

Training modules on Clusters of the negotiating chapters

Cluster 1: The Fundamentals 4-6 June, 2024 Belgrade

Techniques: interactive lectures, group discussions, case studies, simulation exercises, peer reviews

Day 1

9.00-9.30 – **Introductory Addresses**

9.30-10.30 **EU accession negotiations in the twenties**

This introductory lecture will act as an introduction to the overall course. It will, thus, set the stage for the discussion on all clusters as well as the current state of accession and integration processes in the Western Balkans. It will also try to offer some answers to the potential outlook for the Western Balkans until 2030.

10.30-11.00 – Break

11.00-12.00 **The Revised 2020 Enlargement Methodology and what it means for Cluster 1 negotiations**

In this session, the concept of the new methodology will be introduced and explained in detail. Therefore, the cluster division and its logic will be presented, the process of potential slow-down, suspension and backtracking of accession talks will be discussed. This will be followed by the discussion about the connections between the progress of accession and utilisation of pre-accession funds.

12.00 – 13.00 – Lunch break

13.00 – 14.00 – What is the Rule of Law – the fundamentals?

As the rule of law represents the most important part of the Fundamentals' cluster, the concept and the principle of the rule of law shall be discussed in order to allow the participants to understand better why the rule of law has become one of the prime reasons for measuring the progress of candidates, but also why it has slowed down the overall procedures of negotiating. Finally, the issue of the challenges with the rule of law within the EU itself will be presented and discussed, too.

14.00-14.30 – Break

14.30 – 16.00 - Functioning of the Democratic Institutions

Introduction will be given to this area that derives from Copenhagen criteria. Its overall importance will be underlined. Presentations of the acquis, comparative and good practices and solutions in all three

areas of the FDI, namely: the electoral reform, the functioning of the parliament and cooperation with civil society will be given. Practical examples of work on this area will be given from the experience from Albania and North Macedonia and their respective roadmaps.

Day 2

9.00-10.00 – Chapter 23 - Judiciary

The second day will start with the session presenting the EU legislation in the field of judiciary. The fact that there is no “hard acquis” in this area and that the candidate countries mostly adjust with principles and good standards. The role of other international organisations such as Venice Commission, Council of Europe, UN etc. will be presented accordingly. Main issues deriving from this area in the candidate countries and respective solutions will be presented as well.

10.00-11.00 Chapter 23 - Fight against Corruption

According to the new methodology, this area is now a horizontal issue throughout negotiations. In that sense, preventive part and dealing with identification of sensitive areas is of utmost importance, together with suppressive part of fight against corruption. Most important practical issues will be presented accordingly with the best practices.

11.00-11.30 – Break

11.30-12.30 Chapter 23 - Fundamental Rights

The vast area of fundamental rights will be presented with all the subchapters mentioned. Special focus will be given to the general framework for fundamental rights; while issues such as child rights, freedom of expression and gender equality will be discussed in more detail. Also, the participants will be given information on minority and cultural rights, data protection, property rights and the rights of the EU citizens accordingly.

12.30 – 13.30 – Lunch break

13.30 – 14.30 – Chapter 24 – Fight against organised crime (including Fight against terrorism and counterfeiting of the Euro and Cybersecurity)

The participants will be presented with the area that represents the core of the negotiations in the area of rule of law. Special focus will be given to the track record. In that sense the main acquis and good practices will be presented, together with most important issues deriving so far in the candidate countries. Apart from financial investigations, seizure of assets and police cooperation, this presentation will encompass the fight against terrorism and cybercrime, as well as fighting the counterfeiting of the Euro.

14.30 - 14.45 – Break

14.45 – 16.00 – Practical Exercise of problem solving in line with the new enlargement methodology

The practical exercise will be set in a manner that each group from each of the participating countries, receives the same list of priorities in the field of the Fundamentals' Cluster that must be addressed in a specific methodological manner and in a precise time-frame. Every issue will contain background information on the respective situation, while the participants will be asked to use their knowledge, cooperation and vision, to solve the issues.

Day 3

9.00-10.00 – Presentation and Summary of the results from practical exercise – followed by discussion

The results of the practical exercise will be discussed during this session with presenters from the working groups first introducing the results, then followed by an interactive discussion which will allow for stock-taking of the good practices.

10.00-11.00 – Chapter 24 - Migration, Asylum and Visa

This session will present the arising threats in the EU neighbourhood, followed with war, famine, climate change etc, which make the EU into a desirable destination for migrants and asylum seekers. Beside these phenomena, the EU as a fruitful soil for migration of qualified workers, travel and education of third countries national will be introduced. This importance of this are that became in that sense, one of the most important areas in negotiations in the past several years as these issues arose will be accentuated. In that sense, the alignment with the EU acquis, institutional setup and best practices in issue solving will be presented accordingly.

11.00-11.30 – Break

11.30-12.30 Chapter 24 – Schengen, Drugs and Judicial Cooperation

In the final session of the training, the participants will be introduced to the final block of responsibilities of candidates for negotiating Chapter 24. In that sense, the issues of the Schengen acquis and its far-reaching consequences for the build-up of document security and cooperation will be discussed. Cooperation on drugs in its preventive and criminal aspects will be presented, followed by the judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters.

13.00 – 14.00 – Lunch break

Departures