



Council of the  
European Union

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#### NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Bosnia and Herzegovina - Request by the Austrian and Italian Delegations for an AOB item

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Delegations will find in the annex a note from the Austrian and Italian Delegations concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina. The topic will be included as an “Any other business” item on the agenda for the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 March 2024.

**AOB item requested by Austria and Italy for the FAC  
(18 March 2024)**

1. Austria and Italy will inform on a joint visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. During the visit, Ministers expressed their strong support for the EU perspective of the country and called for further reforms.
2. Our partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown more progress on EU reforms in the past several months than in the years before. Shortly after the visit, the Council of Ministers passed the Law on prevention of conflict of interests. Work on other key legislation and reforms is ongoing.
3. It is time that the EU acknowledges this progress and the strong will to advance on the EU path.
4. Further postponing the decision to open accession negotiations could put the current reform momentum at risk and play into the hands of actors who want Bosnia and Herzegovina to take a different path.
5. Overall, the EU must pursue an ambitious and pro-active engagement in the Western Balkans. Also in this region, EU enlargement is our most important geostrategic tool.
6. Italy and Austria therefore strongly support a decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina at the next **European Council** in March.
7. We also would like to recall the letter of 29 September 2023 by the informal group of the “Friends of the Western Balkans”, and the meeting of the abovementioned Group in Rome of 5 February 2024, expressing full support for opening accession negotiations.