

Question for written answer E-001015/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Brain drain and accession of Western Balkan countries

In an interview with 'Deutsche Welle', ¹ Commissioner Mariya Gabriel said, in response to a question on the priorities of her second term in office: 'The brain drain is a huge challenge. Although we have no magic wand to prevent it, we do have some effective instruments to bring back the 240 000 people who have migrated to Silicon Valley over the past two years.'

There is also a brain drain within Europe which is most visible in the home countries of migrating skilled workers, from where young people migrate primarily to Germany or Austria and where there is then a lack of highly-educated young people. A similar phenomenon can be expected to take place in the context of the accession of Western Balkan countries, as recent surveys in those countries demonstrate.

A study by the Institute for Strategic Research and Education in Skopje found that 69% of lecturers, assistants and researchers in the Macedonian higher education system were considering leaving the country, with 20% of respondents already looking for a new job abroad.

1. How will the Commission tackle the brain drain within Europe, particularly from East European countries?
2. What is the Commission's view of the accession of Western Balkan countries? Does it think that this phenomenon will also be in evidence when those countries join the EU?
3. Are there plans to counter the exodus of high achievers from the EU, particularly in the light of the continued influx of uneducated people?

¹ <https://www.dw.com/de/eu-kommissarin-gabriel-der-brain-drain-ist-eine-riesige-herausforderung/a-51465059>