



30 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain: South East Europe needs a reliable perspective for peace and prosperity

A joint Statement by the European Movement Presidents France & Germany

Mid October, four weeks prior to the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU's General Affairs Council and the European Council will discuss the question of opening accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the start of a welcome European reunification. In the course of four rounds of enlargement, following the reunification of Germany and Europe, European unity was extended and consolidated so as to make us stronger together in an instable world. Now is the time to continue the success story of European integration, which preserved peace and prosperity for European citizens.

The acceleration of accession talks with the countries of the Western Balkans is an important part of this process as well as the accomplishment of sustainable economic and social coherence on our continent. In this context, the integration of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia is less a question of enlargement than of "consolidation" of the European continent, since they are located in the middle of 6 of our Member states, from Italy to Greece.

“The EU must strengthen its cooperation with the Western Balkans. Internal dividedness will open up opportunities for other geopolitical players to exert adverse influence in what would become a black hole on our doorstep”, says Yves Bertoncini, President of European Movement France.

There is no doubt that EU accession criteria must be fully met by the candidate countries. The European Movements of Germany and France demand in particular respect for democratic values and the rule of law. In May, the European Commission declared that both, Albania and North Macedonia, made the necessary progress on these standards. Further delays of the accession prospect may impede the region's path into the community.

As Linn Selle, President of European Movement Germany, points out: “The longer the Western Balkan states are uncertain about their prospects for accession, the more the pro-European democratic forces within the states, and, in particular, young people will turn their backs on the European Union.”