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Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 19 December in which you inform about the progress of Montenegro in implementing your country's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

The European Commission services are conducting a detailed review of the information provided. In the meantime, I welcome the overall results achieved, which demonstrate that Montenegro is committed to S3 implementation and our joint assessment work. It also reflects a level of political commitment which is crucial for the engagement of all stakeholders in research and innovation and for connecting this work with the needs of a competitive economy.

Considering the S3 2021-2024 validity period, I encourage you to mobilise sufficient resources for the revision of your Strategy. I am convinced that further developing and updating your approach along the previously established priorities for a Healthy, Sustainable and Digitalised Montenegro can help boost growth and jobs in Montenegro while drawing on your country's competitive advantages.

The Growth Plan for the Western Balkans is a key priority. In this context, I welcome reference to smart specialisation in the draft Reform Agenda for Montenegro. There is scope to further underline the articulation of this ambition with the digital and energy/green transitions. In the context of your accession negotiations, I would like to note that smart specialisation is a mandatory requirement to access EU Structural Funds.

I invite your services to continue their excellent dialogue and cooperation with the European Commission, including RTD and JRC. We stand ready to support you.

Yours sincerely,

Olivér Várhelyi

Milojko Spajić
Prime Minister of Montenegro