
EU-Western Balkans: Brussels, summit today to “reaffirm membership perspective”

The leaders of the EU and the Western Balkans will meet in Brussels this afternoon, a year after the 2022 summit in Tirana. “The summit is an opportunity to reaffirm the EU membership perspective of the Western Balkans as well as the need for partners’ sustained and irreversible reform achievements, underpinned by EU values and principles”, a statement on the European Council’s website reads. The main topics of discussion are: deepening political and policy engagement with the Western Balkans; bringing Western Balkans partners closer to the EU and advancing gradual integration; building economic foundation for the future and mitigating the impact of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine; reinforcing security and building resilience. At the end of the summit, the leaders are expected to release a joint declaration. The EU “aims to bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU, preparing the ground for accession, and bringing concrete benefits to their citizens already during the enlargement process”, the Council explains in its statement. “To this end, the EU intends to explore additional measures aimed at further advancing gradual integration”. The summit “will be an opportunity to discuss coordinated actions related to security issues, which have become even more relevant in the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. This includes fighting foreign information manipulation and enhancing collective cybersecurity”.

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