

Press release: PM welcomes Western Balkans Heads of Government to London

At a reception also attended by the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Minister for Europe and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster the Prime Minister briefed the visiting leaders on the UK's objectives for the upcoming Summit. She also sought their views on achieving our shared goals for the region.

Speaking at the reception the Prime Minister said:

Our relationship endures because all of us in this room share the same vision for the future of the Western Balkans. We want a peaceful, prosperous and democratic region – one anchored to European values and systems and contributing to European security.

The countries of the Western Balkans have tremendous potential. And it's the people here in this room tonight who have a crucial role in harnessing that potential. By putting in place the governance, rule of law and institutions to support prosperity and by building relations between your countries that shape a promising future for all.

The UK will support you in that. Your challenges are our challenges. European security, serious and organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism and extremism; these are all threats that go beyond borders. So I want to deepen further our security partnership to address these shared threats.

At the Summit we will take forward a bold agenda. One that promotes economic stability and fosters co-operation on the security and political challenges that the region continues to face.

We will continue the good work begun by previous Summits, taking forward initiatives countering corruption, serious and organised crime, and other issues that deter investment and economic growth.

I look forward to working with you to shape a positive, productive, prosperous future for the Western Balkans, for the UK and the whole of Europe.

Heads of Government from the region who attended included:

- Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania
- Denis Zvizdic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ramush Haradinaj, Prime Minister of Kosovo
- Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of Macedonia

- Dusko Markovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro
 - Ana Brnabic, Prime Minister of Serbia
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South Pacific regional fisheries management organisation: international measures become EU law

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On 26 February 2018 the Council reached an agreement with the European Parliament on how to incorporate into EU legislation measures adopted by the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO).

The agreed regulation laying down management, conservation and control measures applicable in the convention area of SPRFMO applies to EU fishing vessels fishing in the SPRFMO convention area or, in the case of transshipments, to the species caught in the SPRFMO convention area. It also applies to third country fishing vessels that access EU ports and that carry fishery products harvested in the convention area.

The active role of the EU in international fisheries management organisations and today's agreement are evidence of Europe's commitment to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources around the world.

Rumen Porodzanov, Minister of agriculture, food and forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria and President of the Council

The agreed regulation fully takes into account the latest decision taken at the sixth meeting of the SPRFMO Commission (COMM6) in Lima, Peru, from 30 January to 3 February 2018.

The SPRFMO is an inter-governmental organisation that is committed to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources of the South Pacific Ocean. The European Union is a contracting party. Currently, the main commercial resources fished in the SPRFMO area are Jack mackerel and jumbo flying squid in the Southeast Pacific and, to a much lesser degree,

deep-sea species often associated with seamounts in the Southwest Pacific.

The agreement still needs to be approved by EU ambassadors sitting in the Council's Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper). After formal endorsement by the Council, the new legislation will be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote at first reading and to the Council for final adoption.

The regulation will then enter into force on the third day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

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Updated weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk

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DECISION n°171 of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Railways on the opt-out from

Commission Decision C(2017) 6760 – employment of contract staff employed by the Commission under the terms of Articles 3a and 3b of CEOS

DECISION n°171 of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Railways on the opt-out from Commission Decision C(2017) 6760 – employment of contract staff employed by the Commission under the terms of Articles 3a and 3b of CEOS Reference: 171/2018 Publication Date : 26/02/2018 Published by: Management Board Document Types: Decision Keywords: Opt-out, Commission Decision C(2017) 6760, Article 79 § 2 CEOS, employment contract staff, Articles 3a-3b CEOS Description: Adopted by Written Procedure – 26 February 2018 Related documents:

Vice-President Andrus Ansip's speech at the Mobile World Congress

Ladies and gentlemen

The internet has been an open, fair and neutral platform from the start.

Its online freedom brings endless innovation and a dynamic digital economy.

But so much has changed in a relatively short time:

- quality and speed of access.*
- platforms and website sophistication.*
- sharing files in the cloud.*
- an exponential growth in social media.*
- and of course, 24/7 online shopping.*

It was as long ago as 2000 that the EU's e-commerce Directive came into force.

This sets the basic legal environment for online services in the single market.

It sets liability limits for digital platforms.

It guarantees freedom of expression online.

Both are vital for an open internet.

Europe's rules on net neutrality are the other side of the same coin:

- end-users gain the right to access and distribute the content, applications, services and information of their choice.*
- internet providers must treat all traffic equally. No blocking, throttling or discrimination.*

For me, the idea that all legal internet traffic should be treated equally is the vehicle for innovation that sparked the digital economy in the first place.

It is vital for consumers, business customers and content providers.

Our liability regime and net neutrality rules are two principles that have guaranteed an open internet.

They work, and they should remain.

I think Europe and the United States can agree on the need to preserve the freedom of the internet economy. Where we may differ is how to do it.

I mentioned change. Today, platforms have more influence and market power than anyone could have imagined.

It is only natural that in this position they will need to become more transparent in their dealings.

Most of them are already.

The same goes for illegal material posted online that promotes terrorism, violent extremism, hate speech. Online platforms have taken measures to combat this.

In a couple of days, the Commission will issue a recommendation dealing with illegal content, in particular terrorism.

It will complement our earlier guidance on detection, take-down and stay-down. It will help platforms to act proactively, urgently and decisively.

If the internet is to remain open – and I believe that it should – then illegal content must be blocked at the source, not in the network. This is also more effective and proportionate.

This recommendation will be built on the e-commerce liability regime, which we will not change. Not today. Not tomorrow.

Why? Because I do not want Europe to become a 'big brother' society in online monitoring.

George Orwell aside, I believe everyone has the right to access an open internet, where all traffic should in principle be treated equally. EU law has protected these principles for almost two years.

Since our experiences are positive so far, I will continue to protect and

defend net neutrality and an open internet in Europe.

These rules allow space for everybody, for innovation and experimentation. Space for specialised services that come with a certain quality, where necessary.

But this cannot be at the expense of other internet users. I do not want a digital motorway for the lucky few, while others use a digital dirt-track.

Access to the internet is a basic right. It has to stay open for everybody. No discrimination.

I know that you will all have views as well – and that some will be very different to mine. I look forward to the discussion.