

EN
E-002477/2024
Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.1.2025)

The Commission is aware of the CEE Bankwatch Network report mentioned by the Honourable Members.

1. All the five countries concerned by the report have the status of EU candidate or potential candidate and are therefore expected to gradually align with the EU environmental acquis, including in the sectors of air quality and industrial pollution control. Considering that EU legislation is not binding for the five countries before their accession to the EU, infringement procedures cannot be initiated. However, their compliance with the relevant EU *acquis* is evaluated as part of their progress assessment.

The Commission attaches great importance to environmental issues in the context of the accession negotiations and will continue to raise¹ with the authorities of the five concerned countries the proper alignment with EU air quality and industrial pollution control acquis, including in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements² concluded between the EU and those countries.

2. The Western Balkan countries are also Contracting Parties of the Energy Community Treaty³ and bound by its rules, including as regards emissions and decarbonisation. The Energy Community Secretariat assists these countries in the implementation of these rules. Non-compliance is followed up by means of dispute settlement procedures which are usually launched by the Energy Community Secretariat. The region is also bound by the 2030 Climate and Energy targets⁴, and the obligation to adopt and update National Energy and Climate Plans⁵, using the same template as EU Member States, setting out their actions to reach the targets, including gradual phasing out of coal from electricity production.

¹ For example, issues of compliance with the EU air quality and industrial pollution control acquis were raised in the Commission's 2024 Enlargement Reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 84): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/451db011-6779-40ea-b34b-a0eeda451746_en?filename=Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report%202024.pdf
Kosovo (p.82-83): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c790738e-4cf6-4a43-a8a9-43c1b6f01e10_en?filename=Kosovo%20Report%202024.pdf
Montenegro (p. 83): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a41cf419-5473-4659-a3f3-af4bc8ed243b_en?filename=Montenegro%20Report%202024.pdf
North Macedonia (p.82): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5f0c9185-ce46-46fc-bf44-82318ab47e88_en?filename=North%20Macedonia%20Report%202024.pdf

² https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary_en

³ <https://www.energy-community.org/legal/treaty.html>

⁴ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2030-climate-targets_en

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment/implementation-eu-countries/energy-and-climate-governance-and-reporting/national-energy-and-climate-plans_en