



## Recommendations for continuation of the Berlin Process

July 13, 2018

During the past year the think tanks and policy-oriented civil society organisations from the Western Balkans gathered within the [Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series \(CSF\)](#) platform produced analyses and articles and took part in a number of debates dealing with the future of the Berlin Process. Building on that, and also on the discussions held within the [CSF Working Groups Meeting in Vienna](#), on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2018, the following represents a compilation of the proposals for the continuation of the Berlin Process:

- **In view of the Process goals**
  - In order to address the regionally-shared problem of the lack of the rule of law, manifested most visibly through state capture, lack of media freedom and through deeply-embedded corruptive practices across the Western Balkans, **“additional progress” in the rule of law should also be included as the fifth goal of the Berlin Process**, on top of the four listed in the Final Declaration by the Chair (in Berlin, August 28, 2014)
  - In line with the role that the Western Balkan countries have in regards to migrations and considering the relevance of that role to the security aspect of the region and of the European Union, **“additional progress” in view of the regional preparedness to address the challenges stemming from migrations should be included as the sixth goal of the Process.**

- **In view of the Process's effectiveness**
  - To secure follow up and the necessary dynamics in implementation of the commitments made at the Summits and at the interim Berlin Process-related meetings, **a standing monitoring mechanism should be put in place**, autonomous from the WB6 governments; to this end, **experts from the Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series (CSF)** may, **together with the EU member states and the involved institutions from the European Union** set up a monitoring mechanism and produce due diligence of the thus far accomplishments and recommendations for the future, as well as render “real time” monitoring of implementation of the commitments. In the absence of a coordinating structure, this approach would ensure greater scrutiny of implementation of commitments and overall government accountability.
  - Considering that the six Flagship initiatives envisaged within the European Commission February 2018 Strategy for the Western Balkans tackle the issues that are also dealt with within the Berlin Process, **the Summits' host countries, in charge of the yearly agenda-setting, should seek ways in which to complement, rather than duplicate the efforts undertaken through implementation of the EC Strategy.**
- **In view of the Process ownership**
  - Since the Berlin Process has been geared at advancing regional cooperation and the Europeanisation of the Western Balkans, and whereas the support from the EU member states and the EU institutions remains *spiritus movens* of these processes, the ultimate initiative and responsibility for deepening of regional ties and for the reforms bringing the region closer to the EU should originate from the regional stakeholders – governments and the civil society. Therefore, **the EU member-states involved in the Berlin Process, as well the EU, should encourage these regional actors' immediate involvement in design of the yearly Summits, i.e. in the selection of topics that are to be put on the future Summits' agendas, and in all the phases of designing the policy outputs of these high-level encounters.**
  - To increase regional ownership, **semi-annual ministerial Summits, at the level of foreign affairs ministers** should be held **in the countries of the region.**