AMENDMENTS
1 - 38

Draft opinion
Reinhard Bütikofer
(PE646.975v03-00)

Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Western Balkans, in the run-up to the May 2020 Summit
(2019/2210(INI))
Amendment 1
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

1. Highlights that successfully opening, conducting and concluding accession talks with the Western Balkan countries is one of the EU’s core priorities in the region;

Amendment

1. Highlights that successfully opening, conducting and concluding accession talks with the Western Balkan countries is one of the EU’s core priorities in the region; Recalls that the environmental ambition of the Green Deal and the ecological transition for Europe can only be fully effective if the EU’s immediate neighbourhood also takes effective action and calls on the EU to use its influence, expertise and financial resources to mobilise Western Balkan countries to join it on a sustainable path;

Or. en

Amendment 2
Marek Belka

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

1. Highlights that successfully opening, conducting and concluding accession talks with the Western Balkan countries is one of the EU’s core priorities in the region;

Amendment

1. Highlights that supporting EU-related reforms in the areas of democracy, rule of law, social market economy, economic cooperation and trade as well as good neighbourly relations and successfully opening, conducting and concluding accession talks with the Western Balkan countries is one of the EU’s core priorities in the region;

Or. en
Amendment 3
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 a (new)

Draft opinion

1 a. Welcomes the Commission’s new methodology and Communication on enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans launched on 5 February 2020 that calls for trust, mutual confidence and clear commitments on both sides, emphasising a merit-based approach. A credible accession perspective is a key incentive and driver of reforms, aiming to transform the Western Balkans into functioning market economies, thus contributing to prosperity, predictability, dynamism and political steer;

Or. en

Amendment 4
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 a (new)

Draft opinion

1 a. Recalls the principles of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) and encourages the parties to undertake all efforts towards opening their second phase implementation;

Or. en

Amendment 5
Jan Zahradil, Emmanouil Fragkos
on behalf of the ECR Group

Draft opinion
2. Recalls that the EU is the main trade partner of the Western Balkan countries and that bilateral trade doubled between 2006 and 2016; notes, however, that the EU continuously runs an unsustainable trade surplus with the Western Balkans;

Amendment

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2

2. Recalls that the EU is the main trade partner of the Western Balkan countries and that bilateral trade doubled between 2006 and 2016; notes, however, that the EU continuously runs an unsustainable trade surplus with the Western Balkans; as the World Bank has also noted in its study "Rising Uncertainties"\(^{1a}\)

\(^{1a}\) World Bank Group study "Western Balkans regular economic report, Rising Uncertainties", No.16, Fall 2019.
Paragraph 2

Draft opinion

2. Recalls that the EU is the main trade partner of the Western Balkan countries and that bilateral trade doubled between 2006 and 2016; notes, however, that the EU continuously runs an unsustainable trade surplus with the Western Balkans;

Amendment

2. Recalls that the EU is the main trade partner of the Western Balkan countries and that bilateral trade doubled between 2006 and 2016; notes, furthermore, that the EU continuously runs a steady trade surplus with the Western Balkans, counting for 9 billion euros in 2018;

Or. en

Amendment 8
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 a (new)

Draft opinion

2 a. Urges the European Commission to put in place a strategic economic and investment plan with a view to improving competitiveness and sustainable development in the whole Western Balkans region, in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement and the strategic objective of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 as part of the European Green Deal, as the growth in the Western Balkans is slowing down after a short-lived revival on investments in previous years and the contribution of investments and of exports to growth are fading in the region;¹b

or. en

¹b World Bank Group study "Western Balkans regular economic report, Rising Uncertainties", No.16, Fall 2019.
Amendment 9
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 a (new)

2 a. Welcomes that the trade relations between the EU and the Western Balkans have grown at a progressive rate, where 64.6% of Western Balkans import originate from the EU, while 84.8% of exports head to the EU single market, which is a clear sign of deep interdependence between the two regions;

Or. en

Amendment 10
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 b (new)

2 b. Notes with concern that according to the World Bank, there is slight decrease in FDI in the region in 2019 and FDI is too low to sustain growth in the long term; notes also with concern that greenfield investment peaked in 2018 but a substantial share of FDI has gone into non tradable sectors which do not contribute directly to exports;\textsuperscript{1c}

\textsuperscript{1c} World Bank Group study "Western Balkans regular economic report, Rising Uncertainties", No.16, Fall 2019.

Or. en

Amendment 11
Marek Belka
Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

3. **Believes that** the EU’s enlargement policy **is** a two-way street on which both sides must uphold their commitments;

Amendment

3. **Takes into account the new methodology for the accession negotiations** adopted by the European Commission, which **envisions** the EU’s enlargement policy **as** a two-way street on which both sides must uphold their commitments **and supports the Commission in rewarding negotiation progress** as well as **in reopening negotiations when expected reforms are not delivered**;

Or. en

Amendment 12
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

3. **Believes that** the EU’s enlargement policy **is** a two-way street on which both sides must uphold their commitments;

Amendment

3. **Believes that** the EU’s enlargement policy **is** a two-way street on which both sides must uphold their commitments; **stresses that the pace of negotiations should reflect the merits and readiness of each country and their progress with regards to internal reforms**;

Or. en

Amendment 13
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4
4. Notes with concern that a free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Republic of Serbia has entered into force, which risks undermining the aims of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and Serbia’s 2009 application for membership of the EU;

Amendment 14
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Notes with concern that a free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Republic of Serbia has entered into force, which risks undermining the aims of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and Serbia’s 2009 application for membership of the EU;

Amendment

4. Highlights that free trade agreements negotiated by the Western Balkan countries should not undermine the aims of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and the application for membership of the EU;

Amendment 15
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

4 a. Calls on the candidate countries of the Western Balkans to shape their trade policies with third countries in light of their future EU accession, by complying with the obligations assumed under the Stabilisation and Accession Agreements;

Amendment

4 a. Calls on the candidate countries of the Western Balkans to shape their trade policies with third countries in light of their future EU accession, by complying with the obligations assumed under the Stabilisation and Accession Agreements;
Amendment 16
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 b. Welcomes the WTO membership aspirations of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; calls on the Commission to provide the necessary support and assistance in helping these countries’ efforts in accessing the WTO as soon as possible;

Or. en

Amendment 17
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

Amendment

5. **Demands** strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

5. **Calls for an increase to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and other funds to support reforms and assistance for remaining countries in the Western Balkans; In this regard, calls for strong integration efforts and projects, for instance from funds such as the Western Balkans Fund, in order to support Western Balkan countries in strengthening the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and their administrative and judicial capacity so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform and to achieve stable conditions for business to operate and invest in the region;

Or. en
Amendment 18
Jan Zahradil
on behalf of the ECR Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

Amendment

5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fight against corruption, so as to improve business environment, enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

Or. en

Amendment 19
Marek Belka

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

Amendment

5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights so as to enhance economic competitiveness, prosperity and social wellbeing, budgetary balance and structural reform;

Or. en

Amendment 20
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5
5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

5. Demands strong integration efforts in order to support Western Balkan countries in promoting improvement of the rule of law, democracy and human rights and fighting against corruption so as to enhance economic competitiveness, budgetary balance and structural reform;

Amendment 21
Marek Belka
Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

Draft opinion

5 a. In this respect, calls on the candidate countries to deliver reforms which will guarantee a rules-based economic system with a level playing field for all participants and the adoption of EU standards with regard to citizen's labour and social rights;

Amendment

5 a. In this respect, calls on the candidate countries to deliver reforms which will guarantee a rules-based economic system with a level playing field for all participants and the adoption of EU standards with regard to citizen's labour and social rights;

Amendment 22
Reinhard Bütikofer
Draft opinion
Paragraph 6

Draft opinion

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations;

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations; with a special emphasis on the continuation of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue; Stresses that retaliatory trade measures and diplomatic initiatives aiming at non-recognition of a
neighbouring country handicap both the regional economic integration of the affected countries and block several lines of political dialogue;

Amendment 23
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations;

Amendment

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations; *Highlights the importance of stability and prosperity in the region as well for the EU*; *Supports initiatives that promote regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations while moving countries closer to EU membership, for instance through a border free "mini Schengen" area within the region*;

Amendment 24
Marek Belka

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations;

Amendment

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations *and recalls the importance of the regional integration efforts coordinated within the framework of the Berlin Process, economic cooperation within CEFTA, continued*
work on the connectivity agenda and further engagement in the creation of the Regional Trade Area;

Or. en

Amendment 25
Jan Zahradil
on behalf of the ECR Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6

Draft opinion

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation and good neighbourly relations;

Amendment

6. Reminds the Western Balkan countries of the importance of regional economic cooperation, wider market environment and good neighbourly relations;

Or. en

Amendment 26
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

Draft opinion

7. Recalls that the EU is the largest foreign investor in the region and emphasises the need to give the region high priority under the EU’s Connectivity Strategy;

Amendment

7. Recalls that the EU is the largest foreign investor in the region and emphasises the need to give the region high priority under the EU’s Connectivity Strategy; Highlights the importance of improving transport infrastructure in the region, and in particular the role this plays in facilitating trade; Supports the swift construction of European railway and highway corridors throughout the Western Balkan countries;

Or. en
Amendment 27
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

7. Recalls that the EU is the largest foreign investor in the region and emphasises the need to give the region high priority under the EU’s Connectivity Strategy;

Amendment

7. Recalls that the EU is the largest foreign investor in the region by investing 12.7 billion euros in foreign direct investments between 2014-2018 and emphasises the need to give the region high priority under the EU’s Connectivity Strategy;

Or. en

Amendment 28
Marek Belka

Draft opinion
Paragraph 8

8. Requests that the Commission provide further technical support to the Western Balkans to improve the external investment framework, in particular in the areas of predictability and investor protection;

Amendment

8. Requests that the Commission provide further technical support to the Western Balkans to improve the external investment framework, in particular in the areas of predictability and investor protection also by the means of increased financing of technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;

Or. en

Amendment 29
Jan Zahradil
on behalf of the ECR Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 8
8. Requests that the Commission provide further technical support to the Western Balkans to improve the external investment framework, in particular in the areas of predictability and investor protection;

Or. en

Amendment

Amendment 30
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 8 a (new)

Draft opinion

8 a. Encourages the Commission to use existing tools and, if needed, to create new tools to boost a more dynamic trade cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans. Having this in mind, calls on the Commission to explore possibilities of involving the business sector more closely, in order to build trust, create jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities and to improve the business and investment climate. A high-level business summit on the fringes of the May 2020 EU-Western Balkans Summit in Zagreb could serve the purpose by providing a strong voice for businesses;

Or. en

Amendment

Amendment 31
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 8 a (new)

Draft opinion

8 a. Recalls the importance of WTO
membership to open up trade opportunities and to bring candidate countries closer to EU membership; Recalls that Bosnia and Herzegovina applied from WTO membership in 1999, and Serbia in 2005; Calls on the EU to continue supporting Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with their WTO accession processes;

Amendment 32
Enikő Győri

Draft opinion
Paragraph 8 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

8 b. Reiterates its call on the Commission to monitor the effects of its policies, including trade policy, on SMEs, as they play a vital role in international trade. Due to their size and limited resources, the costs of administrative burden affects the SMEs disproportionally, therefore the EU’s trade policy with the Western Balkans should be SME-friendly, providing user-friendly, up-to-date and practical information;

Amendment 33
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 9

Draft opinion

Amendment

9. Urges the Western Balkan countries to stick to projects in the energy sector which help to meet climate objectives and

9. Urges the Western Balkan countries, but also foreign investors, in particular EIB, EBRD and other public
are aligned with EU environmental legislation; financial institutions, to stick to projects in the energy sector which help to meet climate objectives and are aligned with EU environmental legislation, in particular the preservation of biodiversity and protected sites under international conventions; calls for environmental impact assessments and public consultations on projects affecting protected areas, biodiversity and environmental protection, also taking into account local community views;

Amendment 34
Jan Zahradil
on behalf of the ECR Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 9

Draft opinion

9. Urges the Western Balkan countries to stick to projects in the energy sector which help to meet climate objectives and are aligned with EU environmental legislation;

Amendment

9. Underlines that energy industries in the Western Balkans remain defined by outdated infrastructure, the overwhelming dominance of coal and hydropower, urges the Western Balkan countries to stick to projects in the energy sector which reduce energy poverty, increase energy efficiency and security and help to meet climate objectives and are aligned with EU environmental legislation;

Amendment 35
Dita Charanzová, Urmas Paet

Draft opinion
Paragraph 9

Draft opinion

9. Urges the Western Balkan countries

Amendment

9. Urges the Western Balkan countries
to stick to projects in the energy sector which help to meet climate objectives and are aligned with EU environmental legislation; to bear in mind climate objectives and EU environmental legislation when selecting projects in the energy sector;

Amendment 36
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 10 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

10 a. Emphasises the importance of focused youth programmes in the region in order to improve their job market situation, create decent jobs and support mobility and cyclical migration rather than irreversible economic emigration;

Or. en

Amendment 37
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 10 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

10 b. Calls on the Commission to explore increased sectoral cooperation, especially in terms of SME investment and domestic market capitalisation, of education and research, innovation and digitisation as well as environmental and green technologies, in order to share know-how and best practices;

Or. en

Amendment 38
Reinhard Bütikofer

Draft opinion
Paragraph 10 c (new)

Draft opinion

10 c. Calls for an increase of loans through specialised, regionally targeted loan programmes of the EIB and other international financial institutions;

Amendment

Or. en