



Commission welcomes the green light to opening of accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia

Brussels, 25 March 2020

The European Commission welcomes the Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, subject to final endorsement by the European Council members.

Following the decision, President of the European Commission Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"The European Union delivers on its promise. North Macedonia and Albania did what was asked of them and they have continued making progress in the reforms needed. Today marks the start of the journey to a bigger and stronger European Union. And this decision is in the European Union's geostrategic interest."*

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér **Várhelyi** commented: *"Opening of accession talks sends a loud and clear message not only to the two countries, but to the Western Balkans as a whole. It reaffirms and delivers on the EU's commitment to the European perspective of the region: its present is with the EU and its future is in the EU. The Commission will move quickly and propose soon the draft negotiating frameworks with the two countries integrating the elements of the revised methodology. Today's decision confirms the geostrategic importance of the Western Balkans and demonstrates that Europe is willing and able to take geopolitical decisions even in these trying times of corona virus pandemic."*

Next steps

After final endorsement by the European Council members, expected this Thursday, the Commission will submit proposals for negotiating frameworks with the two countries. These frameworks establish the guidelines and principles governing the accession negotiations with each candidate country. The Commission will begin the necessary preparatory work immediately.

The first intergovernmental conferences should be convened as soon as possible after the adoption of the negotiating frameworks by the Council. Prior to its first intergovernmental conference, Albania is called on to make further progress on electoral and judicial reforms and in the fight against organised crime and corruption. Tackling the phenomenon of unfounded asylum seekers and amending the media law also remain important priorities. The Commission will report on these issues when presenting the negotiating framework for Albania.

The Commission will continue to monitor the progress and continued compliance of both countries in all areas of the conditions identified by the Council in June 2018 related to the opening of negotiations and to carry out and complete the process of analytical examination of the EU *acquis* with the two countries, starting with the fundamentals' cluster.

For More Information

[Link to the full Council conclusions](#)

[Council and Commission statements](#)

[Factsheet EU Western-Balkans relations](#)

[Factsheet EU accession process](#)

[Factograph: Albania on its European path](#)

[Factograph: North Macedonia on its European path](#)

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