Negotiations are held with each candidate country to determine their ability to apply EU legislation (acquis) and examine their possible request for transition periods.

Chapters.
To conduct the accession negotiations, EU legislation and standards are divided into 35 chapters which are negotiated one by one.

Environment Accession Project 3 (ENVAP 3) is a project funded by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for the period 2016 – 2020 assisting Serbia and the MEP particularly in preparing to negotiate and comply with Chapter 27 Environment requirements.

SCREENING

Once accession negotiations are opened the European Commission investigates the candidate country in greater detail in a process called screening. The resulting screening report identifies shortcomings in the candidate country that need to be gradually addressed in order to comply with the EU legislation (acquis) and establishes benchmarks – conditions to be met before submitting Negotiating Position or invites country to submit the Negotiating Position without additional conditions.

CHAPTER 27

The EU environmental requirements comprises over 200 major legal acts covering various sectors. For negotiations purposes, EU legal acts are grouped into about 75 main legal acts/ groups of legal acts into following sub-chapters: horizontal, air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution control, chemicals, noise and climate change. Chapter 27 also includes civil protection area. Preparation for negotiations of Chapter 27 is lead by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia.
The process of environmental approximation should be an integrated element in the overall strategy for accession. Compliance with the EU environmental acquis is necessary both for environmental and economic reasons.

FULL COMPLIANCE

The Commission recognizes that achieving full compliance with the environmental acquis is one of the major challenges for accession and probably only achievable in the long term. The bulk of the investments will be needed for air pollution abatement, water and waste water management and management and disposal of municipal and hazardous waste.

COMMISSION PROPOSES THAT:

Before accession the candidate countries should, in partnership with the EU, draw up and start implementing realistic national long-term strategies and plans for gradual and effective alignment with the environmental acquis, in particular for tackling water and air pollution, improving waste management practices.

These long-term national strategies and plans should include:

- key priority areas
- objectives to be fulfilled by the dates of accession and
- timetables for further full compliance after accession.

Corresponding obligations should be incorporated in the accession treaties. All new investments should comply with the acquis.

The approximation of law is a unique obligation of membership in the European Union. It means that countries aspiring to join the European Union must align their national laws, rules and procedures in order to give effect to the entire body of EU law contained in the acquis communautaire. Further, countries have to implement and enforce these aligned requirements.

APPROXIMATION PROCESS

Effective, prioritised management of the approximation process is crucial, because of the limited resources, and therefore requires careful strategic planning and cost-effective programmes. As the obligation to approximate continues after accession, the pre-accession approximation process becomes an opportunity for countries to organize their institutions and procedures and to train their staff for the daily processes and responsibilities of European Union law making, implementation and enforcement.

These special strategies and plans for adoption and implementation of the environmental acquis should be combined with a reinforced EU pre-accession assistance strategy where investment for adoption of the environmental acquis is one of the priorities, recognizing that the EU’s financial assistance will only cover a part of the resources required.

The process of environmental approximation should be an integrated element in the overall strategy for accession. Compliance with the EU environmental acquis is necessary both for environmental and economic reasons.