

Joint Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, as agreed by the participants in the Western Balkans Berlin Process Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Hillsborough Castle

- i. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans Six and Berlin Process Participants:
- ii. *Recognising* the significance of 2025 as the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations, the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- iii. *Deploing* the return of war to the European continent as a result of Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and looking forward to Europe being once again whole and free;
- iv. *Cognisant* of the growing threats to European security from hostile external state and non-state actors;
- v. *Determined* to work together as Europeans for the security and prosperity of our citizens;
- vi. *Underlining that* the credible EU perspective of Western Balkan Six is important to maintain peace, security and stability especially in the current geopolitical context;
- vii. *Agreed* on the importance of sustained, visible, merit-based progress towards integration into the European Union for all participants in the EU accession process in line with EU accession criteria, their strategic priorities and democratic will of their citizens;
- viii. *Recognising* the suffering borne from conflicts in the Western Balkans region particularly over the 20th century which at different times have affected all communities; *commemorating* with dignity the memory of all the victims and *moved by* the profound pain caused by the unresolved fate of thousands of persons still missing;
- ix. *Recalling* the commitments made by the Leaders of the Western Balkans Six and other participants at the Berlin Process Summits in Vienna in 2015, London in 2018 and Berlin in 2024, to resolve open issues by peaceful means and in a spirit of good neighbourliness, and to report on progress made;

- x. *Acknowledging* the achievements made so far in addressing open issues through dialogue and constructive approaches, which have contributed to the stabilisation of the region and progress towards EU accession respectively for the Western Balkans Six;
1. Reaffirm our commitment to the principles of solidarity, trust, security, respect and good neighbourliness that guide our cooperation, and reiterate our undertaking to pursue European and intra-region co-operation in a spirit of good neighbourliness, and resolve open issues constructively, honouring commitments entered into; reflecting the commitment to peaceful settlement of disputes set out in the UN Charter and relevant European and other agreements;
 2. Recognise that meaningful progress requires establishing an atmosphere conducive to enhanced regional cooperation, connectivity, and free movement of people, goods, services and capital in the region;
 3. Welcome the contribution of civil society organisations and business to fostering mutual understanding, inclusive peace, people-to-people contacts, improving regional cooperation and increasing prosperity, and recall that open societies, open markets and peace are the best means of bringing most benefit to all citizens;
 4. Reaffirm the 2018 Joint Declaration of the Missing Persons in the framework of the Berlin Process to advance further measures in particular the establishment of a regional database of missing persons and commit, through our own good offices, to supporting inclusive and respectful commemorative practices that honour all victims of the conflicts including holding joint commemoration activities;
 5. Pledge not to impede any agreements reached by Western Balkans Six within the framework of the Berlin Process with outstanding issues;
 6. Reaffirm our collective commitment to furthering regional cooperation within the Berlin Process for the benefit of all citizens of the Western Balkans;
 7. Pledge to continue fully to support and strengthen regional cooperation through various relevant regional formats and institutions including the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO).

9 October 2025