

**Joint Letter of Foreign Ministers of Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany,  
Greece, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia**

5 March 2021  
028928/2021

Dear Josep,

We would like to follow up on Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on 22 February 2021 and make a proposal to have a strategic discussion on the Western Balkans on the agenda of one of our next meetings.

We believe it is high time we take a strategic look at the Western Balkans. A lot has changed since our last discussion in August 2019. There have been dynamic internal political developments in the countries of the region. Moreover, the pandemic has exacerbated already existing trends, including geopolitical implications. Other actors are ready to step in the regional affairs, often at our expense. While the EU has mobilised massive amounts of support to the region, other actors were more effective in presenting their support and thus undermining our reliability, credibility and perception of our solidarity.

As the EU, we should approach the region not only through the enlargement lenses, but also through foreign policy optics. We need to discuss how to respond to the internal developments on the ground and to the more active engagement of the third actors.

Additionally, United States is preparing to reengage with the region. Working shoulder to shoulder with them as our key partner, requires from us having a common stance.

Our political discussion on the Western Balkans seems long overdue and should therefore be part of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in April.

Sincerely,

*H.E. Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles  
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security  
Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission*



**Mr. Alexander Schallenberg**  
Minister for European and  
International Affairs of Austria



**Mr. Gordan Grlić Radman**  
Minister of Foreign and European  
Affairs of Croatia



**Mr. Tomáš Petříček**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
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**Mr. Heiko Maas**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
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**Mr. Nikos Dendias**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece



**Mr. Simon Coveney**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
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**Mr. Bogdan Aurescu**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
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**Mr. Ivan Korčok**  
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**Mr. Anže Logar**  
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