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## **The European Council must open accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania**

### **Eu enlargement**

Today, the European Parliament, on the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, adopted a firm response to the decision by three countries (France, Denmark and the Netherlands) to block opening EU accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania at last week's European Council.

**Reinhard Bütikofer** MEP, Greens/EFA coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee, comments:

*"It is in the interest of no one to leave those countries in the lurch because we know that's the best way for them to move away from democracy and the rule of law. Not opening negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania is a serious blunder and damages the EU's standing with our closest neighbours.*

*"We know that 25 of 28 Members States at the European Council want to move forward but it was only France, Denmark and Netherlands holding the whole Union back."*

**Tineke Strik** MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and shadow rapporteur on North Macedonia comments:

*"Stability and peace in the Western Balkans is the promise that Europe offers to the region through EU accession, three countries in the European Council cannot be allowed to break that promise. It is encouraging to note that, despite the heavy disappointment and conclusion that injustice has been done, the political leaders of North Macedonia remain committed to an EU perspective. We stand in full solidarity with them, aware that it is up to the EU now to realise that perspective."*

*"Given the potential for the political situation in North Macedonia to deteriorate, the European Council should not wait until May 2020 to find another opportunity to open accession talks but start after the December European Council as stressed by the text adopted today."*

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## **Responsible MEPs**



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