

ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER MILOJKO SPAJIĆ

Press Conference on the Occasion of the Berlin Process Leaders' Summit

Miločer, 22 October 2026

Distinguished members of the media,
Distinguished Federal Chancellor Merz,
Distinguished Federal Chancellor Stocker,

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you to Montenegro for the second time this year. We are also deeply honoured that our country has been entrusted with the Presidency of the Berlin Process in 2026, one of the most important initiatives for regional cooperation and the European future of the Western Balkans.

We assumed the Presidency from the United Kingdom, and today we have the pleasure of handing over this responsibility to Austria and Federal Chancellor Stocker, confident that Vienna will continue to make a strong contribution to strengthening regional connectivity and bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union.

In a year in which Montenegro marks the 20th anniversary of the restoration of its independence, it is difficult to imagine a greater honour than the opportunity to lead an initiative whose very essence lies in connectivity, cooperation and bringing the region together around a shared European future.

Over the years, the Berlin Process has demonstrated that, despite differences and outstanding issues, the Western Balkans can identify common interests and build its European future through dialogue, mutual trust and tangible results.

I firmly believe that Montenegro's Presidency this year has made an important contribution towards achieving that goal.

During our Presidency, we organised 26 events, including 14 at ministerial level, making this the most intensive programme of activities in the history of the Berlin Process.

We are particularly proud to have created space for new formats of regional dialogue, cooperation and consensus-building, including broader participation by academia, civil society, the business community, young people and the media.

In doing so, we have demonstrated that Montenegro, through both its administrative capacity and its clear political will, can successfully meet the most complex international responsibilities, while also taking the initiative and leading processes of importance to the entire region.

This is also a year in which we have set ourselves an exceptionally ambitious, yet achievable, goal: to conclude accession negotiations with the European Union by the end of 2026, thereby laying the groundwork for Montenegro to become the EU's 28th Member State by 2028.

I believe that, through our Presidency this year, we have also sent a clear message that the European integration of the Western Balkans is not merely a strategic objective for our region, but a shared interest of Europe as a whole. Montenegro aspires to be a reliable partner in this process, as well as an example of how consistent reforms, political determination and tangible results can deliver meaningful progress.

I would also like to highlight the importance of our cooperation with Germany and Austria, both of which are among Montenegro's most important partners, not only on our path towards European Union membership, but also in the further development of our bilateral relations.

We view our partnerships as extending well beyond support for European integration. We are keen to further strengthen economic cooperation, investment, trade, tourism, education and people-to-people ties. We see considerable potential in these areas to translate our excellent political relations into even more tangible results.

I would also like to extend a warm invitation to the citizens of Germany, Austria, all European Union Member States and, of course, the Western Balkans: you are always welcome in our beautiful country.

In conclusion,

Allow me once again to congratulate Austria and Federal Chancellor Stocker on assuming the Presidency of the Berlin Process and to wish them every success in delivering the next cycle of this important initiative.

I would like to thank Germany and Federal Chancellor Merz for their trust, strong support and continued commitment to the European future of the Western Balkans. The Berlin Process remains one of the most important expressions of that commitment, and I am confident that its role will remain equally significant in the years ahead.

I hope that our next meeting in this format will provide an opportunity for us to celebrate another historic milestone together: the signing of Montenegro's Treaty of Accession to the European Union. Such an achievement would represent not only a success for our country, but also a powerful affirmation of the credibility of the EU enlargement policy and of the shared European future to which we aspire.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the countries participating in the Berlin Process for their outstanding cooperation throughout Montenegro's Presidency, as well as to all the institutions,

organisations and partners who contributed to its successful implementation.

I would also like to extend my special thanks to the representatives of the media who have followed our activities and are reporting from Montenegro today.

Your role in communicating the importance of regional cooperation and the European integration of the Western Balkans is of the utmost importance in advancing cooperation and securing the European future of our entire region.

Thank you.