

Brussels, 21 December 2015

Seventh meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level - 2 new chapters opened

The seventh meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open negotiations on Chapter 14 - Transport Policy and Chapter 15 - Energy.

The European Union delegation was led by Mr Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg, on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Ms Catherine Wendt, Director in the Directorate General for European Neighbourhood policy and Enlargement negotiations. The Montenegrin delegation was led by Mr Igor Lukšić, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

With today's Conference, out of a total of 35 negotiation chapters, 22 chapters have now been opened for negotiations 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 first half of 2016. The accession negotiations were launched in June 2012.

Chapters opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 14 -Transport Policy, and Chapter 15 - Energy, 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 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 EU will, if necessary, return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

The benchmarks for each chapter opened are as follows:

Chapter 14 - Transport Policy

- Montenegro aligns with the EU *acquis* concerning road charging, social *acquis* in road transport, new rules on weights and dimensions of heavy goods vehicles and vehicles transporting passengers as well as the common rules for access to the profession of road transport operator, to the international road haulage market and to the international market for coach and bus services.

Montenegro ensures a competent, independent and effective railway regulatory body and safety authority and it ensures alignment with EU safety and interoperability standards.

Montenegro aligns with the *acquis* on passenger rights in all modes of transport.

Montenegro aligns fully with the *acquis* on air traffic management.

Chapter 15 - Energy

- Montenegro completes legal alignment with the *acquis* as regards mandatory oil stocks, establishes its administrative structure to manage oil stocks, and has begun to constitute actual stocks, in line with Montenegro's own Action Plan.

Montenegro aligns with the *acquis* on the internal energy market, including unbundling all energy utilities in line with one of the models in the *acquis*.

Montenegro aligns with the *acquis* on energy efficiency.
