



**AMBASADORI ODRŽIVOG
RAZVOJA I ŽIVOTNE SREDINE**
ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development
Information paper on meaning of Cluster
“Green agenda and sustainable connectivity”
for Serbia**

2020

Information paper on the meaning of the Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity Cluster for Serbia¹

This information paper starts with a rough illustration of the *importance* of the issues from the new methodology for EU enlargement², while it should be noted that the EU itself has not presented any implementation procedures yet. Serbia can adapt the proposed changes to the country's existing negotiating framework, depending on commitments.

The country's political will—The government must make a more straightforward commitment to implementing the main required reforms — whether it is about the rule of law, the fight against corruption, the economy, or ensuring the proper functioning of democratic institutions and public administration and foreign policy alignment. Strengthening regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Cluster 1: Fundamentals (Chapters 23, 24, 5, 18, and 32)³ is **considered to be a cluster of essential importance**. Negotiations on the fundamentals will be opened first and closed last, and the relevant **progress will determine the**

overall pace of negotiations (no other chapter will be temporarily closed before meeting these benchmarks for the rule of law chapters, including Chapter 35).

Negotiations on each cluster will be started as a whole — not each chapter individually. The cluster (which covers all related chapters) is opened without any additional requirements, and closing benchmarks are set for each chapter.

The accession process is based on merit and conditional — the progress of reforms can be more **concretely rewarded, put on hold, or sanctioned**.

EU member states can decide to stop negotiations in some areas or — in the most severe cases — suspend them altogether. The already closed chapters can be reopened or reset if issues need to be reassessed.

In theory, negotiations can also be temporarily suspended along with proposing the terms for potentially resuming.

¹ Prepared in November 2020 and based on analyses provided by ENV.net subgrant project Refresh 4EU

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, EC Brussels, 5.2.2020 COM(2020) 57 final

³ 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights; 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security, Economic criteria, Functioning of democratic institutions, Public administration reform; 5 - Public procurement; 18 - Statistics; 32 - Financial control

The Information Paper further gives a parallel overview of the European Commission’s assessments⁴ for the chapters under the Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity cluster (Cluster 4)⁵ and the new EU enlargement methodology⁶, with a view to identifying issues that can be addressed together in order to advance in multiple chapters.

Chapter 14 centres on transport policy; this chapter required no additional opening benchmarks and the Draft Common Position related to it is in the EU Council.

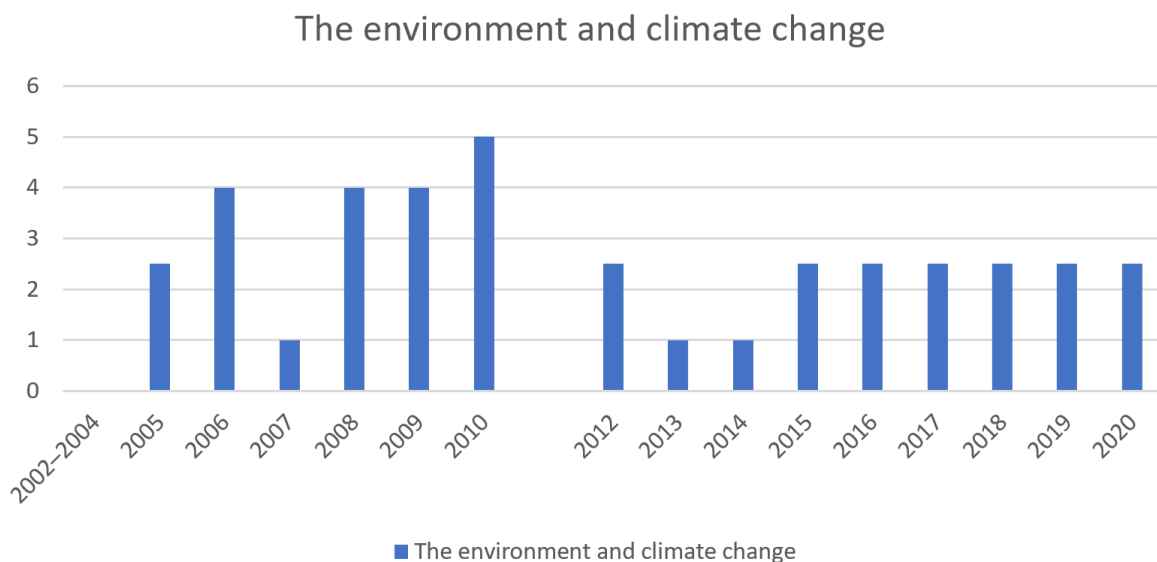
Chapter 21 centres on trans-European networks; this chapter required no additional opening benchmarks and the Draft Common Position related to it is in the EU Council.

Chapter 15 centres on energy; Serbia received initial benchmarks for this chapter, and the country is presently working to meet these initial benchmarks.

Chapter 27 centres on the environment and climate change. This chapter had no opening benchmarks; Serbia presented its negotiating position in January 2020; COM is preparing the relevant draft common position. The progress in Chapter 27 in the process of Serbia’s European integration could be illustrated using the following qualitative overview⁷.

According to the EC Report published in 2020, all four chapters from this cluster have similar ratings: limited progress/some progress/some limited progress.

Based on the EC assessments, **several common denominators⁸ could be surmised for these chapters** — topics that can be addressed together in order to advance across several chapters that **show the importance of civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change:**



⁴ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT - Serbia 2020 Report, Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, EC Brussels, 6.10.2020, SWD(2020) 352 final

⁵ Note: The new methodology places different weight on different issues and chapters.

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, EC Brussels, 5.2.2020 COM(2020) 57 final

⁷ good progress — 5, moderately advanced — 4, limited progress/some progress/some limited progress — 2.5, little progress — 1; for the 2002–2004 narrative Ambitious Programmes

⁸ The list of topics is open; the aim of this analysis is to identify not every topic, but the most visible common ones

Interinstitutional coordination, economic planning, and budgeting, coupled with the issue of the place of civil society organisations dealing with different areas

Rule of law — proper and effective enforcement of the already adopted regulations (especially in strategic and environmental impact assessments), coupled with the issue of the place of civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change

Raising awareness, coupled with the issue of the place of civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change

Education for the future, coupled with the issue of the place of civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change

Issues in energy, environmental, and transport infrastructure

Even more information is obtained by analysing the EC documents: **Guidelines for implementing the Green Agenda in**

the Western Balkans and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans⁹. *Alongside the Economic and Investment Plan to support the region, the Commission published **guidelines for implementing the Green Agenda in the Western Balkans**, and their adoption is expected at the Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in November 2020. The planned activities are rooted in five pillars: (i) climate action, including decarbonisation, energy, and mobility, (ii) circular economy, with special emphasis on waste, recycling, sustainable production, and efficient, sustainable use of resources, (iii) biodiversity, with the aim of protecting and restoring the region's natural resources, (iv) combating air, water, and soil pollution, and (iv) sustainable food systems and rural development. At this time, it is not clear whether the region will be offered any additional financial support from the EU, in addition to the existing ones that are provided for by the Investment Plan.*

The table below shows a rough outline of the situation for Serbia¹⁰.

⁹ SWD(2020) 223 final COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans* {COM(2020) 641 final}, Brussels, 6.10.2020

¹⁰ Excluding Kosovo*

Identified common denominators for implementing Chapters 14, 15, 21, and 27	Support priorities according to the EU Investment Plan for the Balkans, simplified	Possible place for civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change (e-CSO) ¹¹
Interinstitutional coordination, economic planning, and budgeting	NOT COVERED IN THE INVESTMENT PLAN - This is among the instruments expected to be addressed by the government	e-CSOs can contribute to this process
Rule of law — proper and effective enforcement of already adopted regulations	<p>It is very important to properly and effectively conduct strategic and environmental impact assessments, above all — NOT COVERED IN THE INVESTMENT PLAN</p> <p>INITIATIVE 9 — Investing in the competitiveness of the private sector; mobilization of assistance for sustainable transformation of agricultural and food production systems and rural development; public procurement must be in line with EU rules and fully conducted.</p>	e-CSOs can contribute to this process and take part in the decision-making process
Raising awareness	NOT COVERED IN THE INVESTMENT PLAN	<p>Raising awareness that sustainable development and the environment should be among the pillars that determine development</p> <p>Raising awareness to sustainable development and environmental issues across all ten Investment Plan initiatives</p>

¹¹ It is obvious that the positioning of civil society organisations dealing with the environment and climate change is not clearly visible in the context of implementing the EU Green Agenda in the Balkans and the adopted EU Investment Plan for the Balkans.

<p>Education for the future</p>	<p>NOT COVERED IN THE INVESTMENT PLAN, except:</p> <p>INITIATIVE 8 — Digital Education and Equal Access Action Plan, especially for vulnerable groups, including Roma.</p> <p>INITIATIVE 10 — YOUTH GUARANTEE FUND. The Youth Guarantee Fund is a scheme that ensures that all young people are offered the same quality of ... continued education ...</p>	<p>Education is crucial to making a positive impact on environmental behaviour — starting at an early age — as well as to retraining workers and employees. Curricula must contain the key competencies and skills that are needed to support a green economy. Successful implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans must be reflected in education systems reform to ensure that people are equipped and prepared for tomorrow’s labour market and society.</p>
<p>Issues in energy, environmental, and transport infrastructure</p>	<p>INITIATIVE 6 — Renovation of public and private buildings in line with minimum energy efficiency standards</p> <p>INITIATIVE 1 — CONNECTING THE EAST AND THE WEST: Complete the Priština–Niš road; complete the bypass near Niš, significantly improve the Corridor X project for improving the railway lines between Serbia and Croatia; upgrade the railway line to Northern Macedonia.</p>	<p>In strategic and environmental impact assessments, e-CSOs can contribute to the process and take part in the decision-making process</p>

<p>Issues in energy, environmental, and transport infrastructure</p>	<p>INITIATIVE 2 — CONNECTING THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH: Completely repair railway line 4, which connects Belgrade with Podgorica to Montenegro’s Port of Bar from the border with Serbia to the sea shore. Further improvement of the parallel road corridor is planned; — Additional improvement of the railway line connecting Belgrade with Priština is planned; preparation of the necessary technical documentation for the repair works in Serbia.</p> <p>INITIATIVE 5 — TRANSITION FROM COAL:</p> <p>Gas interconnection Northern Macedonia – Serbia; complete the Trans-Balkan Electricity Corridor in Serbia within the interconnection between Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and as the backbone of power distribution throughout the region and to the EU.</p> <p>INITIATIVE 7 — Waste and wastewater management: Implement the environmental protection investment programme in Serbia, which includes projects for wastewater treatment plants for large and medium-sized cities; establish integrated regional waste management systems in Serbia, in parallel with closing sub-standard landfills; support in establishing appropriate air and water quality monitoring systems and pollution prevention measures</p>	<p>In strategic and environmental impact assessments, e-CSOs can contribute to the process and take part in the decision-making process</p>
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EASD (Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development)
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