



**MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Berlin, 8 June 2021, 08:30 (CET),
VTC FORMAT
Talking Points**

Dear Minister Maas,
Dear Ministers and colleagues,

Honoured to address you at this final Berlin Process MFAs meeting, yet another virtual one.

2021 is at its half, but the challenges affecting everyone, in every community continue. We all know the future is not necessarily rosy, but even under these unusual circumstances, I find it important to share with you what the citizens in our region feel.

Half of WB citizens consider that the **relationships in WB are twice better nowadays than back in 2014, when Berlin Process started.**

Over one-third (35%) view the overall atmosphere in the Western Balkans through far more positive lens than the high-level political rhetoric.

When people believe they will only interact once, they have an incentive to behave selfishly. But if they know the interaction will be frequent and repeated, they will likely cooperate. Frequent interactions promote a stable cooperation.

Though a comprehensive stock-taking of our journey since 2014 necessitates a lengthy address, we do take pride in the fact that:

- it centred regional cooperation at the core of the highest-level political agenda;
- it deepened our cooperation across almost all policy areas;



- ventured in some “not so easy” topics;
- and brought some noteworthy concrete achievements – be this the regional roaming agreement, the connectivity packages, or the vision of establishing a Common Regional Market in WB.

CRM is a rule of thumb, not a law of nature. It doesn't apply to every single national vision a government or economy in the region has, nor to every kind of good or bad bilateral relations. It is a broaden-and-build plan, endorsed by the Leaders of this region to enable a better region.

The RCC is only trying to steer an intense process focused on delivering on the CRM commitments in a delicate political and economic context. While there are clear results and significant efforts already invested, teams are still having a hard time advancing the agendas, especially the **important freedom of movement ones.**

We have tabled and advanced the negotiations for the agreement on free movement with ID in the region. **Technically, there is no impediment for this agreement to be within reach for the Berlin Summit.** This agreement could be another positive milestone in the regional cooperation that voices the expectations of the WB citizens-i.e., **42% of citizens from Kosovo* confirm that they would travel more often within WB if they could travel with ID card.**

Yet, if I want to go deeply into any agenda, I will need a lot of time, and in particular, I need to have the privilege of taking your time, which I will not do.

All I can say is that regional cooperation is not important because Berlin, Brussels, Washington, Paris, Rome, Wien and all partners are asking for it!
It is the name of the game the region has chosen to work in a process that enables certain benefits to its citizens, be it in trade, transport bottlenecks, or unleashing the potentials of the four freedoms, green and digital transition.

Ladies and gentlemen,
I know happy talk is not a mantra in the Balkans. But we all know talk is not walk and Future is not an agreement in summits.
Future is about people: depopulation, education, business, technology, jobs, digital, connectivity etc.

We hope a constructive joint push is possible from all sides in the run up of the Summit and look forward to the successful signature of important regional arrangements.



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Let us remain inspired by RRA, which will see its full implementation on the 1st of July with the start of Roaming Free WB. This Agreement remains an important testimony of the potentials of all-inclusive regional cooperation for the benefit of our citizens, and a good model for the arrangements to follow.

This heartened call for accelerated regional cooperation I am voicing here will **only be piecemeal if not joined by a call for intensified EU integration, as well as “phasing-in” to EU policies and programmes and the EU market as a part of the accession process.**

One such concrete action is the extension of the Green Lanes 2.0. This should include not only maintaining and extending the existing Green Lanes with the aim of achieving integrated (“one stop shop”) border crossing points/common crossing points in the region, but also extending the Green Lanes concept to the borders between the EU and the Western Balkans.

Your Excellencies,

Our region has a bumpy and challenging road ahead towards its sustainable development, green and digital transition and EU integration—and RCC will remain a committed partner. We will also remain an important pillar in any forthcoming future-proof concept for the continuation of the Berlin Process that our region defines in a clear demonstration of regional ownership!