

WESTERN BALKANS SIX LEADERS' DECLARATION ON COMMON REGIONAL MARKET 2025-2028

Today, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Berlin Process lunch, we mark an important milestone for the Western Balkans Six (WB6) with our *endorsement of the Common Regional Market Action Plan for the period 2025-2028*.

We, the Leaders of the Western Balkans Six, have agreed to markedly *enhance, broaden and deepen economic cooperation in the region by developing an ambitious future-proof Common Regional Market (CRM)*, based on the EU rules and standards, as a vital vehicle to overcome small, fragmented markets, make businesses competitive, attract investors, and retain and develop our human capital. This next phase of our collaboration will bring us closer to our objective of a Common Regional Market that is well integrated into the EU Single Market.

Recognising that the CRM serves as a *powerful catalyst for growth and attractiveness of the region for investments*, the Action Plan maximises the opportunities for mutually beneficial regional economic integration, boosts socio-economic convergence between the region and the EU and paves the way for *accelerated integration into the Single Market*.

Acknowledging the challenging and substantially shifted geopolitical and socio-economic landscape, and the current vast convergence gaps between the region and the EU, we recognise that our *path towards higher growth, improved living standards and convergence with the EU clearly depends on economic integration within the region, and subsequently between the region and the EU*.

Acknowledging that democracy, fundamental rights, and the rule of law are at the heart of any transformation, stability, and prosperity of the region.

Welcoming the *regional integration through the Common Regional Market as an essential pillar of the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans* and its overall contribution to crucial socio-economic and fundamental reforms, we are committed to unlocking the potential of the region, via action-oriented agendas for *seamless four freedoms, advanced business enabling environment, thriving human capital, and boosted digitisation and innovation ecosystems*. The implementation of these agendas can *add 10% to our economies* and markedly drive economic integration and societal advancement, as well as contribute to the Growth Plan's aim of helping our *economies double their sizes within the next 10 years*.

Recognising the new momentum for the enlargement policy and unwavering in our resolve to accede as *full members of the European Union*, we consider the *Common Regional Market an important step in that direction* and a tool to advance European integration path. Substantial opportunities for accelerated integration into the EU's Single Market go hand-in-hand with our region delivering on regional economic integration.

Appreciating the *tangible economic and social transformation results produced by the Common Regional Market 2021-2024* as a driver of intra-regional trade and booster of economic integration and business and people-to-people collaboration in the WB6, we, the Leaders of Western Balkans

Six, reaffirm our strong commitment to *impactful implementation of all agreements* reached in its context noting that no provision of these agreements may be interpreted as to exempt the Parties from their respective rights and obligations under other existing agreements.

We remain dedicated to the effective implementation of CRM Action Plan 2025-2028 supported by the necessary institutional and administrative capacities to ensure greater impact, with the unwavering support of the European Union. Recognising the importance of regional organisations for the effective implementation of the CRM Action Plan 2025-2028, we reaffirm our full support for the efforts of RCC, CEFTA, TCT, WB6 CIF, and other relevant regional partners, which exemplify strong regional ownership.

Empowered by the *outstanding support to the regional cooperation*, we will continue with our steady support to the implementation of the new Action Plan as a *regionally-owned framework grounded in the EU rules and standards*.

Confident that a strong and thriving *Western Balkans Six integrated in the EU is an indispensable investment in our collective strength, security and competitiveness*, our emboldened regional economic integration agenda in the frame of the new CRM Action Plan 2025-2028 is part of our region's vision for economic and social transformation, paving the way for full membership in the European Union.