



## European Union-Western Balkans: Future Enlargement QSD on 2 July 2019

This briefing identifies relevant reports and useful documents, including recent parliamentary materials and press articles, which may be of assistance to Members in preparing for the following debate:

The Earl of Sandwich to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the recent European Union-Western Balkans summit in Sofia has strengthened their support for European Union enlargement now and after Brexit.

Copies of the materials are available for collection from the Library.

### Key Information

- European Union, [EU-Western Balkans Summit: Sofia Declaration](#), 17 May 2018; European Council, [Remarks by President Donald Tusk After the EU-Western Balkans Summit](#), 17 May 2018; and Council of the European Union, [Background: EU-Western Balkans Summit Sofia, Bulgaria, 17 May 2018](#), 15 May 2018

*Declaration made by EU leaders following the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 17 May 2018. Amongst its conclusions, the EU welcomed the “shared commitment of the Western Balkans partners to European values and principles, and to the vision of a strong, stable and united Europe, underpinned by our historic, cultural and geographic ties and by our mutual political, security and economic interests”. Also included are remarks made by Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, following the EU-Western Balkans summit in which he said that the EU was and would remain “the most reliable partner of the entire Western Balkans”. Lastly, a background paper published ahead of the summit and covering information on the ‘European perspective’, ‘connectivity’, ‘security challenges’ and information on events ‘in the margins of the meeting’.*

- European Commission, [A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans: The Enlargement Process](#), February 2018; [EU-Western Balkans: Six Flagship Initiatives](#), May 2018; [A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans: The Economic Potential of the EU's Relations with the Western Balkans](#), February 2018; and [Q&A: A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans](#), 6 February 2018

*Factsheets on the European Commission's 2018 strategy on the “credible enlargement perspective” for the Western Balkans. The strategy is based on the following six initiatives: strengthened support to the rule of law; reinforcing engagement on security and on migration; supporting socio-economic development; increasing connectivity; launching a digital agenda for the Western Balkans; and supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations. A link to the full strategy is provided in the further information section of this briefing.*

- European Commission, [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy](#), 29 May 2019, pp 1–2, 10–17 and 42–7

*Introduction, conclusions and recommendations and annex 3, 'Implementation of the Western Balkans Strategy and the Sofia Priority Agenda: EU enhanced engagement', from the European Commission's 2019 communication on EU enlargement policy.*

- House of Commons, '[Written Question: North Macedonia: EU Accession](#)', 9 May 2019, 249328

*Written answer in which the Government says it views the EU accession process "as fundamental to delivering security, stability and prosperity in the Western Balkans" and that it would continue to support countries "committed to the accession process to meet the necessary requirements".*

- House of Lords, '[Written Question: Balkans: Foreign Relations](#)', 10 May 2018, HL7297; and Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans, '[Berlin Process](#)', accessed 24 June 2019

*Written answer in which the Government described the EU-Western Balkans summit in Sofia, and the UK-hosted Western Balkans summit held in London in July 2018, as "crucial elements of a busy year of international activism on the Western Balkans". Also included, is an extract from the Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans website which provides further information on the Berlin Process. The UK-hosted Western Balkans summit in London was part of the Berlin Process, which was launched by Germany in August 2014 to aid regional cooperation and the integration of Western Balkans countries into the EU.*

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, '[UK Update on the Western Balkans London Summit](#)', 8 December 2018

*Speech by the UK Ambassador to Montenegro, Alison Kemp, at the November 2018 Western Balkan's Foreign Minister's meeting, outlining UK policy on, and support for, the Balkans. The Ambassador stated that the Government remained "of the view that the EU accession process is fundamental to delivering security, stability and prosperity in the Western Balkans".*

- House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, [Global Britain and the Western Balkans](#), 6 July 2018, HC 1013 of session 2017–19, pp 3–4 and 15–16; and [Government Response](#), 14 September 2019, and [Supplementary Government Response](#), 26 November 2018.

*Summary and introduction from the committee's report on the Western Balkans. Amongst its conclusions, the committee argued that it would be difficult to make a "meaningful difference in a region beset by deeply-rooted problems" and that there was "a risk that the UK's capacity to do so will be reduced if it is no longer involved in the EU accession process". Also included is the Government's response.*

- House of Lords International Relations Committee, [The UK and the Future of the Western Balkans](#), 10 January 2018, HL Paper 53 of session 2017–19, pp 3–8, 17–21, 50–3; and [Government Response](#), 23 March 2018.

*Summary, introduction and section on ‘EU accession’. Amongst its conclusions, the committee argued that the UK remained “well-placed to promote the values and institutional standards EU membership requires”. Also included is the Government’s response.*

### Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU Defence Policy’](#), 10 April 2019, 241414
- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Dayton’](#), 10 April 2019, 241416
- [QSD on ‘Western Balkans’](#), HL Hansard, 10 January 2019, cols 265–96GC

### Press Articles and Comment

- *Financial Times* (£), [‘The EU is Repeating Past Mistakes in the Balkans’](#), 20 June 2019
- James Crisp, [‘Emmanuel Macron ‘Holding North Macedonia Hostage’ in Bid to Force Deeper EU Integration’](#), *Telegraph* (£), 19 June 2019
- BBC News, [‘EU Sees Progress in Albania and North Macedonia Membership Bids’](#), 30 May 2019

### Further Information

- European Commission, [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement With the Western Balkans](#), 6 February 2018
- European Council, [‘EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia’](#), 17 May 2018
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [‘Western Balkans Summit: London 2018’](#), accessed 24 June 2019
- [Debate on ‘Foreign Affairs Committee’](#), HC Hansard, 12 July 2018, cols 1181–5
- [Debate on ‘The UK and the Western Balkans \(IRC Report\)’](#), 24 May 2018, cols 1118–46

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