

Speaking points

Round table discussion: *“Light at the end of the tunnel: Western Balkans & the European Union - Part II”*

The Trieste Summit of the Berlin Process last July represented a significant step towards the European objective. The process is not an end in itself, but a complementary instrument that does not replace the accession process. We are proud of what was achieved together with the other EU Countries parties to the process, with Western Balkans partners and the European Commission.

In Trieste we achieved significant results:

- financial support of 200 MEURO to a package for connectivity projects,
- the signature of the transport community treaty;
- the adoption of masterplan for a regional economic area;
- the introduction of the anticorruption dimension;
- the reinforcement of the dialogue with a civil society;
- impetus to youth policies;
- encouragement to private economic sector, including SMEs.

The speech of President Juncker of the State of the Union for the first time made reference to a concrete timeframe. We interpret this opening as the expression of an approach towards enlargement, which leaves the doors open also to the non-front-runners, stimulating them to accelerate the pace of reforms to be there as soon as possible.

We expect from Western Balkans countries a renewed political effort to reach irreversible progress in the democratic growth. While we hope that this path will be as short as possible, in the meantime we wish to strengthen our cooperation to face the most important and urgent common security challenges: terrorism, organized crime and illegal migration.

The Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans is the best investment for the security of our continent and of the European Union.