



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2021) 3100 final*

Dear Chairman,

The Commission would like to thank the Országgyűlés for its Opinion on the European Commission's 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy {COM(2020) 660 final}.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Országgyűlés for the EU accession process with the Western Balkans, which is an important priority for the Commission.

As pointed out by the Committee on European Affairs of the Országgyűlés, the EU has provided extensive support to the efforts of the governments in the Western Balkans to address the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission has reallocated EU financial assistance in view of the urgencies faced by the region due to the crisis, both in terms of health and socio-economic needs. The EU has mobilised a package of over EUR 3.3 billion to the benefit of Western Balkans citizens and businesses.

One of our main priorities in the region is to accelerate its socio-economic development. To this end, work is ongoing on the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and its Green Agenda. The Plan aims to spur the long-term recovery – backed by a green and digital transition – leading to sustained economic growth, implementation of reforms required to move forward on the EU path, and bringing the Western Balkans closer to the EU single market. It aims to unleash the untapped economic potential of the region and the significant scope for increased intra-regional economic cooperation and trade. The Commission proposes that the large majority of this support is directed towards key productive investments and sustainable infrastructure in the Western Balkans.

Good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are essential elements of the Stabilisation and Association Process and the enlargement process, and key to progress on the countries' respective European paths.

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The Commission will continue to support and facilitate the integration of the Western Balkans in line with the priorities of the Zagreb summit, which reaffirmed the EU's unequivocal support for the European perspective of the region. The EU-Western Balkans cooperation and support from the EU goes far beyond what any other partner has provided to the Western Balkans, which is a clear reflection of the region's strategic anchoring.

The proposal for an Asylum Procedure Regulation includes provisions regarding the concept of safe third country. The Western Balkans are included in the list of safe countries of origin. The Commission has stressed the need for co-legislators to continue discussions in view of reaching agreement.

The Commission would like to thank the Országgyűlés for its engagement with the enlargement process and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Olivér Várhelyi
Member of the Commission*