

YOUTH EPP

Letter of Intent – Western Balkans

Council Meeting in Skopje (18.11.2023)

We, as representatives of the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP), convened at our conference titled "Unifying Future – Next-Gen meets Western Balkans" in Skopje, declare our firm commitment to supporting the integration of the Western Balkan countries into the European Union (EU). This declaration of intent reflects our shared vision and dedication to fostering closer ties between the Western Balkans and the EU, in alignment with the important message delivered by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her 2023 State of the Union Address: "The future of the Western Balkans is in the Union."

1. Support for the Western Balkans' Path to the EU: We fully endorse President Ursula von der Leyen's message, emphasizing that the future of the Western Balkans lies within the European Union. We believe in the potential of the Western Balkan countries to become integral members of the EU community. As YEPP, we are committed to actively supporting and facilitating the Western Balkans' accession to the EU, recognizing the numerous benefits this will bring to the region and the wider European family.
2. The Importance of the Current Context: The geopolitical landscape in Europe has witnessed significant transformations, particularly in the wake of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. These developments have reshaped Europe's political landscape and underscored the urgency of deepening ties between the Western Balkan countries and the EU. The challenges and uncertainties posed by these external factors highlight the necessity of accelerated integration efforts.
3. Recognizing the Western Balkans as Key Partners: We acknowledge that the Western Balkan countries are not just neighbours but key partners and an integral part of the European family. Their history, culture, and potential for growth contribute to the richness of Europe's diversity. As YEPP, we are committed to fostering stronger connections between the Western Balkans and the EU, based on shared values and aspirations.
4. Need for a tangible EU's Approach: Despite the Western Balkans' commitment to European values and reforms, the current enlargement procedures have not shown significant progress in the past years. This has led to frustration in the region. Therefore, we, as YEPP, advocate for creating possibilities to gradually integrate these countries into policy areas of the EU which are beneficial for both sides. We believe that a more dynamic and adaptable approach is required, without undermining the important goals set out by the *acquis*.

In conclusion, this declaration of intent signifies our unwavering commitment to supporting the Western Balkans on their path to EU membership. We believe that by working together, fostering understanding, and rethinking our approach, we can overcome the obstacles and challenges that have hindered progress in the region's integration. Our collective efforts will contribute to a more stable, prosperous, and united Europe where the Western Balkans are an integral part of the European Union.

We call upon all relevant stakeholders to join us in this endeavour and pledge our full support to the shared goal of a stronger and more inclusive European Union.

Supporters:



Junge ÖVP, Austria



CSJ, Luxembourg



MUF, Sweden



CDJA, Netherlands



JONG CD&V, Belgium



Junge Union, Germany



*Youth Forces Union of VMRO-DPMNE,
Republic of North Macedonia*



Mladi lidovci, Czech Republic



TOP tým, Czech Republic



Nova Generacija, Slovenia



Mlada Slovenija



KDN, Finland



Mladež HDZ, Croatia



Giovani PATT, Italy



Nuevas Generaciones, Spain



Kurdish Youth Congress, Kurdistan



ONNED, Greece



KDMS, Slovakia



Die Junge Mitte, Switzerland



Young Fine Gael, Ireland



KNL, Finland



JSD, Portugal



Junge Mitte, Ostbelgien



Junge Generation, Südtirol



Mladez HDZ, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Forza Italia Giovani