

## *The Next steps in the EU's Enlargement Agenda*

Despite all expectations and the recommendations from the European Commission, the European Union did not reach consensus in 2019 on the opening of accession negotiations with both Albania and North Macedonia.

This failure sent shock waves across the Western Balkan region and delivered a heavy blow to the EU's credibility. It also raised serious questions about the future of the EU's enlargement policy with many leaders as well as public opinion in the Western Balkan region asking how they can be expected to put faith in the EU's promises if at the end of the day those promises count for nothing.

The new President of the European Commission, Ursula van der Leyen has reiterated her commitment to the EU's enlargement policy and undertook to address concerns raised mainly by France on the methodology of the accession process.

Will the proposals being put forward by the Commission in the coming weeks satisfy those concerns and reflect the President's stated objective of leading "a geopolitical Commission committed to sustainable policies"?

What does the Commission intend to do to ensure that its recommendations and the ambitious programme for a "credible enlargement perspective" for the region set out in its 2018 Strategy Paper will henceforth be acted upon and its leadership in the accession process restored ?

What preparations are being made to ensure that the EU-Western Balkan summit to be held in Zagreb next May will mark a decisive step in the EU's re-engagement with the region?

Agenda: Monday 10 February 2020 – 13.15 – 14.30. CEPS – Place du Congrès 1 – 1000 Brussels

12.30 – 13.15	Registration & lunch
13.15 – 13.20	Chair: <b>Erwan Fouéré</b> , Associate Senior Research Fellow, CEPS
13.20 – 14.00	Speaker: <b>H.E. Mr. Olivér Várhelyi</b> , Member of the European Commission responsible for Neighbourhood and Enlargement  Commentators: <b>Simonida Kacarska</b> , Director, European Policy Institute, North Macedonia  <b>Gjergji Vurmo</b> , Programme Director, Institute for Dialogue and Mediation, Albania
14.00 – 14.30	Questions & Answers

