

Corelation Between Enlargement of the European Union to the Western Balkans and Strengthening Europe's Geopolitical Position

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening virtually on 11-12 June 2021:

Recalls:

- the 2003 EU Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans which confirms the ultimate EU membership of the countries from the region;
- the ALDE Resolution on European Integration of the Western Balkans adopted by the 2015 ALDE Congress in Budapest;
- the ALDE Party European Election Manifesto 2019 which supports greater strategic EU engagement and the future enlargement perspective for the countries of the Western Balkans;
- the ALDE Council Resolution from February 2019 on North Macedonia's membership in NATO and the EU;
- the ALDE Congress Resolution from October 2019 on Opening of EU Accession Negotiations;
- the expressed urge to support Western Balkans in their attempt to transform their society and political systems according to EU standards, as stated in the ALDE Congress Resolution from October 2019 on Improving Europe's Capabilities to Address the Rise of China;
- the ALDE Congress Resolution from October 2019 on Strengthening the European Union as a Global Actor.

Recognises:

- that the positive and stable image of Europe has been jeopardised by the pandemic and the inability of the EU to offer clear, prompt and resolute response to growing number of geopolitical challenges;
- the possible further increase of influence and popularity of other foreign geopolitical actors across Europe, such as Russia and China;
- the danger of posed by narratives that question that existing realities in the Western Balkans, including ideas for division of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the creation of "great" ethnic-based states, as seen in non-papers and unofficial documents circulating inside and outside the EU;
- the destabilising connection between the promoters of illiberal values throughout Western Balkans and the EU, which have the capacity to destabilise Europe at large;

Resolution:

Corelation Between Enlargement of the European Union to the Western Balkans and Strengthening Europe's Geopolitical Position

Year and Congress:

eCongress, June 2021

Category:

Foreign Affairs

Page:

1

- that “United in Diversity” perfectly describes the European values and that Western Balkans, diverse as they are, would be the perfect ingredient for underlining these values within the EU;
- that the people in the Western Balkan region have a strongly developed European identity, which can be confirmed by the longstanding support for EU membership in the region;
- that progress and thus full EU membership of the Western Balkans depends essentially on each one’s respective merits in meeting the Copenhagen criteria;
- that the integration process of the Western Balkan countries in European Union should be a process that is parallel with the reform of the Union;
- that reconciliation between the countries and people of the Western Balkans, good neighbourly relations, enhanced regional, economic and cross-border cooperation and the search for solutions for long-lasting disputes are highly important for accession;
- that the people of the Western Balkans cannot be excluded from the debate on future of Europe, as well as of the European Union.

Expresses concern for:

- the lack of Council and Presidency Conclusions at the end of 2020 with regards to the enlargement process;
- the blocked start of the accession talks with North Macedonia due to the veto by the Bulgarian government over matters of bilateral nature;
- the stalled accession talks with Montenegro and with Serbia due to insufficient progress in the respective countries;
- the lack of visa liberalisation for the citizens of Kosovo despite the fulfilled criteria;
- the insufficient reaction from all EU member states regarding the diplomatic scandals caused by non-papers and unofficial documents circulating inside the EU;
- the vaccination process against Covid-19 in the Western Balkans, where majority of available vaccines are provided by non-EU actors and entities, thus shaking the public perception of the EU solidarity.

Calls for:

- a firm and clear stance by EU officials and EU member states in rejecting the spread of dangerous and destabilising ideas, especially those that propagate redrawing of the borders or creating new ones in the Western Balkans;
- EU Member States making it an absolute priority to complete the process of European integration and strengthen EU’s geopolitical

Resolution:

Corelation Between
Enlargement of the
European Union to the
Western Balkans and
Strengthening Europe’s
Geopolitical Position

Year and Congress:

eCongress, June 2021

Category:

Foreign Affairs

Page:

2

position in the Western Balkans, sending a clear message to the rest of the world;

- the EU Member States to fully support the integration of all states in the Western Balkans that fulfils the Copenhagen Criteria;
- the EU to help the Western Balkan states to move forward with reforms and implementation of the Copenhagen criteria. The fight against corruption on all levels should be brought to a successful conclusion;
- a new creative approach on enlargement for accelerated membership of the countries from Western Balkans to the EU;
- an immediate start of the accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania, as well as accession incentives for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, not hampered by bilateral historical issues;
- inclusion of representatives from the Western Balkan countries in the discussions and decisions on the Conference of the Future of Europe i.e., the European Union, especially with regards to EU enlargement, social cohesion, environment, trade and foreign and security policy;
- better promotion of EU investments in the Western Balkans, across Europe and rest of the world;
- greater promotion of EU enlargement not solely as a goal for Western Balkan and European Partnership counties, but as strategic geopolitical move of the EU and its member states;
- engaging efforts to nurture the European identity in the Western Balkan and across Europe;
- granting visa-free travel into the EU to all citizens of the Western Balkans immediately;
- acknowledgement of the dangers posed by compromising and weakening the EU's global image;
- emphasising the positive EU fundamental values and not give in to populist rhetoric, thus providing inspiration for younger generations of Europeans;
- advocacy for increased cultural exchange between all European countries to better achieve European unity, cultural inclusion, and appreciation for cultural diversity and heritage;
- investing of greater effort for creation of common historical narratives and incorporating studying of history of all European countries in the history curriculums;
- advocating for a broad culture of remembrance of the Srebrenica genocide and other sufferings of the people in the Western Balkan region in recent European history;
- inclusion of all EU member states and prospective members states into a common strategy for economic recovery and development in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era.

Resolution:

Corelation Between
Enlargement of the
European Union to the
Western Balkans and
Strengthening Europe's
Geopolitical Position

Year and Congress:

eCongress, June 2021

Category:

Foreign Affairs

Page:

3