

Western Balkans conference: Striving for closer alignment with the EU



Home affairs ministers and EU representatives discuss migration, counter-terrorism and the fight against organised crime

Representing Federal Minister of the Interior Horst Seehofer, Parliamentary State Secretary Prof. Günter Krings chaired a video conference with the home affairs ministers of the six Western Balkan states: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The agenda covered counter-terrorism strategies, regional cooperation on migration, and better cooperation in the fight against organised crime. The aim of this annual meeting, known as the EU–Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs, is to help the Western Balkan states implement European Union standards and become more closely aligned with the EU.

In addition to the home affairs ministers of the six Western Balkan states, participants included the EU commissioners Ylva Johansson and Olivér Várhelyi; representatives of the next two holders of the Council Presidency, Portugal and Slovenia; and representatives of the EU agencies Frontex, Europol and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The meeting, which was originally scheduled to take place in Montenegro, was instead held as a video conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since 2003, the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of each year has hosted the annual conference of justice and home affairs ministers in one of the six Western Balkan states.

Following the conference of the home affairs ministers, the justice ministers also held a meeting in the form of a video conference.