

Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Majlinda Bregu for Euronews Albania on 23

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Extract of an interview

Q: Ms. Bregu what is the Regional Economic Area and can it be applied in the Western Balkans?

A: Regional Economic Area is the project that has started almost 3 years ago at the Trieste Summit, where all 6 leaders of the Western Balkan economies had agreed to establish a common economic area.

Q: Is this the famous “mini Schengen”?

A: No it is not. There is, in fact, a big misunderstanding that goes beyond the title, which created a lot of hassle. I believe that these are two different processes. We work for the establishment of the common regional market among six economies, for which all 6 economies have agreed. I emphasize 6 economies to point out that Western Balkan functions as a whole, when it comes to this matter.

In Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Kosovo* has 1 seat as it has 1 vote, same as Serbia, Greece Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Moldova and Romania, who do not recognize Kosovo* as independent.

Hence, the establishment of a common regional market, which for us progresses through several main pillars. You have here, on your screen, the digital pillar, and other are to do with mobility in which we have been working on several very interesting agendas, some of which faced difficulties.

Q: Which agenda?

A: The one is on mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications. For example, roaming agreement was a success story, although it was reached amidst many difficulties. But all economies agreed, because with the agreement the phone calls and surfing the internet in the six economies costs less from July 2019 and in 2021 it will become 0.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.