



**Speech by RCC Secretary General Majlinda Bregu  
at the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs  
Berlin Process  
1 October 2024, Berlin**

Honourable Ministers,

*Anniversary* editions of the Berlin Process like this one *invite for reflections*.

Reflections on how the *regional cooperation landscape has changed in the last decade* and how *closer we are to fulfilling our generational aspirations of becoming EU members* - are the first to come to mind.

*Drawing the line* after 10 years: *a lot to be proud of in terms of concrete advancements and manifested impact* through our regional cooperation agendas and in the frame of Berlin Process!

The uninterrupted critical supplies' flow during the pandemic and beyond, the green lanes are now a reality not only within the Balkans, but extended already with EU; 19% increase of trade in goods and services; doubling of intra-regional trade volume (goods) in 5 years; whooping 500% increase of volume of usage of roaming within WB; nearly 1,200 new companies participated in intra-regional trade; facilitated workforce mobility and addressed evolving labour market dynamics and demographic shifts with the higher education qualifications and seven professions mutually recognised.

All this known and unknown, either communicated properly to the citizens, as we have been and are still struggling to, or ignored by some others, resulted in 82% of support to regional cooperation.

They *demonstrated* what a true Regional Market could be like, offering also a glimpse of the potentials of the Single Market.

Yet the remaining *barriers, political blockages or unmet commitments, along with still vast unharnessed potentials*, are also *part of the same balance book* that the *region must seek to tackle!*

Your Excellencies,

*Locations* like today's host city of *Berlin* also *ignite reflections* on hope, *reconciliation and integration potentials*. This reflection on the *power of togetherness and cooperation* is even more important in the current *fragile and war-ravaging context in which security and stability are in peril*.

RCC, at whose helm I had the honour to serve in the past six years, spearheaded the work on a Common Regional Market as a *key unifying and by far the most elaborate regional cooperation and integration framework*. Although it is a hard task, results across almost all policy domains – from digital, trade, investments, innovation, green, etc., started to be visible while the work on *regional economic integration became firmly anchored in the new Growth Plan and Facility* for the region.

Acknowledging the challenging *geopolitical, socio-economic, technological shifts* and the *sizable convergence gaps*, together with all partners from the region, your highly committed team Madame Minister and our friends in arms, EU Commission,- we coordinated the *development of an enhanced,*

*broadened and deepened Action Plan* - whose *endorsement is expected at the Summit*. A *bolder* and more *ambitious* one that paves the way for *closer integration into the Single Market!*

Rooted in the priorities and needs as seen by our WB economies, it represents a *regionally-owned and EU standard-based growth, competitiveness and barrier-dismantling framework, envisaging a new chain process for the first time: national reform agendas, interconnected with regional ones, laying the groundwork for accelerating the Western Balkans' access to the EU Single Market, thus increasing both WB and EU competitiveness.*

Excellencies,

The Berlin Process *was and remains an important flagship initiative!* Rallying the joint efforts of the region and the participating MS; pushing pragmatic agendas and keeping the torch of integration lit even in earlier moments when enlargement word wasn't often muttered - are just some of its highlights.

**However, regional cooperation should not be just about signing agreements, but about full implementation of the commitments. It's not enough to point fingers or wait for others to lead.**

**There is room for everyone to do More.**

**We all need more integration than disintegration; we all need more cooperation than isolation; we all need more togetherness not in words but in actions; we need better planning and sustainable financial instruments as part of the new gradual accession of WB into the EU, we need a Growth mind-set, not only a Growth Plan.**

**This is a collective journey if we want to drive real lasting change.**

**Cooperation is not a choice but a must! We owe it to ourselves and to the future generations.**

**Thank you**