

Dr. Angelika Winzig
Head of the Austrian EPP Delegation

Committee on Budgets
Committee on Budgetary Control
Committee on International Trade
Committee on Research, Industry and Energy
Committee on Women's Rights and Equality



Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 170
1049 - Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 15 November 2022

Roam-Like-At-Home for Western Balkan

Dear Honorable President,

we are living in extraordinarily challenging times. During your speech on the State of the European Union on September 14, you were clear on the decisive measures we have to take to support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian aggressor.

In this regard, we also very much welcomed your acknowledgment of the need to include Ukraine in the European Free Roaming Area and your assessment that “it is really time to do that now”. While you have our full support for this endeavour, we would also like to draw your attention to another European region that deserves to benefit from free roaming, namely the countries of the Western Balkan.

Right now, it is important to gather under one roof all those, who share our European values. The Western Balkan states have proven that they are reliable partners of the European Union. With the European Commission's recommendation on October 12 to grant candidate status to Bosnia-Herzegovina, another milestone in the Union's enlargement policy has been reached.

It is clear that the accession negotiations with these states will continue for some time to ensure that all the necessary criteria are fulfilled. However, an important step could be taken right now by tearing down the roaming barriers allowing for the Western Balkans states and their citizens to grow even closer to the European Union.

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, therefore call on the European Commission to quickly present a clear roadmap aimed at ending roaming surcharges between the European Union and the Western Balkans, thereby enlarging the European Free Roaming Area for the benefit of the European citizens. The time to act is now.

Sincerely

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