



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the Western Balkans

*2879th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 16 and 17 June 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The European Union remains firmly committed to the European perspective for the Western Balkans and encourages the countries of the region to meet the necessary conditions.

FYROM

The Council took note of the parliamentary elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 1 June 2008. It condemned the violent incidents and regretted other serious shortcomings, as identified by the OSCE/ODIHR. The Council noted the measures taken by the authorities following 1 June including the organisation of re-runs on 15 June in all places where serious irregularities occurred. It called upon the authorities to investigate all reported incidents and take appropriate action in line with the recommendations from the OSCE/ODIHR. In this context it welcomed the commitment of the authorities to address these issues without delay.

The Council expects the new Parliament and Government to be established soon and to achieve sustainable progress in reforms. It called on all political parties to promote and participate in a constructive and inclusive dialogue and to implement the priorities identified in the Accession Partnership.

P R E S S

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Council welcomed the signature of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and of the Interim Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina as an important step on the country's path towards the EU. It looked forward to intensifying cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina through the comprehensive framework offered by these Agreements and the other mechanisms of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The Council highlighted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina establishing a sustained and effective track record in implementing these Agreements. The Council encouraged all the political forces of BiH to unite their efforts to pursue with strong determination its reform agenda including the priorities set out in the European Partnership.

ROADMAPS FOR VISA LIBERALISATION

The Council welcomed the presentation of the roadmaps for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, in order to gradually advance towards visa liberalisation and as a clear sign of the political commitment of the EU for the visa free travel for the citizens of the Western Balkans. It called on these countries to focus now on the full implementation of the requirements contained in the roadmaps. The Council and the Commission will closely monitor the process."
