

## **EGP supports opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania**

Against persistent recommendations by the European Commission the European Council has repeatedly refused to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. Both countries had been led to believe that such negotiations would be allowed to start once they had delivered their necessary contributions. North Macedonia and Albania have done that, but the European Council is breaking Europe's word. In the Thessaloniki Declaration of 2003, the EU made it completely clear that it saw the future of countries of the Western Balkans in their membership in the Euro-Atlantic community and, in particular, in the EU. North Macedonia made extremely remarkable extra efforts to open the door towards Europe in its bilateral agreements with Bulgaria, and, in particular, the historic Prespa agreement with Greece. The country took very difficult and at the same time very courageous steps to overcome the decades old stalemate. It is a terrible betrayal that the European Council does not honour these efforts.

In the past several member states have been dragging their feet, which was already very deplorable. But in the latest European Council decision it was just France, Denmark and the Netherlands that blocked Albania, and it was only France alone that blocked North Macedonia. These decisions were mistakes of a historic dimension. We call upon our member parties in the Netherlands, France and Denmark to urge their governments to stop blocking the accession negotiations.

The European Greens are not willing to accept this status quo. We have been supportive of the efforts of our partners in North Macedonia and Albania to move forward towards their inclusion to the European family of nations, and, in particular, the efforts of our members, Демократска обновна Македонија (DOM) in North Macedonia, and Partia e Gjellbër in Albania. We reiterate our firm determination to reverse the vetoes that slammed the doors shut on those two nations. The European Greens, therefore, demand that before the Zagreb Summit in May 2020 the European Council will not only revert to the issue of enlargement, but also reverse their faithful negative decision.

We thank the Finnish rotating presidency of the EU for its efforts to overcome the blockade, and we call upon the upcoming Croatian presidency to do whatever it can to finally make the EU keep its promise to our two neighbours, North Macedonia and Albania in the Western Balkans.