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Press release | 26.06.2012

EU-Montenegro

Welcomed green light for accession negotiations should not outshine areas of concern

Montenegro was granted candidate status in 2010 but the country has been waiting until now for the start of negotiations. Commenting on today's green light from the General Affairs Council for Montenegro accession negotiations, Green shadow rapporteur **Ulrike Lunacek** said:

"Montenegro has already achieved much and today's green light for Montenegro accession negotiations is a welcome and overdue recognition of these achievements. The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament was unanimous in supporting the opening of accession negotiations. And the European Parliament as a whole, in its latest resolution on Montenegro adopted on 29 March 2012, underlined the significant progress made by Montenegro.

"But there are still some areas of concern: Corruption is widespread, with the political elite being deeply involved, as well as foreign investors. The main problem with Montenegro is that although many laws are being adopted which are in line with the EU acquis, they are only poorly implemented. This is why things on the ground aren't changing enough and legitimate public protest against the political elite is constantly growing. Therefore I fully support the new Commission policy to start negotiations with the opening of Chapter 23 on judiciary and fundamental rights and Chapter 24 on justice, freedom and security because they focus on the implementation of reforms of rule of law, this has to be linked to measures to combat corruption and organised crime.

"As regards anti-discrimination policies, the Constitution prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds. Despite progress in anti-discrimination policies, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, people with disabilities as well as LGBT people are, in practice, still subject to discrimination. There is also still a lack of will for thorough investigation of cases of physical violence and intimidation of journalists and for the demonstration of a strong commitment to a media free of political interference.

"Regarding environmental policy, the Montenegrin authorities are requested to reconsider plans to build large-scale hydropower plants and the resulting heavy reliance on energy provided by such sources and instead to involve relevant civil society organisations when it comes to the planning of future hydropower plant projects. In general, Montenegro must adopt a serious approach to environmental policy, in line with its constitution which says that Montenegro is an 'ecological state'."

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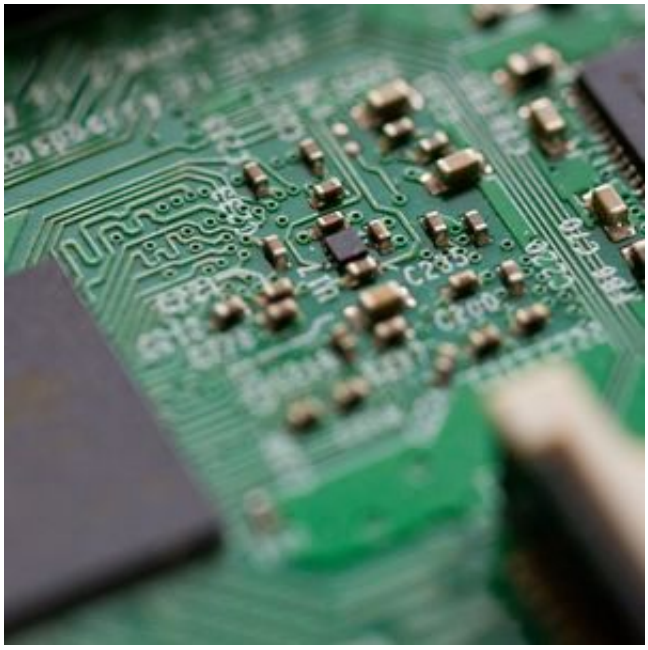


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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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