

Dear Secretariat, dear colleagues,

It is my honor to address you as the Prime Minister of Montenegro and to express my pleasure that today we will wrap up an important chapter.

Taking into account the fact that the discussion at the Plenary Session is at the expert level, allow me to briefly explain why I decided to take part as Prime Minister.

Montenegro got its 44<sup>th</sup> Government just a month ago. Immediately after taking office, I was informed about the position of Montenegro in the evaluation process. This Government ought to bear the burden of the evaluation results, whereas it did not participate in the evaluation period (2017-2022) nor did it have the opportunity to participate in the Report writing period (2023).

Montenegro genuinely values the significance of Moneyval as a body distinguished for its exceptional credibility. The diligent work and valuable recommendations put forth by Moneyval greatly contribute to capacity building in areas within the scope of its mandate. Consequently, the review of our country's situation by Moneyval holds utmost importance for us.

We are resolute to strengthen our economy, as smaller economies are more vulnerable to greater challenges than larger economies or financial centers. Our aspirations for EU membership, as a candidate front-runner country and membership in the SEPA payment system are dependent on our actions in this matter, and that is why we will invest the greatest efforts to achieve the results.

Realizing the importance of strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism System, immediately after the formation of the Government, we took concrete steps at the national level:

- Two days ago, the AML/CFT Law (Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism) was adopted, by which we implemented the V Directive and incorporated some of the details of the VI Directive;
- We amended the CC in order to specifically pinpoint virtual assets;
- The proposal of the Law on Restrictive Measures sent to the European Commission and immediately after receiving the opinion, it will be forwarded by the Government to the Parliament to be enacted;
- The Government has adopted a proposal for amendments to the Law on Games of Chance and it will be in the Parliament by the end of the month;
- I tasked Ministries and Administrations to prepare by the end of January the text of amendments to legal provisions that are marked as Partially Compliant in Technical Compliance.
- I tasked the Ministries and Administrations to sort out the registers marked by members of our Moneyval delegation, which directly affect the effectiveness of certain Immediate outcomes, to sort out the registers or provide me with information about the problem if there are difficulties in sorting it out.

Appreciating your time, I will stop here in listing the plans that the Government is about to implement.

Dear delegates,

I can assure you that the very first follow-up report will meet FATF's recommendations in most criteria to the greatest extent possible. I will personally monitor the process of fulfilling the recommendations and strengthening the national Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism System. In relation to the above, I kindly ask for your understanding of the specific situation in which Montenegro finds itself.

I am at your disposal for any additional questions or clarifications.

Thank you.