



Speech by RCC Secretary General Majlinda Bregu
at the
Executive Training on the Common Regional Market (CRM) for civil
servants from Western Balkans Six parliaments and ministries
2 December 2024, Tirana

Dear Deputy Minister Yzeiraj,

Dear Maja,

Dear participants,

In 2016, after many internal fights, I managed to establish the Summer School on European Integration, a flagship initiative of National Council for European Integration at the Parliament of Albania, that has been contributing to enhancing the capacities of civil servants, media and CSOs on EU integration process for the past 8 years. I recall it being very challenging at that time to persuade donors, stakeholders, civil servants and Parliamentary bodies as they did not see any role of the parliament in this process. But time proved it was the right move.

Now, 8 years later, I am proud that we are launching the 1st Regional Executive Training here in Tirana with the aim to establish a pool of experts on regional cooperation, especially focusing on Common Regional Market and Green Agenda, vis-a-vis the EU Single Market.

So let me start by thanking you, the pioneers of this Executive Training, which I am pretty confident is just the start of a long journey, representing a vibrant mosaic of the public administration—from parliaments, prime ministers' offices, ministries of foreign affairs, to education, trade, finance, telecommunications, European integration, and customs, among others.

In the past months, you have likely heard a lot about “*a new momentum for EU enlargement and opening of clusters*”, “*Growth Plan*”, “*national reform agenda*”, “*gradual accession to EU Single Market*”, “*Berlin Process*” or “*Common Regional Market*”. To an outsider unfamiliar with

these processes, it might seem as though they overlap unnecessarily, placing an undue burden on our already modest administrations.

Conversely, these processes are not isolated—they are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The Growth Plan, envisaging a new chain process for the first time: National Reform Agendas interconnected with regional one, laying the groundwork for accelerating the Western Balkans' access to the EU Single Market, thus increasing both WB and EU competitiveness.

On 14th October, WB6 Leaders renewed their commitment to deepen their cooperation on the Common Regional Market, as a plan for sustainable intra-growth, ***unifying regional cooperation framework of common good or common interests in the global game***. It is an “access gateway” for progressive integration into the EU Single Market and socio-economic convergence with the EU.

Across almost all policy domains – from digital, trade, investments, innovation, green, etc. that started to be visible during the first phase of CRM the work on ***regional economic integration through the plan becomes firmly anchored in the new Growth Plan***.

Dear participants,

Over the next four days, you will delve into key regional frameworks integral to the EU accession process. These frameworks not only guide our alignment with the *EU acquis* but also contribute directly to the daily responsibilities of public administration. The *Common Regional Market* and the *Green Agenda* bring the Western Balkans closer to achieving compliance with over 24 chapters of the *EU acquis*. While the degree of involvement may vary across ministries and economies, it is clear that these efforts require a whole-of-government approach—engaging nearly every sector except, perhaps, the Ministries of Defence and Justice.

This training is more than a knowledge-sharing exercise; it is the beginning of a collaborative journey.

Throughout this programme, you will engage in discussions and interactions on a variety of topics, examined from two key perspectives: how these specific areas are regulated within the European Union and what we have accomplished so far in our region, along with what we aim to achieve in the next four years.

This is not merely an exercise in memorising action plans. Instead, it is an opportunity to step back and see the broader picture—the tangible impact your daily contributions have on the region’s progress. By understanding both the regulatory framework of the EU and the milestones of our own path, you will be better equipped to operationalised regional agenda.

As Jean Monet said “The world is built with men and ideas”.