



NEWS POLITICS

Majstorović: EU would “shoot itself in the foot” by not opening negotiations with Macedonia

By **EWB** - 25.06.2018

Srdan Majstorović; Foto: Tanjug / Dragan Kujundžić

BELGRADE – If the European Union does not start accession negotiations with Albania and Macedonia during this week, it could destabilize the entire region, which should unite beforehand and provide support to these two countries in the European integration process, Srđan Majstorović, chairman of the board of directors of the Center for European Policy and member of the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG), said today.

He participated in the public discussion “Why doesn’t Serbia open more chapters?” organized by European Western Balkans, where he stated that the credibility of the European Commission when it comes to enlargement policy will be tested on Thursday and Friday, when a summit is held where the decision to open negotiations with the these two countries will be reached.

“If the member states make a decision to start negotiations with Macedonia and Albania, it will be a very positive step in proving their own credibility. This is what the Commission has proposed in its Credible Strategy for the Western Balkans. Nevertheless, we are hearing in recent days that individual members are rethinking it, which is a dangerous policy”, Majstorović said.

He has also stated that the endangerment of Macedonia’s internal stability, by not opening accession negotiations, would be “like shooting oneself in the foot and could potentially create a serious political issue in the center of a flammable region”.

“Bearing in mind the importance of regional cooperation and a joint approach to the European Union, I think it would be most pertinent that the leaders of all six (Western Balkan) states send a letter, in which they will address the presidents / prime ministers of all 28 EU member states, in which they will say that, for the sake of regional stability and prosperity, negotiations with Albania and Macedonia should be initiated as soon as possible.”

He has also reminded that the EU policy and conditionality of the EU from 2001 to 2003 in Serbia ended in a tragic way, with assassination of the then Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić “who at the moment did not have the support he deserved” and added that “from these lessons from recent history, conclusions need to be drawn and support (...) to the accession negotiations should be given”.

He also said that this does not mean that these two countries will become members tomorrow, but that they are on a stable path, in a process in which there is also control and monitoring of reforms.

“If Albania and Macedonia do not start accession negotiations with the EU, they will remain at the end of the column, and we, as a region, can not allow this. Stability is not measured in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Tirana, Podgorica, but exclusively as the stability of the whole region. We have to defend that, by solving our internal affairs and regional relations”, Majstorović concluded.

TAGS **ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS** **ALBANIA** **BIEPAG** **MACEDONIA** **SRĐAN MAJSTOROVIĆ**



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...thcoming EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia and the London summit an opportunity to productively address more important issues for the region: like integration, economic stability, security and political legacy, with a focus on the European perspective of the Western Balkans and concrete regional infrastructure projects.



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...Western Balkans are Europe and will be part of the European Union's future, a bigger, stable and united Union. It is a matter of a shared interest and a shared responsibility with the countries of the region for the benefit of all our citizens.



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DONALD TUSK
President of the European Council

...need that the EU should use the Summit in Sofia, in the first place, to address the European perspective of the Western Balkans. At the same time, we should aim to improve, in concrete terms, the region's digital and infrastructure connections with and within the Western Balkan partners.

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STEFAN ZAEV
Minister of Macedonia

...the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia we expect an innovative Agenda to be coming, following the Thessaloniki Declaration, which will clearly pave the way for the accession to the EU, based on the principles produced by the Strategy.



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Aleksandar Vučić
President of Serbia

...made many mistakes, many circumstances are not in our favor, but it is up to us to protect, love, guard our country, and that's what we're doing. I will move forward to each encounter, each negotiation.



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AHMETH THAÇI

President of Kosovo

The summit offers a great opportunity to the European path of Kosovo and Western Balkan countries. Kosovo will try to close a chapter of conflicts with Serbia and open up a chapter of cooperation with this country.

JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER

President of the European Commission

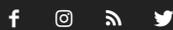
It is something that the Western Balkans summit would see clarity on the work that has to be done so that a region, so important for Europe, would improve its activity. Joining the EU was not a goal. It is something that could be achieved, and no concessions could be made on the criteria for accession.







European Western Balkans is a web portal that focuses on the Western Balkans countries and reports on the development of the EU's enlargement policy. The portal was launched in 2014 by the Centre for Contemporary Politics.



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