



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 26 June 2012

11900/12

**ELARG 75
COWEB 110**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from: General Secretariat of the Council
on: 26 June 2012
to: Delegations

No. prev. doc. 11725/12 ELARG 69 COWEB 103

Subject: Montenegro
- Council conclusions

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on Montenegro, as adopted by the Council (General Affairs) on 26 June 2012.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON MONTENEGRO

In line with the European Council conclusions of 9 December 2011, the Council welcomed the Commission's recent report on Montenegro's progress in the implementation of reforms, with particular focus on the area of the rule of law and fundamental rights, especially the fight against corruption and organised crime.

The Council endorsed the Commission's assessment that Montenegro has achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria, and in particular the political criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, to start accession negotiations. In this regard, the Council underlined the particular importance it attaches to the area of the rule of law and fundamental rights, and urged Montenegro to tackle the issues of concern identified by the Commission in its latest progress report, especially the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and the need for Montenegro to step up its efforts in order to establish a solid track record in the course of the negotiations. The Council invites Europol to present a report on the situation with regard to organised crime in Montenegro, and asks the Commission to ensure that this contribution is taken into account in the forthcoming screening reports.

In this light, the European Union will take account of the experience acquired from previous accession negotiations, notably in relations to the negotiating chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights and on justice, freedom and security. A new approach will be applied to both chapters, which will be tackled early in the negotiations to allow maximum time to establish the necessary legislation, institutions and solid track records of implementation. An overall balance in the progress of negotiations across chapters should also be ensured.

The Council adopted the general EU position, including the negotiating framework, with a view to the opening of accession negotiations with Montenegro.

The Council decided, subject to the endorsement by the European Council, that accession negotiations should be opened on 29 June 2012.