**ABILITY TO ASSUME THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP** **CLUSTER 2: INTERNAL MARKET**

This cluster covers chapters 1-free movement of goods, 2-freedom of movement for workers, 3-right of establishment and freedom to provide services, 4-free movement of capital, 5- company law, 7-intellectual property law, 8-competition policy, 9-financial services, and 28- consumer and health protection. All nine chapters are open, with closing benchmarks that remain to be fulfilled in each chapter. This cluster is key for Montenegro’s preparations for the requirements of the EU’s internal market and is of high relevance for early integration and the development of the Common Regional Market.

Progress was achieved in different areas e.g., on market surveillance, accreditation and standardisation; stepping up the Employment agency’s capacity on the European network of employment services; continued alignment with the Services Directive; legislation on accounting; acquis alignment on intellectual property rights. State aid transparency and ordering recovery of unlawful State aid; the stability of the banking sector of Montenegro also advanced, as well as legislative alignment on consumer protection and adoption of implementation legislation on health protection.

In the coming period, Montenegro is invited to focus on the following areas: ensure sufficient resources to the market surveillance, standardization and accreditation bodies; strengthening *acquis* implementation for the coordination of social security systems; finalise to establish a fully operational Point of Single Contact for regulated professions; align with the *acquis* on capital movements and payments, including on the acquisition of property rights and monitor the phasing out of the investors' citizenship scheme; align with the Transparency Directive; adopt the new national intellectual property strategy; improve the track record in the area of competition and State aid; complete alignment of national legislation with the EU consumer protection and health protection *acquis*, including on substances of human origin; complete legislative alignment with and implementation of the Capital Requirements Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation.