

Ninth meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level, Brussels, 10 December 2018

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The ninth meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level was held today in Brussels to open negotiations on Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy and Chapter 18 – Statistics.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms Karin KNEISSL, the Austrian 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 Serbian delegation was led by Ms Jadranka JOKSIMOVIĆ, Minister of European integration.

With today's Conference, 16 negotiation chapters have now been opened for negotiations out of a total of 35, 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 2019. The accession negotiations were launched in January 2014.

Chapters opened

Regarding the opening of negotiations on Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy and Chapter 18 – Statistics, the Union has closely examined Serbia's present state of preparations. On the understanding that Serbia 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 Conference will have to return to these chapters at an appropriate moment.

As regards the benchmarks, the opened chapters may only be provisionally closed once it is agreed by the EU that the following benchmarks are met:

Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy

- Serbia has aligned its legal framework with the *acquis* in order to ensure full central bank independence, the prohibition of monetary financing of the public sector, the prohibition of privileged access by public authorities to financial institutions, and the full integration of its central bank into the European System of Central Banks.
- Serbia has aligned its legal framework to comply with requirements for national budgetary frameworks as laid down in Council Directive 2011/85/EU.
- Serbia has fulfilled the criterion of being a functioning market economy.

Chapter 18 – Statistics

- Serbia submits key national accounts data in accordance with European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA) 2010 and other relevant requirements together with the required detailed description of the methodology used. Eurostat has verified the data and the descriptions presented, and confirmed appropriate alignment with the EU rules.

Serbia presents to the Commission a road map for the transmission of the remaining tables from the ESA 2010 Transmission Programme and the not yet implemented methodological issues.

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