



# TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

## Solidarnost Declaration 19 June 2024

We, the trade union confederations, members of the Regional Trade Union Council Solidarnost, as follows:

THE ASSOCIATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF SLOVENIA, THE UNION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS OF CROATIA THE CONFEDERATION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS OF SERBIA, TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION NEZAVISNOST, THE CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA, THE CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, THE CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF MONTENEGRO, THE UNION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF MONTENEGRO, THE FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF MACEDONIA and THE CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF MACEDONIA, in co-ordination with our European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

1. Welcome the proposal to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and call on the other candidate countries to redouble efforts to meet all accession criteria and on the EU to complete the accession process.
2. We call on the EU institutions to start negotiations with North Macedonia as soon as possible.
3. We regret that the last EU-Western Balkans summit that took place in Brussels in December 2023 adopted a [declaration](#) that only contained a very superficial reference to the need for Western Balkans partners to decisively undertake economic and social reforms. The declaration does not mention social dialogue, collective bargaining, workers' participation and health and safety as key factors in ensuring economic and social cohesion. It talks about an empowered civil society, but there is no mention of capacity building for social partners and an enabling environment that supports social dialogue and collective bargaining.
4. We believe that enlargement of the European Union and the promotion of its values in the Western Balkans will ensure security and stability, enhance social and economic development and prosperity, strengthen democracy and the rule of law, facilitate free movement of people and goods, stimulate investment policy and foster mobility.
5. We welcome the EESC as the first European institution to receive members from candidate countries and call on other European institutions to follow suit.
6. We also stress that for these objectives to come to fruition, a functioning social dialogue at national level is necessary. Thus, we invite the leaders of the Western Balkans and the EU to engage in strengthening the social and economic component through mutual co-operation of social partners as equal actors in the reform process in the region, as well as to support efforts to build and further develop social dialogue as one of the crucial elements of a modern, democratic,



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and European society. We recall that effective social dialogue and timely inclusion of social partners at all levels of the integration process is very important and should be one of the criteria for an efficient integration process.

7. To this end, we welcome the prompt mobilisation of financial assistance through the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans and call on the competent/amenable institutions to direct part of the funds to building the capacity of representative trade unions and their engagement in accession negotiations.
8. We continue to call for the ratification of all ILO core conventions and invite governments in the region to not only ratify, but also to implement and enforce the conventions already in place – it is only through effective labour inspections and freedom of association that labour markets can be safe and free from exploitation.
9. Finally, the Regional Trade Union Council Solidarnost will continue to work with the ETUC and seek its support in their engagement with the EU in accession talks and ahead of the 2024 enlargement package. Trade unions in the region commit to treat EU accession as a priority and will try to influence the Reform Agendas that their governments will submit to the European Commission to access the Western Balkans Facility.