



- A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with **the Western Balkans**

- Commission Communication of 6 February 2018

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Based on presentation provided by DG NEAR

Enlargement perspective in Union's own interest

- Strategy not a stand-alone initiative. Follows straight from **President Juncker's State of the Union package.**
- **Strategic investment in the EU's security and stability.**
- Addressing **common challenges**: migration, terrorism, organised crime, economic development...
- Not leaving a **vacuum at our doorstep** for others to step in.

Main elements of the Western Balkans Strategy

1 Reaffirms the European future of the Western Balkans

- Historic **window of opportunity** for all Western Balkans
- **2025** perspective for Montenegro and Serbia – not a fixed accession date

2 Spells out what the Western Balkans need to do

- Enlargement perspective in the hands of **the countries themselves**
- Only possible with strong **political will**, the delivery of **real and sustained reforms**, and definitive **solutions to disputes** with neighbors

3 Announces enhanced EU engagement with the region

- Six **flagship initiatives** and a corresponding detailed Action Plan
- Increase in IPA **funding**

4 Preparing the EU to welcome new members

- Institutional issues (QMV, rule of law mechanism...)
- **Funding** (increase of IPA, gradual seamless transition, MFF for next enlargement)

Urgent action required from the Western Balkans

1 Reforms in the rule of law, fundamental rights and good governance

- Deliver on **judicial reforms**, fight against **corruption** and **organised crime** and public administration reform
- Enhance the functioning of **democratic institutions**

2 Strengthen the economy

- Address **structural weaknesses**, low competitiveness and high unemployment rates

3 Good neighbourly relations and reconciliation

- Commit, in both word and deed, to overcoming the legacy of the past, by **achieving reconciliation and solving open issues** well before accession.

Enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans

Unprecedented support in the form of Six Flagship Initiatives

- 1 Strengthening the rule of law
- 2 Reinforced engagement on security and migration
- 3 Enhanced support for socio-economic development
- 4 Increased transport and energy connectivity
- 5 A Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans
- 6 Support for reconciliation and good neighbourly relations

... and a corresponding detailed Action Plan with 57+ actions.



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