

Program

Europe Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

30 in 2030? – Montenegro's EU accession in sight: current state of play and the way forward

High-Level Lunch with Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro Maida Gorčević

Date & Time: 16th December 2025, 13:00 –15:00h

Location: Europe Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
11 Avenue de l'Yser, 1040 Brussels

2025 has shown that enlargement is back on the EU agenda, with several candidate countries accelerating reforms and the EU Commission matching their efforts with renewed vigor. Montenegro has long been the frontrunner among the aspirants, having opened all negotiation chapters. Furthermore, in 2024, Montenegro became the first country to receive a positive Interim Benchmarks Assessment Report (IBAR) on compliance with fundamental standards, paving the way for a closure of all remaining chapters. During the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on 16th December 2025, the country is expected to provisionally close a further five chapters, raising the total to 12. Thus, the country is well on the way to meet the government's target of closing all remaining chapters by 2026 and joining the EU by 2028.

On the EU side, preparations for Montenegro's integration are ongoing as well. The EU Commission and several member states have thrown their full support behind Podgorica's endeavor, and the European Council is expected to form a working group on drafting Montenegro's accession treaty before the end of the year. This treaty is expected to become a blueprint for future accessions, including for Albania, Moldova and Ukraine whose progress and ambitions put them next in line. In parallel, the discussion has become increasingly entangled with questions of EU internal reform and the demand for safeguards preventing negative effects on the EU in case of backsliding of new member states.

Finally, in order to strengthen the EU via enlargement, both member states and candidate countries must ensure that their citizens are on board. While a recent Eurobarometer shows overall support among EU citizens, many of them do not feel sufficiently informed and enlargement is not yet featured prominently in most European capitals and public discourse, leaving spaces for disinformation by malign actors from inside and outside the Union.

We will discuss these and other related issues during a **seated lunch** jointly organized with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) at the Europe Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Avenue de l'Yser 11, 1040 Brussels) on Tuesday, 16th December 2025, 13:00 – 15:00h.

The event will feature a keynote speech by **Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro Maida GORČEVIĆ**, followed by comments from **Marko MAKOVEC**, Head of Cabinet of Marta Kos, Commissioner for EU Enlargement, and **Iliriana GJONI**, Research Analyst at Carnegie Europe. **Frauke M. SEEBASS** of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) will moderate the discussion.

We look forward to welcoming you as of 13:00h. Please inform us in advance of any dietary requirements.

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Europe Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

- 13:00h **Registration**
- 13:30h **Welcoming remarks**
- Beatrice GORAWANTSCHY**
Director, Europe Office of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)
- André HÄRTEL**
Head of Office, SWP Brussels
- 13:40h **Keynote speech**
- Maida GORČEVIĆ**
Minister of European Affairs of Montenegro
- 14:00h **Moderated Discussion on Montenegro's EU Accession Process**
- First Comments:**
- Marko MAKOVEC**
Head of Cabinet of Marta Kos, Commissioner for EU Enlargement
- Iliriana GJONI**
Research Analyst, Carnegie Europe
- moderated by:***
- Frauke M. SEEBASS**
Visiting Fellow
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)
- 15:00h **End of event**