

**MEETING OF THE LEADERS  
BERLIN SUMMIT  
Berlin, 5 July 2021, 15:00 (CET),  
VTC FORMAT  
Talking Points**

**“Borderless Connectivity” benefits everyone**

Your Excellency Chancellor Merkel,  
Your Excellences prime ministers, and colleagues,

- I am honoured to address you at this Berlin Process Summit.
- Last week, we had a historic day for the region. We eliminated barriers, borders, and tariffs for mobile phone roaming. The Balkans is now roam-free. This could have not been done in the two years it took, if it had not been for the cooperation from all of the WB 6, the mobile operators, and the EU Commission.
- We are amazed with the overwhelming number of messages received from citizens, positively impressed by this achievement. Their level of disbelief that this would become a reality was very high. This **Regional Roaming Agreement really is a game-changer. We live in a region that is simultaneously shrinking and expanding, growing closer and yet sometimes apart.**
- **However, when people believe they will only interact once, they tend to behave selfishly. But if they know the interaction will be frequent and repeated, they will likely cooperate.**

- 77% of citizens consider that the **relationships in WB are important.**
- **Over one-third (35%)** view the overall atmosphere in Western Balkans with far more positive lenses than high level political rhetoric.

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;
  - it ventured into 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 (CRM) and Green Agenda in the WB.
- RCC is trying to steer an intense process focused on delivering on the CRM, a **gauntlet in favour of a functional approach of cooperation.** While there are clear results and significant efforts already invested, we had a hard time advancing the agendas, especially the **important freedom of movement ones.**
  - All of us worked around the clock to advance the negotiations for the agreement on free movement with ID card in the region. **Technically, there was no impediment for this agreement to be endorsed today, and all economies have shown maturity and readiness to support this common cause.** This agreement could be another positive milestone, if, in coming months, we manage to agree on removing the remaining political stumbling blocks. One figure: **42% of citizens from Kosovo\* confirm that they would travel more often within WB if they could travel with ID card.**
  - **We know Regional cooperation will prevail on the strength of its ideas and ideals, not on the disputes and the name of documents. We know economies of the region will be competitive when they should be, and collaborative when they must be. We just hope those will be adversarial only when this is inevitable.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

- **I know happy talk is not a mantra in the Balkans. Again, we all know talk is not walk and the Future is not an agreement at a summit.**

- **Future is about people: depopulation, education, business, technology, jobs, digital, connectivity, etc.** Let the Roaming Free be the turning point for the regional cooperation. **“Borderless Connectivity” benefits everyone.**
- Although, regional cooperation will **only be piecemeal if not joined by a call for intensified EU integration, as well as “phasing-in” to EU policies, programmes and the EU market as part of the accession process.**
- One such concrete action could be starting the preparations for reducing roaming charges with the EU and extension of the Green Lanes 2.0. This should include not only maintaining and extending the existing Green Lanes with the aim to achieve 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 Excellences,

- 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.