

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission expects all partners in the region to continue building constructive and cooperative relations, and to work on their respective reform programmes to move forward on the EU integration path. Political leaders in the region should lead by example in promoting a climate of mutual trust, fostering good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, principles and values the EU stands for. The Commission will continue to work with all partners in the region on their respective EU paths and towards closer and more effective regional cooperation and collaboration.

The Commission closely monitors the overall situation of rule of law in Serbia in the framework of the country's EU accession negotiations.

In particular, Serbia is required, within chapter 23 'Judiciary and Fundamental Rights' of the negotiations, to implement its legal framework on the rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as the country's "*action plan for the realisation of the rights of national minorities*" in its entirety, contributing to the effective and equal implementation throughout its territory of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Under that chapter, Serbia is also required to undertake measures aimed at increasing tolerance among citizens, including through training and awareness-raising on countering hate crime and ensuring effective investigation of cases.

The Commission will continue to monitor and report on developments in this area¹, and to engage in policy dialogue with the Serbian authorities.

¹ Latest country report: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0352>