

**CONFERENCE ON ACCESSION
TO THE EUROPEAN UNION
– ALBANIA –**

**Brussels, 10 July 2026
(OR. en)**

AD 47/26

LIMITE

CONF-ALB 9

ACCESSION DOCUMENT

Subject: EUROPEAN UNION COMMON POSITION
- Chapter 26: Education and culture

ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

Albania

EU COMMON POSITION

(In response to additional information provided by Albania)

Cluster 3: Negotiating Chapter 26

Education and culture

EUROPEAN UNION COMMON POSITION

This position of the European Union is based on its general position for the Accession Conference with Albania (AD 5/22 CONF-ALB 2), and is subject to the negotiating principles endorsed therein, in particular:

- any view expressed by either Albania or the EU on a specific chapter of the negotiations will in no way prejudice the position which may be taken on other chapters;
- agreements reached in the course of negotiations on specific chapters, even partial ones, may not be considered as final until an overall agreement has been reached for all chapters;
- as well as to the requirements set out in points 2, 3, 5, 10, 14, 16, 23, 26, 31, 38, 39, 45, 46, 47 and 48 of the Negotiating Framework.

The EU encourages Albania to continue the process of alignment with the EU *acquis* and its effective implementation and enforcement, and in general to develop already before accession, policies and instruments as close as possible to those of the EU.

The EU notes that Albania, in its positions AD 2/25 CONF-ALB 2 REV 1 and AD 42/26 CONF-ALB 4, accepts the EU *acquis* under Chapter 26 as in force on 1 May 2026 and that it will be ready to implement it by the date of its accession to the European Union.

The EU notes Albania's progress towards alignment with the EU *acquis* on education and training. The EU takes note of Albania's progress and invites the country to make further tangible- progress towards establishing the necessary structures to manage Erasmus+.

The EU expects Albania to make further efforts to allocate budget for education corresponding to its ambitions and targets. The EU thus calls upon Albania to increase its public spending on education to close the gap with the EU average spending.

The EU notes that Albania undertook further efforts regarding the use of transparency tools of the European Qualifications Framework, competence-based education and digital skills. The EU invites Albania to pursue measurable improvement in students' basic skills in line with European targets. The EU encourages Albania to take further measures to ensure inclusive education, including for persons belonging to minority groups.

The EU also takes note of the information provided by Albania on educational rights stemming from its Law on the Protection of National Minorities, and the related secondary legislation, and National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and welcomes the efforts made towards ensuring its full implementation¹. The EU encourages Albania to continue to take into consideration Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018². The EU recalls that in line with promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, all levels and types of education should strengthen social cohesion, a European positive and inclusive sense of belonging complementing their local, regional and national identities and fostering tolerant and democratic attitudes. The EU takes note of Albania's commitment to further improve the quality and availability of textbooks in all recognised minority languages.

The EU expects Albania in the field of higher education to fully implement the Bologna key commitments and to further align with the Tirana Communiqué in line with its Action Plan on Higher Education.

¹ This matter is examined in articulation with Cluster 1 Fundamentals with regard to minority language education.

² Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (2018/C 195/01)

The EU stresses that Albania needs to continue making progress in reaching the targets as established under the European Education Area and needs to continue building progressively a monitoring system that allows for reliable tracking of these targets.

The EU also takes positive note of the progress made to fully implement the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET), by adopting relevant secondary legislation on standards, criteria, and procedures for the accreditation of VET providers, to support quality assurance processes and mechanisms from a lifelong learning perspective.

The EU takes note of the reinforced capacities of the National Agency for Employment and Skills and the National Agency for VET and Qualifications. At the same time, the EU stresses the need for Albania to ensure sufficient resources for the optimisation of the VET system in line with the needs of the labour market, including capacity building and increasing the numbers and quality of VET teachers. The EU also stresses the need to promote and develop opportunities for adult learning and aim to align with the EU headline target for at least 60% of adults (aged 25-64) to participate in training every year by 2030, as well as ensure data collection on this indicator. The EU further invites Albania to reinforce apprenticeship schemes and continue to promote further engagement on apprenticeships and work-based learning in the framework of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships by developing and expanding membership from national and regional organisations through pledges. In this regard, the EU underlines the importance of structured employer involvement in the development of VET in Albania.

The EU notes Albania's further alignment with the EU *acquis* on **youth**. The EU invites Albania to continue prioritising youth work and youth participation, and to continue adhering to the European Youth Work Agenda as central objectives. The EU took note of Albania's efforts to support digital literacy of young people.

The EU welcomes Albania's continued good progress in the field of sports and invites Albania to continue the legislative alignment with the EU sports *acquis*. The EU notes Albania's progress in aligning with the EU *acquis* on culture and underlines the importance of protecting cultural heritage.

The EU notes that the adoption of the above-described legislative provisions fulfils the requirements of the closing benchmark set in document AD 6/25 CONF-ALB 6.

The EU encourages Albania to take stronger measures regarding the fight against corruption in education and culture. The EU calls upon Albania to continue ensuring that safeguards for integrity are implemented with regard to the selection of school principals and appointments within key educational agencies on the basis of merit and without political influence.

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In view of the above considerations, the EU notes that, at this stage, this chapter does not require further negotiations.

Monitoring of progress in the alignment with and implementation of the EU *acquis* will continue throughout the negotiations. The EU underlines that it will devote particular attention to monitoring all specific issues mentioned above with a view to ensuring Albania's administrative capacity, full legal alignment, as well as effective implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in this chapter. Particular consideration needs to be given to the links between the present chapter and other negotiation chapters. A final assessment of the conformity of Albania's legislation with the EU *acquis* and of its implementation capacity can only be made at a later stage of the negotiations. In addition to all the information the EU may require for the negotiations in this chapter, and which is to be provided to the Conference, the EU invites Albania to provide regularly detailed written information to the Stabilisation and Association Council on progress in the implementation of the *acquis* and in the strengthening of the administrative capacity.

In view of all the above considerations, the EU will, if necessary, return to this chapter at an appropriate moment.

Furthermore, the EU recalls that there may be new *acquis* between 1 May 2026 and the conclusion of the negotiations.

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