



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

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EU-Montenegro: More results needed on the ground

The representatives of the European Union and Montenegro met in Luxembourg in two formats to advance the accession negotiations at the Accession conference and to review progress in the overall bilateral relations in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Council. Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle represented the European Commission at both meetings and this is how he summarised them at the press conference:

This has been a very intense day with Montenegro – starting with the Accession Conference in the morning and then with Stabilisation and Association Council in the afternoon.

At the Accession Conference we opened three more negotiating chapters: chapter 4 – free movement of capital; chapter 31- foreign, security & defense policy & chapter 32 – financial control. This brings the total of chapters opened so far to 12, with two provisionally closed.

Let me also recall, that last month we completed the screening for all the chapters, which is an important milestone in the accession process.

Today, we stressed that this good progress in completing different stages, in opening and closing chapters, needs to be accompanied by real progress on the ground - especially regarding the rule of law it cannot be limited to the adoption of plans and strategies. It needs to be seen, and felt, by the citizens.

Just look at the recent municipal elections, which were marred by number of allegations of electoral irregularities. It goes without saying that these need to be properly investigated. This is the only way to strengthen citizens' trust in the electoral process.

New laws need to be implemented efficiently. For example, almost one year since the adoption of the constitutional amendments, the position of the supreme state prosecutor is still vacant, due to a lack of broad parliamentary majority. So I call on government and the opposition to find a solution to this issue.

Also – we have called repeatedly for an end to impunity for violence and threats of violence against journalists. We expect to see real results soon. Results that will go beyond the establishment of commissions and will create a better climate for the media in Montenegro.

At the same time, we welcome the participation of civil society in the negotiations' working groups. We welcome the transparency achieved with the publication of the government's reports on the implementation of the action plans for the rule of law.

We also welcomed Montenegro's decision to align with the EU position concerning measures taken on issues related to the Ukraine situation. At this point let me specifically underline the role of Montenegro and personally of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Igor Lukšić in playing the leading role in strengthening the cooperation of the countries involved in the Stabilisation and Association process.

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