



REGIONAL WOMEN'S LOBBY for PEACE SECURITY and JUSTICE in SOUTHEAST EUROPE - RWLSEE (<http://rwlsee.org/>)

To: The authorities of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Slovenia, European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and the Heads of States of six countries of the Western Balkans

From: Participants of 'NO MORE WOUNDS - MAI PIU FERITE', the international project on art for peace and reconciliation in the Western Balkans

Date: October 5, 2021

Subject: Open Letter to the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Slovenia, October 5-6, 2021

Dear Excellencies,

We, participants in the International Project of Peace and Reconciliation through Art entitled "NO MORE WOUNDS - MAI PIU FERITE", held as part of the Rocca Malatestiana Festival in Fano, Italy, from 23 to 30 September 2021, most of whom come from countries where large-scale of conflicts and tragedies have occurred over the past 30 years, would like to raise our concerns about a fragile peace and security in our countries and entire region of the Western Balkans and demand from you authorities and participants of the EU -Western Balkan Summit in Slovenia, as follows:

We want the peacebuilding and democratic state-building of all countries to be completed in a way that will allow for a better future, providing a hope for young people and preventing them to massively leave their own countries in search for hope in third countries.

We want our countries and entire region to be governed by good governance and rule of law, free of autocracy and corruption, as the only way leading to prosperity for all.

We want the Balkan of equals, where all states, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia, Albania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia, live side by side in peace and mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other. Times of regional hegemony are gone.

We want our countries to be full members of the European Union, sooner than later, because the EU integration provides for a sustainable peace in our post-conflict region and removes new security threats.

We want the EU to take clear strategic decision on enlargement in line with the principle of 'Europe whole and free with the Western Balkans within it', because otherwise our region will continue to be threatened by the geopolitical ambitions of non-western actors.

We are convinced that we must enjoy the four freedoms same as all European citizens, as the core values of the Western / Euro-Atlantic world.

We know that the European values of cooperation, open borders and communication can lead to a prosperous future.

We are sure that only when the voice of all states, peoples, women, and men is heard equally can we build sustainable peace and a safe life for generations to come

We are firmly determined to persevere on the path to achieving the European value system and the European quality of life

We demand that at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Ljubljana on October 5-6, 2021, to be discussed the deteriorating situations in our region that pose a threat to the prospects of the accession of the Western Balkan countries to the European Union, but also threatens the peace in Europe.

We expect support in the EU accession process, not blockades, and that EU countries should understand the malignity of the policy of creating a "Serbian world" and the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the processes taking place in the region, which can have huge negative consequences not only to the region of the Western Balkans but rather to entire European Union. The moves of some countries that want to achieve their age-old aspirations for hegemony and dominant influence in the Balkans aiming at undermining the European perspective of the Western Balkans must be understood and stopped.

We are convinced that peace in the region is sustainable only if all signed peace treaties are respected and that the final agreement on normalization of neighborly relations between Kosovo and Serbia, facilitated by the EU and US, must result in a mutual recognition between two states.

It is necessary to start negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia and grant candidate status to Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as to remove the EU visa regime for Kosovo citizens who are unjustly being kept isolated.

The EU should help the six states of the Western Balkans to implement reforms, to support their economic development and become the EU members.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize that our peace project "NO MORE WOUNDS - MAI PIU FERITE" organized by the Regional Women's Lobby in South East Europe (RWLSEE) together with our Italian partners, the Academia of Fine Arts in Macerata and Fano Rocca Malatestiana, aimed at involving art and artists in healing the wounds of wars in the Western Balkans, while recognizing the power of art memory in promoting inclusive peace, transitional justice and reconciliation in our region and beyond. However, as you can see from this letter, we could not

avoid but looking at the current unfavorable developments in our region and that's why we decided to share with you our legitimate concerns and demands.

We very much hope that you will take into consideration our views and demands in this letter, because in inclusivity of diverse voices can the decisions serve a better future for all in democracy and prosperity.

Excellencies, please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

On behalf of the participants of the

"NO MORE WOUNDS - MAI PIU FERITE' international peace project



Dr. Edita Tahiri
Former Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Negotiator of Kosovo
RWLSEE Chair

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RWLSEE is a regional women peacebuilding and mediation organization created in aftermath of conflicts in Western Balkans and as such is a unique in the region and beyond. Our vision is to build a just, peaceful, prosperous, and Euro-Atlantic future for our countries, region and beyond, with women at the heart of leadership equal with men. Our mission is to advocate and lobby for gender equality and women's empowerment in politics and decision making and to promote gender inclusive peacebuilding, democratic governance, reconciliation, transitional justice processes and sustainable development. It is inspired and works for WPS agenda and accelerated implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other relevant UN instruments. Established by UN Women in 2006, RWLSEE is composed of women leaders of politics and civil society from seven focus countries (Kosovo, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, and North Macedonia).