
Migration: EU Commission, an Action Plan for the Balkan route. Borders, asylum, fight against human trafficking, repatriation and visas

An Action Plan built around five “pillars” to deal with migration along the Balkan route. This was proposed earlier today by the EU Commission in the run-up to the EU-Western Balkans summit of December 6th and the Justice and Internal Affairs Council of December 8th. The Action Plan on the Western Balkans identifies 20 operational measures structured along 5 pillars: (1) strengthening border management along the routes; (2) swift asylum procedures and support reception capacity; (3) fighting migrant smuggling; (4) enhancing readmission cooperation and returns as well as (5) achieving visa policy alignment. “The measures are focused on support to or actions by Western Balkan partners, and action in the EU. It aims to strengthen the cooperation on migration and border management with partners in Western Balkans in light of their unique status with EU accession perspective and their continued efforts to align with EU rules. The Action Plan “sets out a series of measures to reinforce the EU's support to Member States facing increased migratory pressure along the Western Balkan routes. Irregular movements along the Western Balkans routes have significantly increased this year due to several factors, including economic pressures and insecurity resulting from ongoing conflicts. The non-alignment of visa-free regime with the EU's visa policy also contributes to an increasing number of people that arrive directly by air to Western Balkan countries and move onward to the EU. Close cooperation with our Western Balkan partners is essential to address these shared migratory challenges”.

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