
EU-Balkans: Zagreb Declaration. Strengthening democracy, fighting corruption, countering arms and drugs trafficking. Migration challenge

“The EU welcomes the strong commitment by the Western Balkans partners to the primacy of democracy and the rule of law, especially the fight against corruption and organised crime, good governance, as well as respect for human rights, gender equality and for rights of persons belonging to minorities. The Western Balkans leaders should ensure that fundamental values, democratic principles and the rule of law are strictly upheld and implemented, including while special and extraordinary measures to contain the coronavirus pandemic are in place”. This is another excerpt from the Zagreb Declaration, released at the end of the EU-Western Balkans Summit that took place via video conference on 6 May. The document points to the territorial issues to be settled, including the Prespa Agreement (relations between North Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria), and the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. It also includes a hope, which is a commitment: “The Western Balkans should transform into functioning market economies able to fully link to the EU’s single market, to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities to improve the business and investment climate and to promote the rule of law”. The EU and the Western Balkans “share a number of security challenges”, including preventing and countering terrorism and extremism, fighting corruption and organised crime, human trafficking, and countering arms and drugs trafficking. There is also a need for enhanced cooperation to “tackle migration challenges”.

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