

# Support to Accession Negotiations in the Economic Chapters of Acquis (SANECA II)

## EU Integration – Albania’s way forward for growth and cohesion

### Support Albania in preparing accession negotiations with the European Union

Albania and the European Commission held the first Inter-Governmental Conference on July 19, 2022, marking the formal opening of negotiations for the country’s EU membership. An historic moment that for Albania has been 13 years in the making since the country submitted its application for membership in 2009 and became a candidate country in 2014. Albania’s road to EU accession was paved with pre-conditions for reforms related to the rule of law and fight against corruption, vetoes, and much uncertainty over enlargement overall.

A primary objective of Albania’s foreign policy and a major aspiration for the people (Albanians are the most pro-European population in the Balkans), accession negotiations give impetus to continuation of reforms for democratic institutions, rule of law and human rights, as well as a functioning market economy which provides sustainable growth and employment.

### Our approach

Building on the results of the previous phase, SANECA II aims at strengthening the organizational and planning capacities of the Albanian administration to conduct accession negotiations in Cluster 2 – Internal Market and Chapter 20, in a participatory manner. The nine chapters in Cluster 2 cover areas such as free movement of goods, workers, services and capital, company law and competition policy, financial services, intellectual property, consumer protection and public health. They are key for Albania’s progress in meeting requirements of EU’s internal market and of high relevance for early integration and development of the Common Regional Market. Chapter 20 – Enterprise and Industrial Policy- part of Cluster 3, eventually

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contributes to the structural change of Albania’s economy which is shifting gradually towards services and industry, at the same time encouraging a business-friendly environment that stimulates small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

MFE is primarily responsible for most chapters in Cluster 2 and for Chapter 20. Besides MFE the project works closely with the General Directorate of Patents and Trademarks, the Albanian Competition Authority and the Albanian Financial Supervision Authority, respectively at head of Inter-Institutional Working Groups for chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Besides, the project collaborates with institutions responsible for overseeing the EU integration process and works in synergy with other donor-funded projects. We do this with sustainability, integrity, inclusivity and transparency as our binding principles.

### Our Focus

We focus on **three key intervention areas:**  
**Developing capacities of the public administration and methodologies to conduct the screening process.**  
 Members of Inter-Institutional Working groups are equipped with necessary skills to prepare adequately for



Left to right.: EU flags, Explanatory Meeting EU-Albania, North Macedonia- Free Movement of Goods.



L. to R.: Interior view of a steel factory. Smiling woman with shopping cart at supermarket

Bilateral Screenings and conduct negotiations in Cluster 2 and chapter 20. Further quality assurance and improvement of legal and institutional gap analyses that have been produced during SANECA I, as well as for preparation of upcoming phases of negotiations in additional 6 chapters.

### Advancing preparations for meeting benchmarks through strategic documents and legal documents is instrumental for the progress of Albania in accession negotiations in Cluster 2.

Expertise is delivered for alignment of legislation with EU acquis in Clusters 2 and Chapter 20 planned as high priority in the National Plan for European Integration. Sound Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) are ensured, and gender equality aspects are considered in the process with the purpose of putting the Albanian government in a better negotiating position. Support is provided for drafting of concept papers and strategic documents that may be required by EU for Albania's advancement in the accession process.

### Government – stakeholder dialogue in the process of EU integration

Alignment with the acquis affects almost all societal groups, making dialogue with stakeholders a vital part of the EU integration process. We support negotiating structures to conduct effective consultations with a wide array of stakeholders – from private sector, civil society to communities– by providing expert advice on implementation of measures for stakeholders' engagement on the one hand and increase of awareness among stakeholders on the crucial role they must play in the process of EU integration on the other.

## Expected Results

- ✓ **The EU Commission identifies improved level of preparation for Albania** in meeting accession criteria for a major part of 10 chapters supported by the project, namely Cluster 2 and Chapter 20

- ✓ **50% of legislation aligned with the EU acquis** with support from the project **in the area of internal market** have been assessed for their impact and reviewed with regard to their relevance for gender equality.
- ✓ **Approval among stakeholders of the process of consultation** by the government in the framework of the Partnership Platform for European Integration and effectiveness in dealing with recommendations is increased.

## Facts & Figures from SANECA I

- ✓ Over 500 pieces of Albanian legislation have been screened against c.a. 275 pieces of acquis for compliance and level of implementation in chapters 1, 3, 20, 28.
- ✓ 310 IIWG members were equipped with knowledge on requirements deriving from directives and accession process and were coached to conduct the process of assessment for compliance of the national legislation with EU acquis
- ✓ 135 training and coaching sessions were conducted on screening, drafting of strategic documents, bilateral presentations and negotiating positions.
- ✓ Around 350 stakeholders participated in 15 information and training workshops on new methodology on the drafting of the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI), chapters' content, recently approved acquis.
- ✓ Around 60 representatives of business organizations and trade chambers participated in the consultation process for NPEI (2022-2024), other strategic documents and pieces of legislation harmonizing the acquis.

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'Support to accession negotiations in the economic chapters of the acquis (SANECA)'  
Street Ismail Qemali, No.3, 3rd Floor  
Tirana, Albania / P.O. Box 2391  
Phone +355 4 22 73 424  
E-Mail blerina.raca@giz.de  
www.giz.de

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Text Blerina Raça

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