



Based on the conclusions of the meeting of the Brdo–Brijuni Process, held in Slovenia, on 3 June 2017, the Ministers of South East Europe, together with the Ministers of Slovenia and Croatia, sent a joint letter, on 5 June 2017, to Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice President of the European Commission, and Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. The letter included their assessment of the current situation concerning EU enlargement, particularly in respect of the SEE region, and their specific recommendations regarding the region's European integration.

In their reply of 30 August, Federica Mogherini and Johannes Hahn expressed their full agreement with the Ministers' assessment that the process of EU enlargement was not only aimed at inclusion of the South East European partners into the European Union, but was also a process of consolidation of the European project and reunification of Europe.

"The European perspective of the Western Balkans was unequivocally reaffirmed by Member States at the European Council of 9 March 2017. Recently, the very successful Western Balkans Summit in Trieste in which we both participated showed what can be achieved on the basis of a clear and firm European perspective. We appreciate the value of the complementary contribution of regional processes, such as the Brdo-Brijuni process, in this context. It is particularly important that all participants reaffirmed their commitment not to block each other on the path towards the European Union.

The European Commission provided substantial input to the concrete actions agreed at the Trieste Summit, in particular the seven Connectivity Projects, the Connectivity Europe Facility, and the Regional Economic Action Plan. In the context of creating a more dynamic investment environment in the Western Balkans, the European Commission announced additional financing to boost entrepreneurial capacity and new financing opportunities to companies in the region.

We share your view that firm respect for the rule of law remains crucial, together with human rights, economic governance and administration reform. It is essential to continue strengthening our focus on these fundamentals in order to boost progress on the accession path. We count on your commitment to implement the necessary reforms, and you can count on the continued

support from our side", reads the letter.