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Press release | 18.03.2020

Member States to debate start of accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia next Tuesday

Quote from Reinhard Bütikofer MEP & Tineke Strik MEP

According to draft council conclusions leaked today, the General Affairs Council might agree to opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania next Tuesday (24th March). The Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States (CoRePer) will also discuss accession tomorrow.

Reinhard Bütikofer MEP, Greens/EFA group coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, comments:

"It's welcome that the Council now finally moved towards opening accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania. This has been long overdue. The European Parliament and the European Commission have always advocated that these two countries must be allowed to take their rightful seat around the European table.

"Opening accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania is crucial to rebuild EU credibility in the Western Balkans and to ensure countries in the region maintain and strengthen trust in our common European future. The EU must demonstrate its ability to move forward particularly in this time of crisis."

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA group spokesperson on North Macedonia, comments:

"North Macedonia is long overdue to start the accession process. The country has had to go to huge lengths to change its name and build diplomatic relations with its neighbours to get to this point. We cannot turn our backs on countries who so enthusiastically embrace a desire for European integration.

"Early elections on the are a direct result of the failure of the European Council to agree on starting accession negotiations. The countries pro-EU course will be seriously undermined by another postponement of accession talks by the Council. It's time for European Member States to signal their willingness to preserve peace and progress in the Western Balkans."

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