New methodology for EU accession of Western Balkans proposed: More credibility, predictability, dynamism and political steer

Today, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi presented a new Commission proposal for enhancing the accession process for the countries of the Western Balkans, calling it ‘a geo-strategic investment of the EU in a stable, strong, prosperous and united Europe’.

“The European Union enlargement to the Western Balkans is a top priority for the Commission”, Commissioner Várhelyi said, explaining that the Commission is proposing concrete steps on how to enhance the accession process whose goal remains accession and full EU membership. He also confirmed that the Commission firmly stands by its recommendations to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, and will soon provide an update on the progress made by these two countries. In addition, the Commissioner announced that, in preparation of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Zagreb in May, the Commission will come forward with an economic and investment development plan for the region that will accompany the new methodology for the accession process of the Western Balkans partners.

Commissioner Várhelyi explained that the proposal secures more credibility, predictability, dynamism and more direct political steer of the process. He also emphasised that the firm, merit-based prospect of full EU membership for the Western Balkans is in the Union's very own political, security and economic interest and that in times of increasing global challenges and divisions, it remains more
than ever a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong, prosperous and united Europe.

The Commission hopes that the Member States will endorse the proposal, in parallel with the opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, ahead of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Zagreb on 6-7 May.

The full press release, the Commission proposal and a Q&A are available online.

Dedicated factsheets on EU-Western Balkans relations and the EU accession process are also available.

See also

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