

Twelfth meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level, Brussels, 10 December 2018

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The twelfth meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open negotiations on Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate change.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms Karin Kneissl, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Austrian 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 Montenegrin delegation was led by Prof. Dr. Srdjan Darmanović, Minister of Foreign Affairs, with line Minister Pavle Radulović, responsible for Sustainable Development and Tourism, intervening.

With today's Conference, out of a total of 35 negotiation chapters, 32 chapters have now been opened for negotiations of which 3 chapters have already been provisionally closed. Further Accession Conferences will be planned, as appropriate, in order to take the process forward in the first half of 2019. The accession negotiations were launched in June 2012.

Chapter opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 27 – Environment and climate change, the Union has closely examined Montenegro's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Montenegro has to continue to make progress in the alignment with and implementation of the *acquis* in this chapter, the EU noted that there are benchmarks that need to be met for the provisional closure of this chapter.

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

The benchmarks for the chapter opened are as follows:

Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate change

- Montenegro continues to align with the horizontal Directives and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure their effective implementation and enforcement at the date of accession.
- On air quality, Montenegro fully aligns with the revised Directive on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants (NEC Directive 2016/2284/EU). Montenegro presents an analysis of cost-effective emission control strategies for 2020 and 2030, which shall serve as a basis for final agreement between the EU and Montenegro on its reduction obligations under the NEC Directive. Montenegro reports on an annual basis its emissions, in line with the Directive and the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and develops a National Air Pollution Control Programme. Furthermore, Montenegro enhances the preparation for the implementation of the *acquis* in this area, by regularly taking measures to reduce national air pollution, particularly in zones where EU limit values for air quality are exceeded, and by developing or updating air quality plans, as envisaged by the Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (Directive 2008/50/EC).
- Montenegro decides on its waste management system and dedicates appropriate funding to infrastructure investments, in line with relevant EU legislation, including the waste hierarchy. Montenegro establishes waste prevention programmes, prepares waste management plans (WMP), and adopts measures for the separate collection of waste for paper, metal, plastic and glass.
- Montenegro makes significant progress on *acquis* alignment in the water sector, including drinking water legislation, and Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of marine environmental policy. Montenegro designates the competent drinking water authorities and develops river basin management plans for each river basin district lying entirely within its territory, including the portions of international river basin districts falling within its territory.
- In the area of nature protection, Montenegro submits the list of proposed Natura 2000 sites, sufficiently covering the habitat types and species in line with the requirements of the Birds and Habitats directives, to the Commission. Montenegro demonstrates the capacity to manage the Natura 2000 network, including by affording the Ulcinj Salina the appropriate protection status and effectively implementing the necessary conservation measures leading to the improvement of its conservation status.
- Montenegro continues its alignment with the *acquis* in the chemicals, noise and civil protection sectors, and demonstrates that it will be fully prepared to ensure the implementation and enforcement of the EU requirements at the date of accession.
- On climate change, Montenegro continues its alignment with the *acquis*, notably by adopting legislation on the functioning of the European Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), in line with the EU ETS Directive

2003/87/EC and its successive amendments. Montenegro further aligns with relevant secondary legislation on monitoring and reporting, accreditation and verification, the Union Registry, free allocation, and auctioning. Montenegro makes sure that the appropriate framework is in place to implement the EU ETS in its entirety regarding the monitoring, reporting, and verification of greenhouse gas emissions.

- Montenegro, in line with the Action Plan for the transposition, implementation and enforcement of the EU *acquis* on environment and climate change, significantly enhances the capacity of the administrative bodies at all levels, including inspection services, further improves coordination of work and demonstrates that all appropriate administrative structures and adequate training will be in place in good time before accession to enable implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in all sectors of this chapter.

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