

JOINT STATEMENT

WESTERN BALKAN 6 MINISTERIAL - ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND CONNECTIVITY

BELGRADE, 23 OCTOBER 2014

As a follow up to the Conference on the Western Balkans held in Berlin on 28 August 2014 and our meeting in New York on 23 September, we, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Economic Affairs of the Western Balkans gathered in Belgrade on 23 October 2014 in the presence of the European Commission Vice-President for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy and the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). They expressed appreciation for the contribution and support of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Our discussion focused on Economic Governance and Connectivity, and we have adopted the following Joint Statement in order to reaffirm our commitment to good neighbourly relations, regional cooperation and European integration:

1. We acknowledge our comparable social, economic and cultural characteristics which are a firm basis for regional integration and cooperation. We share similar challenges ahead that can be more effectively addressed through increased regional cooperation. Improving regional cooperation and economic stability is one of our common tools for matching European standards and fulfilling the EU accession criteria, and the process should bring clear benefits to our citizens still before accession.
2. We will cooperate based on the Non-Paper endorsed at our meeting in Kotor in July 2014 which ensures complementarity in particular with the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECF).
3. We express our strong commitment to the Berlin Process set in motion at the Conference on the Western Balkans held in Berlin on 28 August 2014 at the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany.
4. The global economic crisis has underlined the need to strengthen economic governance and EU Member States now coordinate economic, structural and budgetary policies. We welcome the European Commission's new approach to economic governance, competitiveness and sustainable growth for the Western Balkans and recognise the importance of intensifying structural reforms to support the process.
5. In line with this new approach, we commit to submit every year credible National Economic Reform Programmes to the European Commission, the first ones by the end of January 2015 as a pilot exercise. These programmes will present measures to ensure macroeconomic and fiscal stability. In addition they will address a limited number of priority structural and competitiveness measures in the sectors that are most relevant

