

[Eighth meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level, Luxembourg, 25 June 2018](#)

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The eighth meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level was held today in Luxembourg to open negotiations on Chapter 13 – Fisheries and Chapter 33 – Financial and budgetary provisions.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Mr Johannes HAHN, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. The Serbian delegation was led by Ms Jadranka JOKSIMOVIĆ, Minister of European integration.

With today's Conference, 14 negotiation chapters have now been opened for negotiations out of a total of 35, of which 2 chapters have already been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences will be planned, as appropriate, in order to take the process forward in the second half of 2018. The accession negotiations were launched in January 2014.

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 13 – Fisheries and Chapter 33 – Financial and budgetary provisions, the Union has closely examined Serbia's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Serbia has to continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* in these chapters, the EU noted that there are benchmarks that need to be met for provisional closure of these chapters.

In addition, the EU underlined that it would devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned in its common positions. Monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* will continue throughout the negotiations. The Conference will have to return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

The benchmarks for each chapter opened are as follows:

Chapter 13 – Fisheries

Serbia presents an action plan that will ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU legislation by the date of accession, in particular

regarding organisation of the markets, aquaculture, data collection and control measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Chapter 33 – Financial and budgetary provisions

Serbia increases its administrative capacity – including that of the still to be established coordination structure – and to this end adopts an action plan in order to sufficiently prepare and introduce procedural rules to ensure that it will be able, from accession, to correctly calculate, forecast, account for, collect, pay, control and report to the EU on own resources in line with the *acquis*.

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