



Regional Cooperation Council



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**Speech by RCC Secretary General Majlinda Bregu
at the
10th Berlin Process Summit
14 October 2024, Berlin**

Your Excellency Chancellor Scholtz,
Madam President of the European Commission,
Your Excellences,

Berlin Process started 10 years ago, with 4 objectives:

- ✓ to offer a solution on the open bilateral issue and internal problems of the WB,
- ✓ reconciliation within and between the societies in the region,
- ✓ improvement of regional economic cooperation,
- ✓ creation of a basis for sustainable growth.

The first one seems still too ambitious, especially today. To get ready for a successful today, us, CEFTA, PM Sherpas, your team at Chancellery and the Foreign Affairs one, colleges from NEAR, whether it was in our offices, embassies, airports, or even when some of us were on holiday, the work didn't stop.

The second objective I have to say speaks for itself: 82% of citizens in the region support and want regional cooperation.

The third objective is mirrored in the uninterrupted critical supplies' flow during the pandemic, the Green Lanes are now a reality within the Balkans and with the EU; doubling of intra-regional trade volume (goods); 500% increase in volume of usage of roaming within WB; facilitated mobility of workforce and young people with the higher education qualifications and seven professions mutually recognised.

And here we come to the fourth objective: what the leaders of WB are going to sign today is the plan they have to stick to for the next 4 years, the second phase of Common Regional Market is a plan for sustainable intra growth, it is a *key unifying regional cooperation framework of common good or common interests in the global game*. Across almost all policy domains – from digital, trade, investments, to innovation, green, etc. that started to be visible during the first phase of

CRM, the work on *regional economic integration through the plan that will be signed today becomes firmly anchored in the new Growth Plan.*

Your Excellences,

Few in this room were in office when the Berlin Process first began. I was fortunate to be one of them. 10 years ago, as Chair of the EU Committee on EU Integration, I was trying to push for parliaments of the region to be party to this platform. It took some 7 years of efforts but parliaments are part of the Berlin Process now; however considering I have been working every single day for almost 20 years to see Albania an EU Member, the timing of Berlin Process seems too short.

Anyhow, this is the last summit I am participating at as the RCC SG. I started my mandate with a good EU background, and my ambition was to make RCC a stronger and respected coordination body that would set the stage for smoother integration into the EU.

In the end, I can say that this time has been more animated and challenging than I could have imagined. Pushing pragmatic agendas, maintaining a spirit of cooperation, and keeping the torch of integration lit during pandemic crisis or even in moments when enlargement word wasn't easily muttered - are just some of those challenges.

After 6 years I can say that **never has this region been as free and as conscious as it is now regarding the importance of cooperation. We all owe this situation largely to the process of EU integration.**

The Common Regional Market is a great opportunity, but it has a fundamental challenge: to foster a common vision and a clear purpose of our future in Europe. As we work towards integrating markets we also cultivate a shared European identity, reducing the appeal of isolationist policies and highlighting the benefits of cooperation as the driving force behind progress. In the words of Jean Monet: "We are not forming a coalition of states, we are uniting people".

Thank you