

# Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Montenegro Milo Đukanović

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Good afternoon. First of all, I wish to warmly welcome President Đukanović, my old friend, in Brussels and congratulate him on his election.

It is highly symbolic that President Đukanović decided to come to Brussels for his first official trip abroad. It is another confirmation that the European and Euro-Atlantic direction of Montenegro is beyond any doubt. In fact, Montenegro celebrates today its first anniversary of NATO membership and remains also a frontrunner in EU accession talks.

Last month, the leaders from both the European Union and the Western Balkans re-confirmed the European perspective as their firm strategic choice. Today more than ever, we need not only political declarations but also concrete actions.

Therefore, I would also like to see a faster progress in the accession talks with Montenegro. This means not only opening but also closing of new chapters. I told President Đukanović that the pace of talks is set by his country. A strong track record in the rule of law, fight against corruption and organised crime is essential. Just like thriving free media and civil society are an integral part.

We also discussed the domestic situation in Montenegro. I shared with President Đukanović my personal regrets that pro-European forces in his country are not able to cooperate within the existing institutions. I encouraged him to take leadership to overcome this strategic weakness. I believe that a full implementation of the recommendations made by international observers on the electoral process in his country could strengthen public trust in the institutions and in the vote's outcome.

Last but not least, I used our meeting to once again thank Montenegro for its unwavering solidarity with and support to our foreign and security policy.

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