

**Question for written answer E-003753/2026
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Pace of EU enlargement

On 14 July 2026, the EU held accession conferences with Montenegro and Albania. For Montenegro, the parties provisionally closed negotiations on competition and customs union, meaning that, in total, 18 out of 33 negotiating chapters have been provisionally closed. As regards Albania, the parties provisionally closed negotiating chapters on science and research, education and culture, and external relations. Albania has now opened all negotiating chapters and provisionally closed three of them¹.

Against this background:

1. Given the varying degrees of reform progress between the two countries, how does the Commission ensure that the opening of thematic clusters and the provisional closure of chapters are based exclusively on merit and full compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, particularly regarding the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organised crime?
2. Does the Commission consider that the current accelerated pace of negotiation risks lowering accession standards?
3. Will the Commission commit to recommending the reopening of closed chapters if it is shown that the candidate countries have not achieved adequate progress in their respective accession chapters?

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¹ The Council, 'EU enlargement advances with four accession conferences in one day', 14 July 2026, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/news/20260714-four-accession-conferences-in-one-day/>.