the Republic of North Macedonia



Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Regional Director for the Western Balkans of EBRD

Majlinda Bregu, Secretary General of Regional Cooperation Council

Discussion

14:30 - 15:00

Presentation of the study “The Western Balkans - A Chance for the EU”, by the European Liberal Forum

Chaired by **Rune Glasberg**, Head of Unit External Affairs of the Renew Europe Group in the EP

Anela Lemes, Executive Director of Boris Divkovic Foundation

Jasmina Mrso, Expert Associate of Boris Divkovic Foundation

15:00

END OF THE EVENT

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