
EUROPEAN UNION TO OPEN ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS WITH ALBANIA

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The European Commission Report set to be published on 17 April in Strasbourg outlines how far the non-EU countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey have come on their road to European Union membership. The document confirms that the EC, for the first time, recommends opening EU accession negotiations with Albania, which became an official EU candidate country in 2014. The document states that "reform of the public administration [has been] consolidated, with a view to enhancing its professionalism and depoliticization." It also adds that "further actions were taken to reinforce the independence, efficiency, and accountability of judicial institutions, particularly through advancing in the implementation of a comprehensive justice reform." The European Commission does, however, warn that "continued, concrete, and tangible results in the reevaluation of judges and prosecutors will be decisive for Albania's further progress."

For Kosovo the document noted that the country "delivered at a slow pace throughout 2017" when it comes to EU-related reforms and calls on Pristina to continue EU-facilitated talks with Serbia on normalisation of relations. The document states that Kosovo's new government and assembly "should bring forward EU-related reforms as a matter of priority and build consensus on key strategic issues."

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