

European Parliament - Western Balkans Speakers' Summit

Brussels, 28 January 2020

JOINT DECLARATION

We the Speakers of the parliaments of the Western Balkans,

together with the President of the European Parliament

**and the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, representing the Croatian Presidency of
the Council of the EU,**

1. Reaffirm the key role of parliaments in driving forward the EU reform agenda and delivering on the European aspirations of the people of the Western Balkans;
2. Call on the European Council to continue supporting the European perspective of the Western Balkans based on the fulfilment of the accession criteria, and give an unambiguous and positive political message on opening of accession negotiations and granting of candidate status;
3. Consider that the Zagreb Summit could play a pivotal role in restoring the credibility of enlargement policy and giving the process a new and effective impetus through concrete conclusions that would bring the region closer to the EU and ensure the sustainability of the European perspective of the Western Balkans;
4. Confirm the full commitment of our parliaments to participate in the reflections on a “renewed approach” to enlargement in order for the process to become more democratic, more transparent and closer to the citizens and civil society; reaffirm that the rule of law is and should remain a cornerstone of the accession process;
5. Firmly believe that enlargement of the European Union will benefit the people of the Western Balkans and of the EU Member States, and can bring about much-needed reconciliation in the region;
6. Consider, as preparations for the Conference on the Future of Europe gain momentum, that the Western Balkan Six should be fully associated to the work of the Conference;
7. Are fully committed to work together to strengthen parliamentary democracy and the parliamentary dimension of the enlargement process, as well as to deepen parliamentary culture based on consensus-building through a well-intentioned, open, inclusive and non-confrontational dialogue guided by the interest of lasting peace; stress the importance of

the parliamentary support and capacity building programmes carried out locally and regionally, supported by the European Parliament;

8. Believe that the empowerment of parliaments is an essential part of the enlargement process, as only empowered and efficient parliaments, with strong cultures of inclusive dialogue and consensus building, can be genuine and effective drivers of reforms.

Finally, we, the Speakers of the parliaments of the Western Balkan Six, with the full support of the President of the European Parliament and the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, representing the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU, commit to lead our respective parliaments on this path and help create a new political momentum in the enlargement process that responds to the expectations of all our citizens.



David Maria SASSOLI
President of the European Parliament



Gordan JANDROKOVIĆ
Speaker of the Croatian Parliament

Gramoz RUČI

Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania



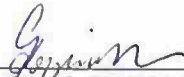
Denis ZVIZDIĆ

Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Dragan ČOVIĆ

Speaker of the House of Peoples,
Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Glauk KONJUFCA

President of the Assembly of Kosovo*



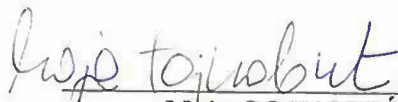
Ivan BRAJOVIĆ

President of the Parliament of Montenegro



Talat XHAFERI

President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia



Maja GOJKOVIĆ

Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.