



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 17.05.2016
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – EU Enlargement Strategy {COM(2015) 611 final}.

The Communication sets out a medium-term strategy for EU enlargement policy to cover the period of the mandate of the Commission. Enlargement policy is an investment in peace, security and stability, which are of particular value in the light of the ongoing refugee crisis.

The Commission thanks the Senát for its positive consideration of the EU enlargement policy as a successful, effective and credible instrument for the stimulation of reform efforts in countries aspiring to membership. The Commission appreciates the Senát consideration of Turkey as a strategic partner of the Union and the positive evaluation of the efforts made by Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia. As clearly set out in the 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy, the Commission shares the Senát's point that Turkey needs to strengthen the rule of law and fundamental rights.

The Commission also takes note of the remarks made by the Senát on the need for Albania to keep the path of reforms on its efforts after the achievement of its candidate status. The EU Enlargement Strategy proposes to continue supporting reform efforts in all enlargement countries. In line with the continued support to reform efforts in all enlargement countries, as underlined in the Strategy, the Commission considers that in the case of Albania a constructive cross-party political dialogue needs to be ensured for the sustainability of the EU reform process.

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senát
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The Commission remains fully committed to continue supporting the candidate countries and potential candidates in their reform efforts which will allow them to progress on their European paths.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Johannes Hahn
Member of the Commission*