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Fourth meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level - 3 new chapters opened

The fourth meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Ministerial level was held today in Luxembourg to open negotiations on Chapters 4 - Free movement of capital; 31 - Foreign, security and defence policy; and 32 - Financial control. In addition, the Conference confirmed at Ministerial level the opening of Chapter 7 - Intellectual property law, and of Chapter 10 - Information society and media, which were considered at the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Deputy Level, held in Brussels on 31 March 2014.

The European Union delegation was led by Mr Evangelos Venizelos, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece. The Montenegrin delegation was led by Mr Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The European Commission was represented by Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy.

With today's Conference, out of a total of 35 negotiation chapters, 12 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 second half of 2014. The accession negotiations were launched in June 2012.

P R E S S

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Chapters opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 4 - Free movement of capital; Chapter 31 - Foreign, security and defence policy; and Chapter 32 - Financial control, 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 4 - Free movement of capital

With respect to capital movements and payments, Montenegro completes its legislative alignment with the *acquis* and demonstrates it will be able to fully implement it by accession, ensuring that all remaining restrictions are removed.

Montenegro aligns the implementing legislation of the Law on Payments System with the *acquis* and demonstrates it will be able to fully implement Regulation (EC) No 924/2009 and Regulation (EU) No 260/2012 by accession.

In the area of prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing, Montenegro completes the necessary legislative alignment with the *acquis* and demonstrates through a track record an adequate administrative capacity to properly implement and enforce the relevant legislation.

Chapter 31 - Foreign, security and defence policy

Montenegro - as a signatory of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) - fully aligns its position with the Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 and the EU Guiding Principles concerning Arrangements between a State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC and the United States regarding the Conditions to Surrender of Persons to the Court, annexed to the Council Conclusions of 30 September 2002 on the International Criminal Court.

Chapter 32 - Financial control

Montenegro implements PIFC legislation and underlying policies and ensures sufficient administrative capacity at central and local level, in social security funds and in the state-owned enterprises. Montenegro further ensures that the proposed centralised budget inspection function is in line with the PIFC requirements.

The State Audit Institution (SAI) of Montenegro complies with the standards of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), including ensuring financial, functional and institutional independence, implementation of finance and performance audits, and ensures sufficient administrative capacity.

Montenegro ensures an effective and efficient coordination of anti-fraud activities to guarantee the fulfilment of future obligations arising from Article 325(3) of the TFEU and application of the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 2185/96 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission, in particular the obligation of assistance to Commission inspectors. Montenegro provides a track record on cooperation with the Commission on reported irregularities and investigation cases involving EU funds.

Montenegro ratifies and implements the 1929 Geneva International Convention for the suppression of counterfeiting currency, aligns its legislation with the EU *acquis* on medals and tokens similar to euro coins and ensures sufficient administrative capacity for the technical analysis centre.
