

Brussels,
15.03.2024

Subject: Call to open EU accession negotiations with Bosnia-Herzegovina

Dear President Michel,

on Tuesday 12 March 2024, the European Commission recommended to open EU accession negotiations with Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Since obtaining candidate status in December 2022, the country has demonstrated its commitment to the strategic goal of European integration by carrying out important reforms and delivering tangible results.

The adoption of the law on the prevention of conflict of interests, the law on anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing, the significant improvements to the judiciary and prosecutorial system are some of its most relevant achievements. BiH has also taken significant steps to improve migration management and strengthen the fight against corruption, organised crime and terrorism. In President von der Leyen's own words, Bosnia has "taken impressive steps forward and more progress has been achieved in just over a year than in a whole decade".

It is now time for the EU to deliver on its promises. In light of the current geopolitical challenges, we must adopt a clearer and more ambitious approach to enlargement policy. EU membership is the best guarantee for long-term stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans and BiH in particular. Despite its complex institutional and legal framework based on the Dayton Agreement and despite the numerous internal and external threats it faces, the country has achieved the necessary level of compliance with EU membership criteria. **This is why we call on the European Council to open accession negotiations with BiH at its next meeting on 21-22 March 2024.**

We need to send an unequivocal message to BiH: its future - and that of the Western Balkans - is in the EU. Its citizens endured enormous suffering during the war in the 1990s and their efforts to assimilate EU standards, norms and values deserve to be rewarded. While we owe it first and foremost to the people of BiH, we must also bear in mind that the credibility of the EU's enlargement policy itself is at stake. BiH will certainly need to make further progress on the necessary reforms, but it is up to the EU now to keep its word.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Franc Bogovič

Milan Brglez

Fabio Massimo Castaldo

Gheorghe Falcă

Valter Flego

Klemen Grošelj

Sophie In't Veld

Irena Joveva

Mislav Kolakušić

Dietmar Köster

Matjaz Nemec

Dorien Rookmaker

Thomas Waitz