
EU-Western Balkans: Varhelyi (Commission), concrete steps towards enlargement. “Commitment to full integration”

“Today is a very important day. Our leaders will not only confirm but also make it very clear that we are committed to the full integration and membership of the Western Balkans within the European Union”. These remarks were made by European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia. Having admitted that “we have to take our responsibilities and our decisions that lead us to this”, the Commissioner referred to concrete measures such as “opening the first Intergovernmental conference with North Macedonia and Albania”; “opening negotiating clusters with Serbia and start closing with Montenegro”; “accelerating the work for Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a candidate country”; and granting “visa liberalisation to Kosovo”. Also, Commissioner Varhelyi was particularly pleased that the Economic and Investment Plan, “worth one third of the GDP of the Western Balkans, €30 billion, which is one year old, already started to be implemented” to facilitate the “economic recovery after the COVID crisis”. In his view, this “should give a boost to accelerating the real integration of the societies and the economies of the Western Balkans with the European Union”. Finally, the Enlargement Commissioner mentioned the EU’s “continued commitment” in the fight against the “COVID pandemic”, and to deliver vaccines.

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