



Rede Außenminister Westerwelles aus Anlass der Konferenz der Außenminister Südosteuropas (Englisch)

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-es gilt das gesprochene Wort-
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-Janos Martonyi,
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-Excellencies,
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-Colleagues,
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-Ladies and gentlemen,
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-I'm delighted to open this Southeast Europe Foreign Ministers Conference together with my friend and colleague Janos Martonyi. I would like to thank the Hungarian Embassy and the Aspen Institute Germany for organizing this important conference.
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-The fact that Janos is my partner here today is no coincidence. It's the result of Hungary's and Minister Martonyi's personal record of active and responsible work in the Western Balkans.
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-We are very glad to have Under Secretary Gögüs from Ankara among us today. We are all aware of the particular weight and the great influence our close ally Turkey has in the Western Balkans region.
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-For Germany, Europe is not one policy option among several. That has a lot to do with German history. But, more and more, it also has to do with a dramatically changing world.
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-In that world, Europe is bound together by a shared culture and a common destiny.
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-Only if we work together will we be able to safeguard the innovation, creativity, free markets and open trade routes on which our prosperity depends.
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-The major challenges we face on the world stage today are ones we can only tackle together.
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-All Europeans, not only those in the eurozone, have an overwhelming shared interest in a strong Europe and a healthy euro. What we need now, therefore, is intelligent crisis management that goes right to the roots of the debt crisis. But Europe is a lot more than crisis management.
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-On 12 October, the Noble Committee in Oslo stated: "The stabilizing part played by the EU has helped to transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace." The Committee's decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union was due in no small part to the enlargement process.
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-Indeed, the historic achievements of enlargement policy are impressive. The enlargement process has helped to overcome Europe's division between East and West. After the Iron Curtain was swept away, it helped anchor democracy and the rule of law in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe.
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-Europe's division will not be truly overcome until the countries of the Western Balkans have concluded their path towards the EU. The prospect of EU accession remains the most important engine for reform and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.
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-Today Slovenia is a member of the European Union and part of the eurozone.
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-I have no doubt that on 1 July 2013, Croatia will become the EU's 28th member state. While challenges remain, I am convinced that Croatia will tackle them successfully and set a positive example for the entire region.
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-It is up to the countries in the region to take the next steps on their road towards the EU. Every country will be judged by the progress it has made and will determine itself how quickly it moves towards the EU.
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-The European Union will support them along this path of reform and transformation. It recently strengthened its presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina to that end.
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-Fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, including the fight against corruption and organized crime, are especially important to us.
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-In this respect, our expectations correspond in full to the reforms which citizens in the region are demanding of their governments.
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-The new negotiating framework with Montenegro, which lays a clear and strong emphasis on this, points in that direction. Albania, too, recently took a major step towards modernization and adopted key laws which now have to be implemented as a matter of priority.
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-The other focus is our insistence that bilateral conflicts be resolved prior to accession. Friendly, neighbourly relations between European countries are the foundation for all that the European Union stands for.
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-In Europe we have been able to replace the model of confrontation with the model of cooperation. Cooperation can be difficult. But anyone familiar with the consequences of confrontation knows that cooperation is worth any amount of effort.
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-We welcome the fact that Serbia and Kosovo are seeking to normalize their relations. This normalization is vital in order to foster good-neighbourly relations. And these, in turn, are an indispensable requirement for allowing the two countries to ultimately join the EU with full rights and responsibilities, as partners.
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-Germany fully supports Lady Ashton's swift and ambitious efforts to achieve normalization.
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-I call upon both parties to continue to engage boldly and constructively in this process.
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-We need a political understanding between Serbia and Kosovo on key issues, including the unresolved situation in northern Kosovo. And we need honest and straightforward implementation of past and future agreements.
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-By offering the region an EU accession perspective back in 2000, the EU member states made a commitment. We stand by this commitment, without any ifs or buts.
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-The move towards the EU has proved to be an excellent means of fostering stability and reform.
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-This is also evident in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where the Ohrid Framework Agreement remains the indispensable basis for the peaceful co-existence of the population groups in Macedonia.
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-Enlargement remains in our common strategic interest. Enlargement policy is the European Union's best foreign policy tool for fostering regional cooperation and reconciliation.
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-Strict and fair conditions are crucial. Conditionality is key to preserving the vitality and the transformative power of enlargement policy.
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-It is up to each accession country to show determination, courage and ability. The better the record of a candidate is, the more the EU must deliver.
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-There will be no short-cuts to EU membership. Accession negotiations take as long as it takes to ensure full compliance with membership criteria.
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-This lies as much in the interest of the EU as in the interest of the accession countries and their citizens.
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-We will remain fully committed to the enlargement process as a key instrument for peace, freedom and prosperity in Europe. We are sure: The future of the countries in the Western Balkans lies in the European Union.
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-Thank you-
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Auswärtige Dienst versteht sich neben seiner Funktion als Gestalter der Außenpolitik als Dienstleister für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger, die deutsche Wirtschaft, das deutsche Kulturleben und für Parlamentarier und Regierungsvertreter aller Ebenen. Sein Dienstleistungsangebot ist für den Auswärtigen Dienst neben der klassischen Diplomatie zu seiner zweiten, tragenden Säule geworden: Es macht heute gut die Hälfte seiner Aktivitäten aus. So steht das Auswärtige Amt als modernes und aufgeschlossenes Dienstleistungsunternehmen weltweit seiner "Kundschaft", mit seinem Know-how und seinen Kontakten mit Rat und Tat zur Seite.