

Screening report

Albania

Cluster 4 – Green Agenda & Sustainable Connectivity

Chapter 14– Transport Policy

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 24 – 27 June 2019, update on 15 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 10-13 July 2023

Chapter 15– Energy

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 26-27 March 2019, update on 16 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 28 - 29 September 2023

Chapter 21– Trans European Networks

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 27 March and 27 June 2019, update on 15-16 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 13 July 2023 and 29 September 2023

Chapter 27– Environment and Climate Change

Date of screening meetings:

Explanatory meeting: 13-17 May 2019 updated 20 - 24 March 2023

Bilateral meeting: 19 - 23 June 2023

PREAMBLE

After the first Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations with Albania in July 2022, the Commission immediately launched the screening process.

The screening is based on the enhanced enlargement methodology, which was adopted in 2020 and organises the negotiating chapters in thematic clusters in order to inject dynamism into the negotiating process and to foster cross-fertilisation of efforts beyond individual chapters. These thematic clusters bring together the chapters / areas according to broader themes and will allow a stronger focus on core sectors. Within each individual cluster, screening is carried out through meetings on a chapter-by-chapter basis. The substance of those clusters and chapters, as set out in Annex II of the Negotiating Framework, mirror the requirements for membership stemming from the Copenhagen criteria.

This report provides an assessment of where Albania stands in terms of alignment and capacity to apply the EU *acquis* in Cluster 4. Since the Negotiating Framework also refers to the possibility of accelerated integration, thus where appropriate, Albania has requested participation in certain areas already before accession. This report provides the Commission's opinion and answer to these requests. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations remain essential elements of the enlargement process.

It is important to continue the dialogue with civil society and other stakeholders, with the aim of ensuring the support of citizens for the EU accession process. Albania is expected to strategically communicate the benefits and obligations of the accession process to its public.

A) INTRODUCTION

The enhanced enlargement methodology¹, as reflected in the Negotiating Framework with Albania, puts the negotiating chapters of the EU *acquis* into clusters. The **Green agenda & sustainable connectivity cluster** encompasses the legislation on green transition and energy, transport, infrastructure, environment and climate change. This cluster includes four chapters of the EU *acquis*:

- Under Chapter 14, **Transport** covers the smooth functioning of the single market for transport, protecting consumers and ensuring seamless transportation.
- Under Chapter 15, **Energy** covers a single set of rules for the functioning of the single market for energy but also for the greening of the EU's energy market. Rules on energy efficiency and renewable energy and the structure of the energy market are also included.
- Under Chapter 21, **Trans-European Networks** policies aiming to ensure that the EU's infrastructure is thoroughly connected in terms of transport and energy capacity are included.
- Under Chapter 27, **Environment and Climate Change** policies aiming to promote the protection of the environment and enabling Europe to become the first climate neutral continent in 2050 are included.

The chapters under the **Green agenda & sustainable connectivity** cluster should not be seen in isolation, as several have **commonalities and so interact with each other** to be mutually reinforcing. For example, **Energy, Trans-European Networks, Transport and Environment and Climate Change** are key components of the European Green Deal and Green Deal Industrial Plan.

This **screening report is structured** according to the **respective areas and chapters** of the cluster. Each area/chapter starts with a short overview of the **main content of the EU *acquis* / European standards**. Then each thematic area within a chapter first summarises the **country's presentations followed by the outcome of the expert discussions** of the bilateral screening meeting, ended with the **Commission's assessment**.

In the last **section**, based on its findings the Commission draws **recommendations for the next steps in the accession negotiations process related to the present Cluster**.

Albania stated that it accepts the EU *acquis* in the chapters of Cluster 4. It reserved however the right to request for transitional arrangements in certain limited areas of the *acquis* in this Cluster at a later stage in the negotiations.

¹ COM(2020) 57 final

B) CHAPTER 14 – TRANSPORT POLICY

The EU transport policy focuses on sustainable and smart mobility, supporting Europe’s competitiveness as well as the welfare of its citizens to enhance safety, security, and passenger rights, thereby contributing to social and territorial cohesion. Its objectives include improving the internal market by promoting a well-connected, safe, secure, competitive, resource-efficient, environmentally friendly, and user-friendly transport system, ensuring high levels of sustainable and smart mobility across the Union.

The EU transport policy facilitates the smooth, efficient, and free movement of people and goods across integrated networks utilizing all transport modes—road, rail, water, and air. It tackles critical issues like climate change, clean fuels, labour standards, and passenger rights, while fostering competitive conditions for industry growth and job creation. With over 30 years of implementation, the emphasis on sustainable and smart mobility has intensified, particularly in light of rising greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector, while at the same time promoting the sector’s competitiveness and contribution to a well-functioning internal market.

The EU transport policy is governed by Title VI, Articles 90-100 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and is implemented through numerous legislative texts, including regulations, directives, and decisions. The *acquis* under this chapter covers road transport and road safety, clean vehicles and intelligent transport systems, rail and combined transport, passenger rights, aviation, maritime transport and security, and inland waterways. A strong and well-equipped administration is key to implementing the EU transport *acquis*.

I. ROAD TRANSPORT

I.A ROAD CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

a. Country presentation

Regarding **road charging infrastructure**, Albania has **not aligned** with Eurovignette Directive 1999/62/EC on the Charging of Heavy Goods Vehicles for the Use of Certain Infrastructures. However, the current internal legal framework already provides a legal obligation to pay national taxes and fees. Taxes are based on circulation tax, carbon tax and tax on used vehicles transport for the type of fuels (gasoline and diesel). Albania intends to align with the Directive in the medium term (2027-2030).

b. Commission assessment

On road charging infrastructure, both heavy and light-duty vehicles are covered by Directive 1999/62/EC on the Charging of Heavy Goods Vehicles for the Use of Certain Infrastructures. However, no circulation tax pursuant to Chapter II is levied on heavy-duty vehicles. The current national legislation is **not aligned** with the Eurovignette Directive 1999/62/EC.

I.B EUROPEAN ELECTRONIC TOLLING SYSTEMS

a. Country presentation

On **European Electronic Tolling Systems (EETS)**, the national legal framework is **not aligned** with Directive (EU) 2019/520 on the Interoperability of Electronic Road Toll Systems and Facilitating Cross-border Exchange of Information on the Failure to Pay Road Fees in the Union. Albania plans to align with Directive (EU) 2019/520 by 2029. The future operationalisation of the Albanian road authority will have a dedicated tolling sector, which will coordinate the operation of the tolling systems in national road network.

Regarding accelerated integration, Albania would like to participate in the exchange of information on electronic road tolls.

b. Commission assessment

On European Electronic Tolling Systems (EETS), Albania is **not aligned** with the EU *acquis* and does not currently have interoperability with other Western Balkan partners. Plans to align with Directive (EU) 2019/520 on Electronic Tolling into national law, including accepting EETS providers on its territory, are a positive step forward.

Regarding accelerated integration, the Commission will further explore the possibility of Albania's participation in the exchange of information on electronic road tolls.

I.C ROAD OPERATORS

a. Country presentation

Regarding the **admission to the occupation of road operators**, Albania stated that its national legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 on Establishing Common Rules Concerning the Conditions to be Complied with to Pursue the Occupation of Road Transport Operator. The national legislation is already based in the consolidated text/version of this Regulation, amended by Regulation (EU) No 613/2012 (passengers) and by the Council Regulation (EU) No 517/2013 and covers the:

- rules for admission to the occupation of road transport operator for goods and passengers, and recognition of official documents;
- requirements for engagement in the occupation of road transport operator, (transport manager, conditions relating to the requirement of professional competence, penalties, etc.)
- certificate of professional competence (CPC) for the occupation of manager of road transport operator;
- detailed rules for the list of data, which are kept in the national electronic register on road transport undertakings;
- criteria, rules and procedures for the documentation for the issuance of licenses, authorisations and certificates for the operation of international transport of goods and passengers by road.

The country has established a road transport task force, which aims to improve road control of motor vehicles. The national electronic register will be ready at the end of 2026.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding the admission to the occupation of road operators, steps to align with Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 are welcomed. Albania is currently **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*.

I.D ACCESS TO THE HAULAGE MARKET

a. Country presentation

Regarding **access to the haulage market**, national legislation is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis* referring to the part of access to the road haulage market and Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 on Common Rules for Access to the International Road Haulage Market.

Cabotage is defined since 2016 and there is relevant guidance of licences for international transport. However, cabotage is not allowed in Albania and can only be acted upon special authorization. The road transport task force is working to enhance the cooperation with the Transport Community, and a Memorandum of Understanding was made with Kosovo* and the Republic of North Macedonia authorities to further align with the EU requirements. **b. Commission assessment**

Regarding the access to the haulage market, Albania is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*. Steps taken to align with Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 are welcomed.

I.E MARKET ACCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT AND MODEL OF DOCUMENTS FOR PASSENGER TRANSPORTS

a. Country presentation

On **access to the market to international passenger transport and model documents for passenger transport**, Albania stated that the national legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 on Common Rules for Access to the International Market for Coach and Bus Service and Regulation (EU) No 361/2014 as regards Documents for the International Carriage of Passengers by Coach and Bus.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding the access to the market to international passenger transport and model documents for passenger transport, Albania is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 and Regulation (EU) No 361/2014. Further efforts in the direction of full implementation are supported, in particular regarding the new provisions introduced by Mobility Package I.

I.F TARIFFS AND CRISIS MEASURES

a. Country presentation

On tariffs and crisis measures, national legislation is **not aligned** with Regulation (EEC) 4058/89 on the Fixing of Rates for the Carriage of Goods by Road between Member States and Regulation (ECC) 3916/90 on Measures to be Taken in the Event of a Crisis in the Market in the Carriage of Goods by Road. Albania plans to align with Regulation (EEC) 4058/89 in the medium term (2027-2030).

b. Commission assessment

On tariffs and crisis measures, Albania is **not aligned** with the EU *acquis*. Measures under the relevant EU Council Regulations dating from 1989 and 1990 have never been triggered. However, as these Regulations have not been repealed, they still constitute a part of the EU *acquis*.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

I.G DIMENSION AND WEIGHT OF VEHICLES

a. Country presentation

On dimension and weight of vehicles, Albania stated that national legislation is **partially aligned** with Directive 96/53/EC laying down Dimensions in National and International Traffic and the Maximum Authorized Weight in International Traffic. Only definitions are aligned while weight and length are not part of the internal framework. It is planned to be aligned in the medium term (2027-2030). Albania is willing to have access to the European Car and Driving Licence Information System (EUCARIS) Treaty, governing the European car and driving licence information system.

b. Commission assessment

On dimension and weight of vehicles, the consolidated version of Directive 96/53/EC dates from 2019. Albanian legislation **has not yet been fully aligned** with the provisions of Directive 96/53/EC and certain values (dimensions and weights) for certain types of heavy-duty vehicles differ from those set out in Annex I to the Directive.

I.H HIRED VEHICLES

a. Country presentation

On hired vehicles, Albania stated that its legislation has **been partially aligned** with the Directive 2006/1/EC on the Use of Vehicles Hired Without Drivers for the Carriage of Goods by Road, notably on criteria, rules and documentation for allocation of licenses and certificates for exercise of activity in international goods transport by road. The country will assess the compliance level in relation to the recent updates made in the EU *acquis*.

b. Commission assessment

On hired vehicles, Albania is **not aligned** with Directive 2006/1/EC. However, this is not a problem as the Directive foresees minimum conditions for the use of vehicles hired without drivers, in particular a minimum period in which a vehicle with a foreign number plate does not need to be re-registered in the country of use. Since Albania does not seem to impose conditions on the use of vehicles hired abroad and used on its territory, this is in line with the EU *acquis*.

I.I SOCIAL PROVISIONS, DRIVING TIME AND REST PERIODS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **social provisions, driving time and rest periods**, Albania stated that the national framework is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 on the Harmonisation of Certain Social Legislation Relating to Road Transport, Directive 2006/22/EC concerning Social Legislation Relating to Road Transport Activities, and Directive 2002/15/EC on the organisation of the working time of persons performing mobile road transport activities

Elements regarding approval on the organisation of working time for persons engaged in road transport, for driving working time and recording equipment are embedded. Albania is planning to update its legal framework in line with the new provisions of the mobility package supporting the alignment with Directive (EU) 2020/1057 laying down specific rules with respect to Directive 96/71/EC and Directive 2014/67/EU for Posting Drivers in Road Transport.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **social provisions, including driving time and rest periods**, Albania is **partially aligned**. For driving time and rest periods under Regulation (EC) 561/2006, steps are taken by Albania for the approximation of national legislation. Further efforts should be taken for full implementation, in

particular of the new provisions introduced by Mobility Package I and new rules on posting of drivers in road transport sector under Directive (EU) 2020/1057.

I.J SMART TACHOGRAPH

a. Country presentation

Regarding the **use of the tachograph**, national Law is **partially aligned** with EU *acquis*, such as Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 on Tachographs in Road Transport. The legal framework is in the process to be updated to fully align with the Regulation by 2026.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** regarding smart tachograph, steps taken by Albania toward full implementation of the digital tachograph and transition to the smart tachograph are welcomed and further efforts in this regard supported.

I.K DRIVING LICENSES

a. Country presentation

On **driving licenses**, Albania considered that the national legislation is **fully aligned** with Directive 2006/126/EC on Driving Licenses. Only around 36% of the population holds a driving licence (with particularly low shares among women), but the number of novice drivers is increasing rapidly.

A bilateral agreement with Germany was signed on the exchange of driving licences and the country is looking forward to integrate elements related to the proposal for a new driving licence which foresees EU-wide recognition of licences issued by third countries with a road safety record and driving licence scheme similar to the one in the EU.

The national legislation is **not aligned** with the Regulations (EU) 383/2012 and (EU) 575/2014 laying down Technical Requirements regarding Driving Licences which include a Storage Medium (microchip).

Regarding accelerated integration, Albania requested to join the European Car and Driving License Information System (EUCARIS) Treaty.

b. Commission assessment

On **driving licences**, steps taken by Albania to further align with the EU *acquis* are welcomed. On Regulation (EU) 383/2012, the introduction of driving licences with a microchip is optional. Therefore, Albania is not required to do so.

Regarding accelerated integration, the Commission looks favourably on Albania's accession to the EUCARIS treaty although it is to be noted that this is not an EU body.

I.L TRAINING OF DRIVERS

a. Country presentation

On the **training of drivers**, the national legislation is **fully aligned** with Directive (EU) 2022/2561 on the Initial Qualification and Periodic Training of Drivers of Certain Road Vehicles for the Carriage of Goods or Passengers.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **training of drivers**, Albania is **fully aligned** with Directive (EU) 2022/2561.

I.M VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

a. Country presentation

On **vehicle equipment**, Albania is **fully aligned** with Directive 89/459/EEC on the Tread Depth of Tyres, but only **partially aligned** with Directive 91/671/EEC on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems. However, Directives 2007/38/EC on Retrofitting of Mirrors to Heavy Good Vehicles and 92/6/EEC on Speed Limitation Devices are **not aligned** but are foreseen to be in the next five years.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has a **partial level of alignment** on vehicle equipment.

I.N SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ROAD TRANSPORT

On road transport, Albania is **partially aligned** with road transport *acquis*. There are already some good levels of preparation, notably in driving licences, and the country is planning to implement further the EU *acquis* in several cases in 2026. Further progress should be made in road charging infrastructure, EETS, Smart tachograph and vehicle equipment.

II. CLEAN VEHICLES AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

II.A CLEAN VEHICLES AND ALTERNATIVE FUELS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **clean vehicles**, the national legal framework is **partially aligned** with Directive 2009/33/EC on the Promotion of Clean and Energy-efficient Road Transport Vehicles. The national legal framework is embedding the requirements for authorities and contracting entities on how to procure works, supplies or services with specific environmental social standards. Authorities are at an early stage of preparation and the development of electric chargers is currently being supported.

There is **no alignment** with Directive 2014/94/EU on **Alternative Fuels Infrastructure** (AFID). Albania is at early stage of developing alternative fuels infrastructure and was informed of the need on future alignment and implementation under the new obligations set by the new Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 on the Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure, and Repealing Directive 2014/94/EU (AFIR).

b. Commission assessment

On **clean vehicles**, Directive 2009/33/EC on Clean Vehicles was revised by Directive 2019/1161, with important changes introducing the definition of a clean vehicles. Authorities are not required to use direct criteria and also mandatory targets were proposed to give a signal to the market.

Regarding **alternative fuels infrastructure**, Directive 2014/94/EU has been replaced by the new Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 (AFIR). This new instrument sets binding targets for Member States and will need to be implemented by Albania.

II.B INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM

a. Country presentation

On **intelligent transport system** (ITS), Albania stated that the national legislation is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2010/40/EU on the Framework for the Deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the Field of Road Transport. Rules for the implementation of the intelligent systems in the field of road transport and a connection with other modes of transport and a Strategy for the Application of Intelligent

Systems in Road Transport are approved by the respective legal acts of the Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, including implementation and enforcement actions such as the building of a traffic management centre in Tirana.

b. Commission assessment

On **intelligent transport systems**, the Directive 2010/40/EU has been amended by Directive (EU) 2023/2661 amending and the supplementing Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1926 on Multimodal Travel Information Services has been amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/490. Albanian's alignment will need to take into account these new legislative developments. In the meantime, Albania needs establish national access points, which is already an obligation under the previous *acquis* for ITS.

II.C SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – CLEAN VEHICLES AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

On clean vehicles and intelligent transport system, work should be reinforced as the country is still at **low level of alignment** with the EU. Following the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy, additional *acquis* was adopted recently and should be reflected in Albania's plans for further alignment. The National framework for the digital and decarbonisation transitions should be adapted.

III. ROAD SAFETY

III.A ROAD SAFETY STATISTICS AND TRENDS

a. Country presentation

On **road safety statistics and trends**, Albania stated that national legislation is **fully aligned** with Decision 93/704/EC on the Creation of a Community Database on Road Accidents. Albania has plans to upgrade its Accident Information System to bring it into line with EU good practice to enhance implementation and enforcement.

b. Commission assessment

On **road safety statistics and trends**, the number of fatalities has significantly fallen in the last years. However, there is still a large discrepancy between the national figure and the World Health Organization's estimated number of fatalities. Albania needs to take further steps to improve its data quality and accuracy.

III.B INLAND TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND CHECK ON TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **inland transport of dangerous goods** and **check on transport of dangerous goods**, the national framework is **partially aligned** with Directive 2008/68/EC on the Inland Transport of Dangerous Goods and Directive (EU) 2022/1999 on Uniform Procedures for Checks on the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road. Full alignment with Directive 2008/68/EC is foreseen in the medium term (2027-2030). Currently, the program, training, testing and issuance of the certificate for drivers and safety advisors in the transport of dangerous goods and the corresponding fees are adopted by the respective guidelines of the Minister of Infrastructure and Energy.

b. Commission assessment

On **inland transport of dangerous goods**, Albania is **partially aligned**. The availability of the legal acts in national language, foreseen for the future, is a condition to ensure proper application. In addition,

personnel need to be trained for implementation, both for the industry, as there are mandatory certificates of competence, and for authorities.

On **check on transport of dangerous goods**, the Directive provides for a common classification of infringements, based on their risk for safety, which must be duly implemented and applied. **III.C**

TRANSPORTABLE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT

a. Country presentation

Regarding **transportable pressure equipment**, Directive 2010/35/EU on Transportable Pressure Equipment, Albanian stated that **is fully aligned**, with an operational administrative structure in place (State Technical and Industrial Inspectorate) acting in cooperation with the custom authority in the field of pressure equipment.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **transportable pressure equipment**, Albania have taken steps to align with the Directive.

III.D ROADWORTHINESS, ROADSIDE INSPECTION AND REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS

a. Country presentation

For **roadworthiness, roadside inspection and registration documents**, the national law **is fully aligned** with Directive 2014/47/EU on the Technical Roadside Inspection of the Road Worthiness of Commercial Vehicles Circulating in the Union and Regulation (EU) 2019/621 on the Technical Information Necessary for Roadworthiness Testing of the Items to Be Tested, on the Use of the Recommended Test Methods, and Establishing Detailed Rules Concerning the Data Format and the Procedures for Accessing the Relevant Technical Information. Albania is **partially aligned** with Directive 2014/45/EU on Periodic Roadworthiness Testing of Motor Vehicles and their Trailers and Directive 1999/37/EC on the Registration Documents for Vehicles. These Directives will be aligned in the upcoming years.

b. Commission assessment

For **roadworthiness, roadside inspection and registration documents**, the changes introduced by Directives (EU) 2021/1717 and (EU) 2021/1716 have to be taken fully into account when reaching compliance with Directives 2014/45/EU and 2014/47/EU respectively. When it comes to registration documents with regards to Directive 1999/37/EC, there will likely be more requirements to exchange info between EU Member States in the future.

III.E DISTINGUISHING SIGNS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **distinguishing signs**, the legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation 2411/98/EC on the Recognition in Intra-Community Traffic of the Distinguishing Sign of the Member State in which Motor Vehicles and their Trailers are Registered.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on distinguishing signs.

III.F TUNNELS

a. Country presentation

On **tunnels**, Albania is almost **fully aligned** with a part of the provisions of Directive 2004/54/EC on Minimum Safety Requirements for Tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network on road tunnels existing on TEN-T Road Network.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding tunnels, the Commission stressed the necessity to build new tunnels that already comply with the directive as costs and efforts for refurbishment would be very high..

III.G ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

On **road infrastructure safety management**, Albania stated is **aligned** with Directive 2008/96/EC on Road Infrastructure Safety Management. Application is postponed upon accession. Nonetheless, preparatory work for implementation is currently ongoing.

b. Commission assessment

On **road infrastructure safety management**, there are positive developments. Albania has shown it has sufficient professional expertise to comply fully with the requirements of the Directive and to apply all the procedures.

III.H CROSS-BORDER EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON ROAD-SAFETY-RELATED TRAFFIC OFFENCES

a. Country presentation

Regarding **cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences**, national legislation is not **aligned** with Directive (EU) 2015/413 on facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences. The country aims for alignment as soon as possible.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding the cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences, Albania is **not aligned**. It is necessary to increase efforts to align with Directive (EU) 2015/413.

III.I SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ROAD SAFETY

In road safety, Albania is **partially aligned** in the EU *acquis*. Further work should be done on statistics, asset management and cross border exchange of information.

IV. RAIL TRANSPORT

IV.A SINGLE EUROPEAN RAIL AREA

a. Country presentation

On the **single European rail area**, the national legal framework is **fully aligned** with Directive 34/2012/EU establishing a Single European Railway. The implementing acts are **partially aligned**, notably:

- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1795 laying down Procedure and Criteria for the Application of the Economic Equilibrium Test;
- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/909 on the Modalities for the Calculation of the Cost that is Directly Incurred as a Result of Operating the Train Service;
- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2177 on Access to Service Facilities and Rail-Related Services;
- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/545 on Procedures and Criteria Concerning Framework Agreements for the Allocation of Rail Infrastructure Capacity;

- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/10 on Criteria for Applicants for Rail Infrastructure Capacity;
- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/171 on Certain Aspects of the Procedure of Licensing Railway Undertakings;
- Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/429 setting out the Modalities to be Followed for the Application of the Charging for the Cost of Noise Effects.

Implementation of these acts is foreseen by 2025. The market is opened for rail services at domestic level. The unbundling with the restructuring of Albanian Railways, separation of infrastructure management and operation, and setting up of railway authorities (licensing authority, regulatory authority and safety authority) Railway and Maritime Accident and Incident Investigation Authority should be completed by end of 2024.

b. Commission assessment

On the **single European rail area**, future development regarding the separation of infrastructure management and rail operations, which is the cornerstone of the reform, are welcome.

The Commission welcomes the establishment of Railway and Maritime Accident and Incident Investigation Authority, and it is invited to contact the network of National Investigation Bodies to cooperate with European peers.

IV.B EUROPEAN RAIL NETWORK FOR COMPETITIVE FREIGHT

a. Country presentation

Regarding the **European Rail network for competitive freight**, there is **no alignment** with Regulation 913/2010/EU concerning a European Rail Network for Competitive Freight. Plan is to adopt the relevant EU *acquis* by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

On the **European Rail network for competitive freight**, the revised TEN-T guidelines, as well as the proposal for a new Regulation on Rail Capacity Management, will have an impact in this regulatory area. Albania should focus its effort on the further alignment and implementation of Directive 2012/34/EU, as amended by Directive (EU) 2016/2370, and the relevant implementing acts.

IV.C TRAIN DRIVER LICENSING AND SOCIAL FIELD

a. Country presentation

On **train driver licensing/social field**, the **national legal framework** is **fully aligned** with provisions of Directive 2007/59/EC on the Certification of Train Drivers Operating Locomotives and Trains on the Railway System in the Community. Fully alignment with the Directive 2005/47/EC on the Agreement between the Community of European Railways (CER) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) on Certain Aspects of the Working Conditions of Mobile Workers Engaged in Interoperable Cross-Border Services in the Railway Sector has to be achieved by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding train driver licensing/social field, the Directive will soon be revised, and it will be important to have minimum content in the future, that opens the door for top-ups, additional contents. Some important steps are expected when it comes to digitalisation. The intention is to create a digitalised

European register including the integration of digitalisation into the training and licensing processes. There is an increase of common specifications for licensing within the EU.

IV.D INTEROPERABILITY

a. Country presentation

On **interoperability**, the Law on Interoperability in the Railway System is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2016/797 on the Interoperability of the Railway System within the European Union. Elements missing are notably entailing drafting, adoption and review of technical specifications for interoperability; deficiencies; conditions for the placing on the market of interoperability.

Albania will align with Regulation (EU) 1301/2014 on the Technical Specifications for Interoperability Relating to the ‘Energy’ Subsystem of the Rail System in the Union and Regulation (EU) 1300/2014 on the Technical Specifications for Interoperability Relating to Accessibility of the Union’s Rail System for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility in the next years.

b. Commission assessment

On **interoperability**, the main issue is the cooperation with the European Railways Agency (ERA), which shares the main responsibilities with the National Safety Agency (so called “dual system” applicable to the authorisation of vehicles and vehicle types, as well as for the certification of the safety performance of railway undertakings).

The legislation in compliance of which vehicles are authorised, the EU technical specifications for interoperability (TSI), is laid down in directly applicable implementing Regulations. These acts are also 100% mirrored in the international legislation of Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), to which Albania is member.

IV.E RAILWAY SAFETY

a. Country presentation

Regarding **railway safety**, national legislation **has been partially aligned** with provisions of Directive 2016/798/EU on Railway Safety, notably on safety development and management, safety certificates and authorizations and access to professional training centres. Albania plans to adopt relevant EU *acquis* in the medium-term period.

b. Commission assessment

On **railway safety**, the National Safety Agency is established, and it is important that it becomes fully operational to ensure and oversee the safety of the rail system in Albania.

IV.F EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR RAILWAYS

a. Country presentation

On the **European Agency for Railways**, the national legal framework is considered **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2016/796 on the European Union Agency for Railways, notably with the functions from the Railway Safety Authority and Railway Licensing Authority. Further alignment will take place in a mid-term period, once the National Safety authority becomes functional.

b. Commission assessment

On the **European Agency for Railways**, the Regulation establishing the Rights and Obligations of the European Railways Agency (ERA) implements the EU level part of the Rail Interoperability and the Rail Safety Directives. A solid alignment of these Directives is key, whereas non-EU Countries do not gain a lot by applying the ERA Regulation. The powers that ERA will gain in the country, will only manifest

itself once EU membership is obtained.

IV.G SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – RAIL TRANSPORT

On rail transport, Albania is **partially aligned** with the *acquis*. Development regarding the separation of infrastructure management and rail operations are welcome. Further efforts should be made on railway safety and completing the implementation of the institutional framework.

V. COMBINED TRANSPORT

a. Country presentation

The national legal framework is **partially aligned** with the Directive 92/106/EEC on the Establishment of Common Rules for Certain Types of Combined Transport of Goods between Member States. The country plans to be fully aligned, with focus on modality shifted to railway and waterway transport. Several investments need to take place in the railway sector to ensure proper implementation.

b. Commission assessment

The revision of the Combined Transport Directive is a key element of the legislative freight package aimed at promoting a more sustainable economy. To boost the competitiveness of combined transport, the initiative will provide both economic and regulatory incentives.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – COMBINED TRANSPORT

Albania is **partially aligned** with combined transport . Positive steps are taken with plans to fully align with shift towards railway and waterway transport. The country will have to take into consideration the new combined transport directive.

VI. PASSENGER RIGHTS

VI.A GENERAL FRAMEWORK

a. Country presentation

Albania stated that the legal framework on passenger rights across all modes of transport is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*, apart from air transport, where it stated the relevant national legislation has been **fully aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding passenger rights, the role of enforcement bodies and oversight activities are very important for ensuring enforcement of EU rules.

VI.B AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Concerning **air passenger rights**, the national legislation is **fully aligned** with the requirements of:

- Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on Air Carrier Liability in the Event of Accidents;
- Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 establishing Common Rules on Compensation and Assistance to Passengers in the Event of Denied Boarding and of Cancellation or Long Delay of Flights;
- Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 concerning the Rights of Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility when Travelling by Air.

b. Commission assessment

On **air passenger rights**, the Albanian legislation is fully aligned with the EU *acquis* in this domain.

VI.C RAIL PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **rail passenger rights**, Albania stated that the national legislation has been **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) 1371/2007 on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations. Albania intended to align its national legislation in 2023 with the new Regulation (EU) 2021/782 on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations which repealed Regulation (EC) 1371/2007. This would include implementation of the rights and obligations of railway undertakings and passengers.

The current framework notably entails assistance to travellers in the case of a delay in arrival or departure, passengers shall be kept informed of the situation and of the estimated departure time and estimated arrival time by the railway undertaking or by the station manager as soon as such information is available.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **rail passenger rights**, the national legislation **is not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2021/782.

VI.D BUS AND COACH PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **bus and coach passenger rights**, the national legislation has **been partially aligned** to Regulation (EU) 181/2011 on the Rights of Passengers in Bus and Coach Transport.

b. Commission assessment

On bus and coach passenger rights, the national legislation has been **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 181/2011.

VI.E WATERBORNE PASSENGER RIGHTS

a. Country presentation

Concerning **waterborne passenger rights**, the national legislation **is partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 1177/2010 concerning the Rights of Passengers when Travelling by Sea and Inland Waterway. The missing elements to be aligned are the obligations for carriers and terminal operators in the event of interrupted travel and general rules on information and complaints. Albania is planning to be **fully aligned** with these dispositions by 2025.

b. Commission assessment

On waterborne passenger rights, the national legislation has been **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 1177/2010.

VI.F SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – PASSENGER RIGHTS

Concerning passenger rights, the Albanian legislation is **partially aligned with the relevant EU rules**. Albania should strengthen in particular the role of enforcement bodies and their oversight activities

VII. AVIATION SAFETY

VII.A AVIATION SAFETY

a. Country presentation

Regarding the general framework, there is **partial alignment** with the EU *acquis* on aviation safety.

Full alignment was mentioned with requirements of:

- Regulation (EU) 996/2010 on the Investigation and Prevention of Accidents and Incidents in Civil Aviation;
- Regulation (EU) 376/2014 on the Reporting, Analysis and Follow-up of Occurrences in Civil Aviation and of Commission Implementing Regulation 2015/1018/EU, pursuant to Annex 1 of European Common Aviation Agreement (ECAA Agreement);
- Regulation (EU) 2019/947 on the Rules and Procedures for the Operation of Unmanned Aircraft;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/665 as regards Requirements for Providers of Air Traffic Management/Air Navigation Services and other Air Traffic Management Network Functions in the U-space Airspace Designated in Controlled Airspace;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/666 establishing the Common Rules for Effectively Making the Presence of Manned Aircraft Operating in U-space Airspace Electronically Conspicuous.

Regarding Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation and Establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (**EASA basic Regulation**), there is **partial alignment**. The amendment adopted in 2021 is still to be incorporated. The authorities are planning to update it in line with EU *acquis* by 2025.

b. Commission assessment

On **aviation safety**, Albania has made good progress in aligning EU aviation safety laws. At present, Albania is **partially aligned** with the Union's aviation safety *acquis*. There are still several areas where work continues or has even not started.

Efforts are made regarding building up the appropriate capacity and resources for the Albanian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), still this is an area for which further progress is needed.

While Albania's alignment with the Union's aviation safety *acquis* is ongoing, it is important to note that Albania is already an observer in EASA Management Board; its Civil Aviation Authority is a full Member of the EU's ramp inspection programme and that Albania is participating in EASA Advisory Bodies, which will support their efforts for further alignment. The EU *acquis* in this area is evolving quickly and new amendments will soon be incorporated.

VII.B AERODROMES

a. Country presentation

On **aerodromes**, Regulation (EU) 139/2014 laying down Requirements and Administrative Procedures Related to Aerodromes is **aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on aerodromes.

VII.C AIRCREW

a. Country presentation

For **aircrew**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EU) 1178/2011 laying down Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures Related to Civil Aviation Aircrew and its Amendments Listed in Annex 1 of ECAA Agreement. However, amendments from 2019 are planned to be incorporated by 2024.

Regarding **aircrew (balloons and sailplanes)**, Albania is in the process of aligning with Regulation (EU) 2018/395 laying down Detailed Rules for the Operation of Balloons and Regulation (EU) 2018/1976 laying down Detailed Rules for the Operation of Sailplanes, finalising it by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on aircrew.

VII.D AIR OPERATIONS

a. Country presentation

For **air operations**, there is **alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EU) 965/2012 laying down Technical Requirements and Administrative Procedures Related to Air Operations and its Changes according to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on air operations.

VII.E AIRWORTHINESS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **initial airworthiness**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EU) No 748/2012 on Initial Airworthiness pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement. Alignment is foreseen by 2024.

For continuing **airworthiness**, there is **partial alignment** with the requirements of the Regulation (EU) No 1321/2014 on the Continuing Airworthiness of Aircraft and Aeronautical Products and its amendments pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement. Alignment is foreseen by 2024.

Regarding additional **airworthiness**, there is **no alignment** with the requirements of the Regulation (EU) 2015/640 on Additional Airworthiness Specifications for a Given Type of Operations and amendments pursuant to Annex 1 of the ECAA Agreement. Legislation is at drafting stage and will be aligned by 2024.

For the **air safety list**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EC) 474/2006 establishing the Community List of Air Carriers which are Subject to an Operating Ban within the Community. Authorities are planning alignment by 2024.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on the *acquis* on airworthiness.

VII.F OCCURRENCE REPORTING

a. Country presentation

On **occurrence reporting**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EU) No 996/2010 on the Investigation and Prevention of Accidents and Incidents in Civil Aviation.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on occurrence reporting.

VII.G DRONES – UNMANNED AIRCRAFT

a. Country presentation

For **drones – unmanned aircraft**, the following acts are in process of alignment:

- Regulation (EU) 2021/664 on a Regulatory Framework for the U-space;
- Regulation (EU) 2021/666 establishing the Common Rules for Effectively Making the Presence of Manned Aircraft Operating in U-space Airspace Electronically Conspicuous.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on unmanned aircraft.

VII.H MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION SECURITY RISKS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **management of information security risks**, legislation is not aligned with Regulation (EU) 2022/1645 and Regulation (EU) 2023/203 regarding Requirements for the Management of Information Security Risks.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on management of information security risks.

VII.I SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AVIATION SAFETY

On aviation safety, Albania is **partially aligned**. There are still several areas where work should continue or has even not started, notably in the areas of air operations, air crew legislation, occurrences and aviation accident and incident investigations, drones and security legislation.

VIII. AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

VIII.A FRAMEWORK REGULATION

a. Country presentation

On **framework regulation**, there is **alignment** with Regulation (EC) 549/2004 laying down the Framework for the Creation of the Single European Sky. However, there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EU) 2019/317 laying down a Performance and Charging Scheme in the Single European Sky.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on air traffic management. It is to be noted that the Single European Sky regulatory framework is being reformed with the adoption by the European Parliament on 22 October 2024 of the SES2+ Regulation recast (EU)2024/2803, which will repeal Regulations (EC) No 549/2004, 550/2004, 551/2004.

VIII.B SERVICE PROVISIONS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **service provisions**, there is **full alignment** with requirements of the Regulation (EC) 550/2004 on the Provision of Air Navigation Services in the Single European Sky. There is **partial**

alignment with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2017/373 and Regulation (EU) 176/2011 on the Information to be Provided before the Establishment and Modification of a Functional Airspace.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on service provisions.

VIII.C AIR SPACE

a. Country presentation

For **air space**, there is **full alignment** with

- Regulation (EC) No 551/2004 on the Organisation and Use of the Airspace in the Single European Sky;
- Regulation (EC) No 2150/2005 laying down Common Rules for the Flexible Use of Airspace;
- Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 laying down the Common Rules of the Air and Operational Provisions Regarding Services and Procedures in Air Navigation according to Annex 1 from ECAA Agreement.

National legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) No 255/2010 laying down Common Rules on Air Traffic Flow Management, and it **is not aligned** with Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/123 laying down Detailed Rules for the Implementation of Air Traffic Management (ATM) Network Functions..

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on air space.

VIII.D INTEROPERABILITY

a. Country presentation

For **interoperability**, there is **alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EC) 552/2004 on the Interoperability of the European Air Traffic Management Network. Alignment in the medium term (2027-2030) is foreseen for the following acts:

- Implementing Regulation (EU) 1207/2011 laying down Requirements for the Performance and the Interoperability of Surveillance for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1770);
- Regulation (EU) 73/2010 laying down Requirements on the Quality of Aeronautical Data and Aeronautical Information for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2020/469);
- Regulation (EC) 262/2009 laying down Requirements for the Coordinated Allocation and Use of Mode S Interrogator Codes for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1771);
- Regulation (EC) 29/2009 laying down Requirements on Data Link Services for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1770);
- Regulation (EC) 633/2007 laying down Requirements for the Application of a Flight Message Transfer Protocol Used for the Purpose of Notification, Coordination and Transfer of Flights between Air Traffic Control Units (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1771);

- Implementing Regulation (EU) 1079/2012 laying down Requirements for Voice Channels Spacing for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1770);
- Regulation (EC) 1033/2006 laying down the Requirements on Procedures for Flight Plans in the Pre-Flight Phase for the Single European Sky (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1772);
- Regulation (EC) 1032/2006 laying down Requirements for Automatic Systems for the Exchange of Flight Data for the Purpose of Notification, Coordination and Transfer of Flights between Air Traffic Control Units (this regulation has been repealed and replaced by Regulation (EU) 2023/1771).

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on interoperability. It is to be noted that Regulation (EC) No 552/2004 on Interoperability has been repealed by Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 with a transition period of 5 years. All implementing regulations related to interoperability mentioned above have been repealed and moved under this regulation.

VIII.E SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY ATM RESEARCH (SESAR)

a. Country presentation

Regarding **Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR)**, there is **no alignment** with requirements of the Regulation 219/2007/EC on the Establishment of a Joint Undertaking to Develop the New Generation European Air Traffic Management System (SESAR). Regulation 2021/2085/EU establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe is **not aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on single European sky. There is no need at the moment to further align the legislation for the Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, as this can only be pursued following accession to the EU.

VIII.F SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Regarding **air traffic management** Albania is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*. Progress of the past years were limited, as the country focused on strengthening the Civil Aviation Authority and National Safety Authority. With this development, it is expected that the pace of alignment will speed up with the EU air traffic management *acquis*.

IX. AIR TRANSPORT

IX.A MARKET OPERATION

a. Country presentation

Regarding **market operation**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on Common Rules for the Operation of Air Services in the Community and Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation and Establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency.

The Civil Aviation Agency is the competent institution for implementation of the Regulation (EC) 1008/2008 on Common Rules for the Operation of Air Services in the Community.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on market operation.

IX.B STATISTICS

a. Country presentation

On **statistics**, there is **partial alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 437/2003 on Statistical Returns in Respect of the Carriage of Passengers, Freight and Mail by Air and Regulation (EC) 1358/2003 on the List of Community Airports.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on statistics.

IX.C INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

a. Country presentation

For **insurance requirements**, there is **partial alignment** with requirements from the Regulation (EC) 785/2004 on Insurance Requirements for Air Carriers and Aircraft Operators.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on insurance requirements.

IX.D SLOTS

a. Country presentation

Regarding slots, the national legal framework is **fully aligned** with Regulation (EEC) 95/93 on Common Rules for the Allocation of Slots at Community Airports.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **aligned** on slots.

IX.E Airport charges

a. Country presentation

For airport charges, Directive 2009/12/EC on Airport Charges is **fully aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is aligned on airport charges.

IX.F Ground Handling

a. Country presentation

On **ground handling**, the national legal framework is **fully aligned** with Directive 96/67/EC on access to the Ground Handling Market at Community Airports.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **aligned** on ground handling.

IX. G Computerised reservation systems

a. Country presentation

For **computerised reservation systems**, national legal framework **is partially aligned** with the Regulation (EC) No 80/2009 on a Code of Conduct for Computerised Reservation Systems.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on computerised reservation systems.

IX. H Environment and Noise

a. Country presentation

Regarding **environment and noise**, there is **partial alignment** with:

- Directive 2006/93/EC on the Regulation of the Operation of Aeroplanes;
- Regulation (EU) 598/2014 n the Establishment of Rules and Procedures with regard to the Introduction of Noise-Related Operating Restrictions at Union Airports within a Balanced Approach;
- Directive 89/629/EEC on the Limitation of Noise Emission from Civil Subsonic Jet Aeroplanes.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** on environment and noise.

IX.I WORKING TIME

a. Country presentation

On **working time**, Albania stated that there is **full alignment** with the minimum requests from the Directive 2000/79/EC concerning the European Agreement on the Organisation of Working Time of Mobile Workers in Civil Aviation concluded by the Association of European Airlines (AEA), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), the European Cockpit Association (ECA), the European Regions Airline Association (ERA) and the International Air Carrier Association (IACA).

b. Commission assessment

There is **partial alignment** on working time.

IX.J SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AIR TRANSPORT

Regarding **air transport**, Albania has made **good progress** with alignment of the EU aviation *acquis* in relation to market access. There are still several areas where work continues or needs to start, but the overall advancement is satisfactory. Further action needs to take place in relation to the climate and environmental sustainability of aviation and in line with the EU's legislation in this area (in force or upcoming).

X. AVIATION SECURITY

a. Country presentation

On **civil aviation security**, there is **partial alignment** with the requirements of:

- Regulation (EC) 300/2008 on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation Security;
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 laying down Detailed Measures for the Implementation of the Common Basic Standards on Aviation Security;

- Regulation (EU) 1254/2009 and Regulation (EU) 72/2010 laying down Procedures for Conducting Commission Inspections in the Field of Aviation Security;

The country is foreseen full alignment in the medium term (2027-2030).

b. Commission assessment

There is **partial alignment** on civil aviation security.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – AVIATION SECURITY

In the area of **civil aviation security**, Albania is encouraged to continue its efforts in ensuring progressive and full alignment to the evolving EU *acquis*. In the interim period, Albania may maintain compliance with the Union legislation by applying European Civil Aviation Conference Doc 30, Part II – Security.

XI. MARITIME TRANSPORT AND MARITIME SECURITY

XI.A TRADE FACILITATION

a. Country presentation

Regarding **trade facilitation**, there is **partial alignment** with, full alignment is foreseen in the medium term (2027-2030):

- Regulation (EU) 2019/1239 establishing a European Maritime Single Window Environment;
- Regulation (EU) 2023/204 laying down Technical Specifications, Standards and Procedures for the European Maritime Single Window Environment Pursuant;
- Regulation (EU) 2023/205 as regards the Establishment of the European Maritime Single Window Environment Data Set and amending its Annex.

b. Commission assessment

On **trade facilitation**, the establishment of a European Maritime Single Window, while the databases seem to be in place, the national legal framework defining governance for the maritime national single window, notably its scope in terms of reporting and technical specifications, is still missing. There is **partial alignment** with the EU *acquis*.

XI.B MARITIME PORTS

a. Country presentation

On **port reception facilities**, national legislation is **fully aligned** with Directive (EU) 2019/883 on Port Reception Facilities for the Delivery of Waste from Ships.

On **maritime ports**, the legal framework is **partially compliant** with Regulation (EU) 2017/352, which establishes a Framework for the Provision of Port Services and Common Rules on the Financial Transparency of Ports, notably on organisation of port services, minimum requirements, and procedure to ensure compliance with the minimum requirements. Efforts are underway to achieve full compliance by 2025.

b. Commission assessment

On **maritime ports**, the progress made on the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2017/352 establishing a Framework for the Provision of Port Services and Common Rules on the Financial Transparency of Ports is welcome. Further efforts are expected by 2025.

XI.C MARITIME SAFETY

a. Country presentation

Regarding **passenger safety**, there is **full alignment** with the Directive 2003/25/EC on Specific Stability Requirements for Ro-Ro Passenger Ships. There is **partial alignment** with the following EU *acquis* which is expected to be **fully aligned** by 2025:

- Directive (EU) 2017/2110 on a System of Inspections for the Safe Operation of Ro-Ro Passenger Ships and High-Speed Passenger Craft in Regular Service;
- Directive 98/41/EC on the Registration of Persons Sailing on Board Passenger Ships Operating to or from Ports of the Member States of the Community;
- Regulation (EC) 392/2009 on the Liability of Carriers of Passengers by Sea in the Event of Accidents.

Regarding **port state control**, there is **partial alignment** with Directive 2009/16/EC on Port State Control. Authorities are planning full alignment by 2025 and Albania intends to join the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MoU). In this regard, Albania has made progress to get off the “black list” and since 1 July 2024 Albania is on the “grey list” of the Paris MoU.

On **flag state control**, there is **full alignment** with:

- Directive 2009/21/EC on Compliance with Flag State Requirements;
- Directive 2013/54/EU concerning Certain Flag State Responsibilities for Compliance with and Enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006;
- Regulation (EC) 789/2004 on the Transfer of Cargo and Passenger Ships between Registers within the Community.

There is **partial alignment** with:

- Decision 2009/491/EC of on criteria to be followed in order to decide when the performance of organization acting on behalf of a flag State can be considered an unacceptable threat to safety and the environment;
- Regulation (EC) No 391/2009 on Common Rules and Standards for Ship Inspection and Survey Organizations;
- Directive 2009/15/EC on Common Rules and Standards for Ship Inspection and Survey Organizations and for the Relevant Activities of Maritime Administrations;
- Regulation (EU) No 788/2014 laying down Detailed Rules for the Imposition of Fines and Periodic Penalty Payments and the Withdrawal of Recognition of Ship Inspection and Survey Organizations.

Regarding **vessel traffic monitoring**, **full alignment** is achieved with Directive 2009/18/EC establishing the Fundamental Principles Governing the Investigation of Accidents in the Maritime Transport Sector. There is **partial alignment** with Directive 2011/15/EU establishing a Community Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System. Full alignment is planned by the national authorities by 2025.

Regarding **pollution prevention**, there is **full alignment** with requirements from the Directive 2000/59/EC on Port Reception Facilities for Ship-Generated Waste and Cargo Residue. There is **partial alignment**, notably on the disposal of dangerous, poisonous and explosive materials and waste is achieved for Directive 2005/35/EC on Ship Source Pollution and on the Introduction of Penalties, Including Criminal Penalties, for Pollution Offences and on Directive 1999/32/EC relating to a Reduction

in the Sulphur Content of Certain Liquid Fuels. There is **no alignment** for the following pieces of the *acquis* which expect alignment by 2025:

- Directive 2005/35/EC on Ship Source Pollution and on the Introduction of Penalties, Including Criminal Penalties, for Pollution Offences;
- Regulation (EU) No 911/2014 on Multiannual Funding for the Action of the European Maritime Safety Agency in the Field of Response to Marine Pollution caused by Ships and Oil and Gas Installations;
- Regulation (EU) 2015/757 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Maritime Transport.

On **accident investigation and insurance and liability**, there is **full alignment** with the EU *acquis*.

Regarding **maritime transport technical safety requirements**, there is **full alignment** with Regulation 2978/94/EC on the Application of Tonnage Measurement of Ballast Spaces in Segregated Ballast Oil Tankers and Regulation 336/2006/EC on the Implementation of the International Safety Management Code within the Community. **Partial alignment** is achieved with Regulation (EU) No 530/2012 on the Accelerated Phasing-In of Double-Hull or Equivalent Design Requirements for Single-Hull Oil Tankers.

Regarding the **European Maritime Safety Agency**, there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002 establishing a European Maritime Safety Agency. As third country, alignment will be made once joining the EU.

On **Committee on Safe Seas and the Prevention of Pollution from Ships** there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 2099/2002 establishing a Committee on Safe Seas and the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. Albania mentioned that alignment will be made once joining the EU.

On **seafarers**, the national legislation is **fully aligned** with Directive 2008/106/EC on the Minimum Level of Training of Seafarers. There is no alignment with Directive 79/115/EEC concerning Pilotage of Vessels by Deep-sea Pilots in the North Sea and English Channel and Directive 2005/45/EC on the Mutual Recognition of Seafarers' Certificates Issued by the Member States.

b. Commission assessment

On **maritime safety**, concerns remain regarding the quality of the vessels flying Albanian flag, The Commission welcomes the progress made in moving from the Paris MoU “black list” to the “grey list”. The steps taken to date thus far will need to be maintained by the national authorities. Albania should now be able to start the process of applying for cooperating membership of the Paris MoU. However, the future role of the Albanian Register of Shipping still has to be determined.

XI.D MARITIME SECURITY

a. Country presentation

On **maritime security**, authorities mentioned **full alignment** with:

- Regulation (EC) No 725/2004 on Enhancing Ship and Port Facility Security;
- Directive 2005/65/EC on Enhancing Port Security.

There is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 324/2008 laying down Revised Procedures for Conducting Commission Inspections in the Field of Maritime Security. As third country, alignment will be made once joining the EU.

b. Commission assessment

In the area of **maritime security**, the national legal framework is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*.

Albania is encouraged to ensure full alignment with measures of Directive 2005/65/EC on Enhancing Port Security and Regulation (EC) No 725/2004 on Enhancing Ship and Port Facility Security, which are going beyond the International Mandatory Measures of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code of the International Maritime Organisation.

XI.E SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – MARITIME TRANSPORT AND MARITIME SECURITY

On maritime transport and maritime security, Albania is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*. Good progress was made in the area of trade facilitation and maritime ports. However, substantive efforts are needed to enhance maritime safety in the country to be removed from the black list of the Paris MoU.

XII. INLAND WATERWAYS

a. Country presentation

Regarding **inland waterways**, Albania has a general **partial alignment** with the EU *acquis*. The country does not have any navigable rivers. Lake Shkodra is the only lake where recreational navigation takes place. No cargo is transported on the lake and there is no economic interest. International agreements are in place on transport rules on the lake with North Macedonia and Montenegro. Alignment with the remaining EU *acquis* is envisaged between three to five years.

For **vessels**, there is no alignment with:

-Directive (EC) No 2009/100 on Reciprocal Recognition of Navigability Licenses for Inland Waterway Vessels

- Directive 2010/35/EU on Transportable Pressure Equipment;
- Directive 2008/68/EC on Inland Transport of Dangerous Goods.

On **market access**, the national legislation is **not aligned** with the EU *acquis*.

Regarding **jobs and skills**, the national legislation is **partially aligned** with Directive 2014/112/EU implementing the European Agreement Concerning Certain Aspects of the Organization of Working Time in Inland Waterway Transport. The rest of the EU *acquis* is not aligned, such as Directive 87/540/EEC on Access to the Occupation of Carrier of Goods by Waterway in National and International Transport and on the Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Certificates and other Evidence of Formal Qualifications for this Occupation, and Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Inland Navigation.

On **environment**, there is **no alignment** with the EU *acquis*, notably on:

- Directive 98/70/EC on the Quality of Petrol and Diesel Fuels and its amending act;
- Directive (EU) 2016/1628 on Requirements Relating to Gaseous and Particulate Pollutant Emission Limits and Type Approval for Internal Combustion Engines for Non-Road Mobile Machinery;
- Directive 2014/94/EU on the Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure.

Regarding **river information services**, the national legislation is **not aligned**.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has a good understanding of the EU **inland waterways** *acquis*, notably in relation to market access, jobs and skills, vessels, environment, and river information system. Albania is advised to prioritise alignment the EU *acquis*, especially on job and skills and environment. In particular, it was mentioned to focus on the full alignment with:

- Directive 2014/112/EU implementing the European Agreement Concerning Certain Aspects of the Organisation of Working Time in Inland Waterway Transport;
- Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Inland Navigation, Albania still needs to align with Art. 39 (3);
- Directive (EU) 2021/1233 as regards the Transitional Measures for the Recognition of Third-Country Certificates, in which it was advised to align it fully.

Regarding the legislation applicable for **river information** systems (RIS), Albania does not need to prioritise it as it lacks interconnected inland waterways with Member State according to the scope of the RIS Directive.

Cooperation with the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat should continue, especially the active participation on the working groups supporting the implementation of the action plan for waterborne transport.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – INLAND WATERWAYS

Albania has a good understanding of the EU **inland waterways** *acquis*, notably in relation to market access, jobs and skills, vessels, environment, and river information system. Albania is advised to prioritise alignment of the social part of the EU *acquis*.

XIII. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - TRANSPORT POLICY

a. Country presentation

Albanian authorities presented their vision on fighting against corruption on chapter 14. The general policy framework is based on the cross-cutting strategy against corruption and action plan covering the 2020-2023 period. It focuses on three main pillars: prevention, repression and awareness raising. The institutional framework is in place, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

The main strategic objective is to support the digitalisation of public institutions, which have seen an increase of functional electronic services for citizens, businesses and public institutions.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and other institutions supporting the alignment with chapter 14 have approved and published in their webpages a Transparency Program and put in place Information Coordinators who can be contacted by the public. In addition, an Action Plan on Integrity Risk Management for 2022-2025 was approved by the Ministry of Infrastructure. Supporting transparency, legal and sublegal acts for transport sector are published in the webpage of Ministry.

In relation to digitalisation, the country focuses on the importance of fight against corruption in investment related project with the increase of transport services and e-documentation. So far, 52 transport services are listed in the e-Albania platform. Online services are also available on the official webpage.

In addition, the Ministry is supporting the implementation of all government policies on the fight against corruption, increasing the public participation of transport related initiatives and reinforcing security of information.

The National Coordinator Against Corruption is drafting the new Intersectoral Anti-Corruption Strategy covering the period 2023-2030.

b. Commission assessment

Good progresses were made by Albania to set up institutions and legal framework to fight against corruption in chapter 14.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Albania has the institutions and legislative framework in place to effectively fight corruption.

C) CHAPTER 15 – ENERGY POLICY

The EU energy policy focuses on energy security, sustainability, and integration of energy markets. It is based on key policy areas, such as energy efficiency, including energy performance of buildings, eco design and labelling, renewable energy, gas and oil storage, electricity and gas markets, nuclear energy, nuclear safety and radiation protection, and overall governance.

The EU energy policy is recognised in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU Art. 114, 122, 194, and 216-218.

An increasingly important part of the EU energy policy is the links with climate, environment, and transport policy. These areas are at the core of the European Green Deal and the REPowerEU strategy, which aims to make the EU climate neutral by 2050 and ensure the energy independency of the EU, based on a systemic and coherent approach within the different areas.

Implementation and enforcement of the EU energy *acquis* requires significant investments both in infrastructure and policy frameworks. This needs to be accompanied by a structured co-operation amongst all stakeholders including different ministries and agencies, industry, and civil society. A strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for compliance. Albania is a Contracting Party to the Energy Community Treaty since 2006, and a Contracting Party of the Energy Charter Treaty.

I. HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

a. Country presentation

Albania is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2018/1999/EU on Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Change (Governance Regulation), through its Climate Law 155/2020 and Energy Efficiency Law 124/2015. Albania has approved its National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) for 2021-2030 and the plan is currently under revision to be amended in accordance with the Energy Community Recommendation. The coordination process for drafting the NECP is the responsibility of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. In accordance with the Minister's Order No. 284 on the Approval of the Structures and Process of the Drafting of the NECP for the period 2021-2030, a comprehensive delineation of participating institutions and their specific roles in the NECP's formulation has been established.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding Governance Regulation, Albania has made some efforts to align with and implement the Governance Regulation, this can be seen by the approval of NECP in 2021, being one of the first countries in the region. Further efforts, including the alignment of Albania's national legislation with all the provisions of the Governance Regulation in particular related to the preparation of integrated progress reports and reviewing the Albanian NECP in line with the 2030 Energy Community targets and Energy Community recommendations, need to be undertaken.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

Overall, on the Governance Regulation, which is the main horizontal Regulation covering the different energy and climate areas, Albania is **partially aligned**. Focus should be given to the adoption of the final NECP and the full alignment with all the provisions of the Governance Regulation.

II. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

II.A ENERGY EFFICIENCY

a. Country presentation

On energy efficiency, Albania is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2012/27/EU on Energy Efficiency (2012 EED), through Law 124/2015 on Energy Efficiency, and is not aligned with Directive (EU) 2018/2002 on Energy Efficiency (2018 EED), which amends the 2012 EED.

Albania has introduced amendments into national law to promote the development of the market model of energy services (Energy Service Companies – ESCO); energy audits; and monitoring and verification platform. However, several amendments are still needed to be aligned with 2012 and 2018 EED, this includes provisions on: energy savings obligations; remote metering for gas and electricity and billing and metering; billing information for heating, cooling and domestic hot water; public procurement for the purchase of products, services and buildings with high energy efficiency performance; establishment of yearly renovation rates for surfaces of public buildings.

In the area of energy performance of buildings, Albania is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2010/31/EU on the Energy Performance of Buildings (Recast EPBD) but it is not aligned at all with Directive (EU) 2018/844 on Energy Performance of Buildings, which amends the 2010 EPBD (2018 EPBD amendment).

Albania has introduced amendments into national law to equip all new and existing buildings (that undergo major renovation) with Energy Performance Certificates and to comply with minimum energy performance requirements. However, several amendments are still needed in order to be fully aligned with the EPBD as amended, this includes establishment of inspection of heating and air-conditioning systems; establishment of technical building systems, electromobility and smart readiness indicators; adoption of the long-term renovation strategy and financial mechanisms.

In addition, Albania is **fully aligned** with Delegated Regulation (EU) 244/2012 establishing a Comparative Methodology Framework for Calculating Cost Optimal Levels of Minimum Energy Performance Requirements for Buildings and Building Elements. Albania's is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2020/2155 establishing an Optional Common European Union Scheme for Rating the Smart Readiness of Buildings and Regulation (EU) 2020/2156 detailing the Technical Modalities for the Effective Implementation of an Optional Common Union Scheme for Rating the Smart Readiness of Buildings.

Albania introduced 2030 energy efficiency targets and policy measures in the first version of its NECP adopted in 2021, the Plan is approved and currently undergoes the process of being updated to reflect new levels of ambition. In addition, in 2022 Albania introduced a mandatory 15% energy saving targets for the public sector and new measures for households during the duration of the emergency in the electricity supply, including a financing scheme for subsidizing the installation of solar water heaters.

b. Commission assessment

Much greater effort is needed for Albania to accelerate its alignment with the EU energy efficiency *acquis*, both for the EED and for the EPBD. For full alignment with the 2018 EED several by-laws are needed to incorporate key provisions. Among these provisions is Art. 7 of the 2018 EED, energy savings obligation, which Albania has not yet implemented, but is planning to do so by a mixture of energy efficiency obligation scheme and alternative measures. On efficient district heating and cooling, an alignment and implementation of several provisions is missing. Currently Albania does not have district heating and cooling network and is assessing the options of moving towards high-efficiency co-generation and efficient heating and cooling. In addition, the country needs to align the energy efficiency

targets present in their NECP with the Energy Community 2030 targets. The proposed timeline to fully align with the 2018 EED by the end of 2024 seems ambitious.

For the EPBD, many key provisions of the Recast EPBD are still missing in the national legislation and Albania has not aligned yet at all with any of the requirements of the 2018 EPBD amendment. Nevertheless, Albania has introduced national provisions for new and existing buildings, that undergo major renovation, to be issued with Energy Performance Certificates that comply with the minimum energy performance requirements. For Albania to become aligned with the requirements of the EPBD as amended, the national legislation would have to include, among others, provisions on setting of minimum energy performance requirements with a view to achieving cost-optimal levels of energy performance; on nearly zero-energy buildings; on establishment of inspection of heating and air-conditioning systems, including for the installation of building automation and control systems; on establishment of technical building systems and buildings requirements, including for the installation of self-regulating devices; on establishment of a calculation methodology for the energy performance of buildings; on requirements on electromobility; on smart readiness indicators; on financial incentives and market barriers; and on setting up of independent control systems for energy performance certificates and inspection reports. In addition, the long-term renovation strategy also needs to be adopted.

In parallel with the above-mentioned alignment of the substantive EPBD requirements, Albania will have to lay down at national level the rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the national provisions adopted in Art. 27 of the EPBD.

Albania has **aligned** with Delegated Regulation (EU) 244/2012, which is a positive step. However, it is important that Albania applies the Regulation correctly for calculating cost optimal levels of energy performance for the purpose of setting minimum energy performance requirements that achieve cost-optimal levels. Albania has a functioning Energy Efficiency Agency, however the division between experts working specifically on the EED on the one hand and on the EPBD on the other hand is not clear.

Given the limited extent of alignment at present, it seems ambitious to expect Albania to be fully aligned with the EPBD as amended by the end of 2024, as established by the current timeline. It is therefore important that Albania provides a clear action plan on the steps to be taken for the alignment of the EPBD while indicating a clear expected timeline of adoption.

II.B ENERGY LABELLING AND ECO-DESIGN

a. Country presentation

On Eco-Design, Albania has **not yet aligned** with Directive (EU) 2009/125/EC establishing a Framework for Setting of Eco-Design Requirements for Energy-Related Products and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/341 on Eco-Design Requirements.

On energy labelling, Albania is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/1369/EC and Regulation (EU) 2021/340 setting a Framework for Energy Labelling and Energy Labelling Requirements. Albania is **fully aligned** with Directive 2010/30/EU, which preceded Regulation (EU) 2017/1369/EC, on the Indication by Labelling and Standard Product Information of the Consumption of Energy and other Resources by Energy-Related Products and had a similar scope. Albania is **not yet aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2020/740 on the Labelling of Tires. The State Inspectorate of Market Surveillance oversees implementing market surveillance in the field of energy labelling and other sources of products with an impact on energy.

b. Commission assessment

Albania made limited efforts to align with EU eco-design and energy labelling legislation, further progress is needed on the alignment of eco-design.

Albania has **aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 for Energy Labelling the Draft law on the labelling of products with an energy impact.

Increased administrative capacity is needed if Albania aims to align with:

- Directive 2009/125/EC, Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/340 and Regulation (EU) 2020/740 by the end of 2025;
- and with Regulation (EU) 2021/341 by 2027.

All of this while ensuring the implementation and market surveillance. In addition, on labelling, it is key that the Albanian authorities further develop their energy labels, including QR code, associated database, and flag. Moreover, it is important that Albania aligns with the EU legislation on product imports coming from third countries.

For Regulation (EU) 2020/740 on the Labelling of Tires, it is key that Albania ensures alignment with this Regulation and that the level of sanctions for the non-compliance of labelling of tires is in line with the EU provisions.

II.C SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ENERGY EFFICIENCY

On energy efficiency the legislation of Albania is **partially aligned**, with a very low level of alignment on eco-design and products. Legislation on energy efficiency needs to be further developed, by adopting long term renovation strategy, putting in place the requirements for eco-design, implementing energy efficiency obligations schemes or alternative measures, and aligning with the energy efficiency to the 2030 Energy Community targets. Future plans of alignment with EU *acquis* seem ambitious and need to be carefully monitored.

III. RENEWABLE ENERGY

a. Country presentation

On renewable energy, Albania is **partially aligned** with Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on Renewable Energy (RED II Directive). Different provisions of the RED II Directive are already in place, these include: introduction of new auction schemes, establishment of a renewable energy operator and provisions for annual net-billing scheme for prosumers replacing previous monthly net-metering. In addition, within the framework of the regional project implemented by the Energy Community Secretariat, an electronic registry for guarantees of origin (GOs) was established for Albania. It became operational by regulator ERE in May 2023. As of May 2024, ERE became member of Association of Issuing Bodies (AIB).

Renewable energy producers have guaranteed priority access to the grid, and network operators have developed medium and long-term plans to accommodate new renewable electricity generators into the grid. The regulator publishes tariffs for connection to the network. The concept of renewables self-consumers was established in Albania and expands the empowerment of final customers. Renewables self-consumers have a maximum capacity of 500 kW, with the right to generate, consume, store and sell their excess production of renewable electricity, individually or through aggregators, including through bilateral agreements, electricity suppliers and peer-to-peer trading arrangements. Albania has incorporated changes into the Renewables Law, which outlines a transition to net billing for self-consumed renewables, scheduled to commence on 1st January 2024. Provisions related to **sustainability of biofuels** are still **not aligned** and the entire legal framework related to renewable fuels for transport remains not aligned. Therefore, certain amounts of biofuel are used in Albania's transport sector, but it is not certified as biofuel which has fulfilled the sustainability criteria. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE) has

developed a new draft law on biofuels reflecting the new elements of RED II, but this is still in stakeholder consultation phase.

On **permitting**, Albania has **not aligned** with Regulation EU 2022/2577 on Accelerate the Deployment of Renewable Energy.

In the NECP Albania has a target of achieving 54,4% share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption in the adopted NECP and in line with the 2030 target set by the Energy Community.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has made good progress in aligning with renewable energy *acquis*, however key provisions on biofuels are missing, with further efforts clearly needed in this field. The targets presented in the NECP have the required level of ambition. Feed-in-tariffs are no longer incentivised through key amendments introduced to the Albanian Renewable Law. Net-metering is in place and net-billing is expected to be in place by the 1st January of 2024. The electronic registry for guarantees of origins was established, but further alignment is needed. The next critical milestone for achieving a fully operational GO system includes the adoption of disclosure rules and the calculation of the residual energy mix.

Albania will also need to align with Directive (EU) 2023/2413 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the Promotion of Energy from Renewable Sources.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – RENEWABLE ENERGY

The legislation of Albania is **partially aligned** with the *acquis* on renewable energy. Focus should be given to the alignment with biofuels provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive. The NECP target for renewable energy is aligned with the 2030 Energy Community targets.

IV. SECURITY OF SUPPLY

a. Country presentation

Currently, natural gas production in Albania is close to zero, due to the end of production from existing gas fields. The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) is operational since 2020, but Albania has no gas supply for domestic consumption and no underground natural gas storage.

Albania is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 concerning Measures to Safeguard the Security of Gas Supply; however, Albania is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 on Gas Storage (Regulation on Gas Storage). On Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 several provisions of the gas emergency rules are **aligned** through Law 102/2015, on the Natural Gas Sector and CoM Decision 417, on Approval of the Natural Gas Emergency Plan. These national provisions are in compliance with the minimum standards of the security of supply, and rules for guaranteeing a reliable and effective gas supply. Alignment and implementation of Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 will depend on future gasification projects and potential gas storage developments. Nevertheless, Albania aims to attract investments for development of gas storage infrastructure (e.g., UGD Dumrea) along with the country's gasification and gas market development plans.

On electricity, Albania is **not yet aligned** with Regulation 2019/941 on Risk Preparedness in the Electricity Sector and repealing Directive 2005/89/EC (Regulation on Risk Preparedness for the Electricity Sector). Nevertheless, Albania has **fully aligned** with the rules on security of electricity supply stemming from Directive 2005/89/EC concerning Measures to Safeguard Security of Electricity Supply and Infrastructure Investment. However, their practical implementation is not yet ensured due to missing Electricity Security of Supply Rules to be adopted by the Energy Regulator Authority (ERE). On

Regulation (EU) 2019/941, Albania **has yet to** to ensure national alignment of the new regulatory regime introduced under .

On oil stocks, Albania **is partially aligned** with the EU *acquis*. The Law on Establishment, Maintenance and Management of Minimum Security Stocks of Crude Oil and Petroleum Products has been drafted with support from the Energy Community Secretariat. In 2022, three draft regulations and a governmental decision were prepared to establish a system that aligns with the Directive's requirements while retaining the industry-based model. The current emergency procedures remain insufficient to meet the Directive's standards. The legal framework is under discussion and adoption is expected in 2025. Additionally, the reporting system and calculation methodology do not comply with Directive 2009/119/EC.

b. Commission assessment

On gas, Albania has made some efforts to implement the gas security of supply provisions and to be aligned with the EU *acquis*, by amending national laws. Regulation on Gas Storage is **partially aligned** and needs to be fully aligned by ensuring the existence of provisions on burden sharing mechanism and certification procedures, which are still valid for countries with gas storage facilities. The certification of the transmission system operator should be complete in the shortest possible timeframe, and the relevant secondary acts should be finalised and approved.

On electricity sector, Regulation on Risk Preparedness for Electricity, is **not yet aligned**. The alignment will require significant changes in the primary legislation and development of new bylaws for example on the Risk-Preparedness Plans.

On oil, Albania is **partially aligned** with the Oil Stocks Directive and the alignment will require changes in different provisions. In addition, the reporting system and calculation methodology is not fully aligned with the requirements of the legislation, with only partial data being reported.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – SECURITY OF SUPPLY

On security of supply, the legislation of Albania is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis* on security of supply for gas, electricity and oil. On gas, key provisions on burden sharing mechanism need to be put in place and all the certification procedures need to be complete. On electricity more efforts need to be undertaken to align with the Regulation on Risk Preparedness for the Electricity Sector. On oil further alignment with the legislation needs to be ensured.

V. INTERNAL MARKETS

V.A ELECTRICITY MARKET

a. Country presentation

On **electricity**, Albania electricity transmission system operator of Albania (OST) is a member of European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) since 2017. OST's transmission system is permanently synchronously connected with the Continental European Network. OST has been certified by Energy Regulator Authority (ERE) Board as an unbundled Transmission Systems Operator (TSO). The Albanian Power Exchange (ALPEX) is functional and is defined by ERE as a Nominated Electricity Market Operator (NEMO). As of February 2024, Albanian day-ahead market is coupled with the Kosovo* electricity market through ALPEX operation in both markets. Electricity balancing market has been functional since April 2021. The competitive balancing and ancillary services market is established, but still operates with limited liquidity. All electricity consumers in Albania are eligible to choose and switch their supplier, however full market opening is not yet achieved. The electricity production corporation KESH has a public service obligation to provide electricity for

universal service. Grid connections rules applicable for generators, demand, and high voltage direct current systems and direct current-connected power park modules are partially aligned. Allocation of cross-border capacities for the market participants comes from the Coordinated Auction Office SEE CAO in Podgorica.

Albania is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2019/943 on Common Rules for the Internal Market for Electricity and Directive (EU) 2019/944 on Common Rules for the Internal Market for Electricity, with provisions stemming from the third energy package being already aligned.

Albania states that several provisions introduced by Regulation (EU) 2019/943 are **not fully aligned**, this includes:

- Balance responsibility & balancing market (Art. 5-6 & 10);
- Day-ahead & intraday markets (Art. 7-8 & 10) ;
- Day-ahead & intraday markets (Art. 7-8 & 10);
- Forward markets (Art. 9);
- Capacity allocation (Art. 14-17);

Several provisions introduced by Regulation (EU) 2019/943 are not aligned, this includes:

- Dispatching & re-dispatching (Art. 12-13);
- Congestion management (Art. 19);
- Resource adequacy/capacity mechanisms (Art. 20-26);
- Regional cooperation of TSOs and DSOs (Art. 34-47 and 52-57);
- revised competences of ERE, TSO and DSO.

In addition, several provisions of Directive (EU) 2019/944 are also missing this includes:

- Market-based supply prices (Art. 5);
- Dynamic electricity price contract (Art. 11);
- Aggregation (Art. 13 & 17);
- Comparison tools (Art. 14);
- Active customers (Art. 15);
- Citizen energy communities (Art. 16);
- Billing & billing information (Art. 18, Annex I);
- Smart metering systems (Art. 19-22, Annex II);
- Data management (Art. 23-25);
- Energy poverty (Art. 29);
- Out-of-court dispute settlement (Art. 26);
- Flexibility in electricity distribution networks (Art. 32);
- Integration of electromobility (Art. 33);
- Energy storage (Art. 42 et alia);
- Ownership of energy storage facilities (Art. 36 & 54);
- Revised competences of ERE, TSO & DSO.

On **electricity network** codes, Albania is **partially aligned** with:

- Regulation (EU) 2016/631 establishing a Network Code on Requirements for Grid Connection of Generators;
- Regulation (EU) 2016/1388 establishing a Network Code on Demand Connection;
- Regulation (EU) 2016/1447 establishing a Network Code on Requirements for Grid Connection of High Voltage Direct Current Systems and Direct Current-Connected Power Park Modules;

Albania is only **partially aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2017/2195 establishing a Guideline on Electricity Balancing.

Albania is **not yet aligned** with:

- Regulation (EU) 2015/1222 establishing a Guideline on Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management (CACM Guideline);
- Regulation (EU) 2016/1719 establishing a Guideline on Forward Capacity Allocation (FCA Guideline);
- Regulation (EU) No 838/2010, on Guidelines relating to the Inter-Transmission System Operator Compensation Mechanism and a Common Regulatory Approach to Transmission Charging.

However, on the latter, OST has signed the Inter-TSO Compensation (ITC) clearing and settlement multi-year agreement, which is designed to compensate parties for costs associated with losses resulting from hosting electricity transit flows via transmission networks.

b. Commission assessment

On **electricity**, Albania has made some progress to align and implement the Electricity Integration Package, for which the deadline was 31 December 2023 apart from earlier implementation of the Third Energy package, through unbundling and certification of the TSO, establishment of the NEMO, launch of day-ahead market, and operationalisation of the balancing market. However, key steps for the establishment of a competitive electricity market are still missing. These include alignment with the Electricity Integration Package, which includes transposition of Directive 2009/944, Regulation (EU) 2019/943, Regulation (EU) 2019/942 and Regulation (EU) 2019/941 as well as Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management (CACM), Electricity Balancing and Forward Capacity Allocation Guidelines, System Operation Guidelines and Emergency and Restoration Network Code, alignment with key provision on retail markets and implementation of an intra-day market. Future steps in aligning with Directive 2009/944, Regulation (EU) 2019/943, Regulation (EU) 2019/942 and Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1222 are of key importance to allow for further integration of the Albania electricity systems with the countries in the region and the EU.

V.B GAS MARKET

a. Country presentation

On **natural gas**, there is not a domestic natural gas market in Albania. Albgaz is the combined system operator of Albania, certified by ERE, which operates both transmission and distribution natural gas networks. Albgaz has the status of observer at ENTSO-G. National legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation (EC) 715/2009 on Conditions for Access to the Natural Gas Transmission Networks, and **fully aligned** with and Directive 2009/73 through Law 102/2015 on the Gas Sector.

On network codes for gas, there is full alignment with

- Regulation (EU) 2017/460 establishing a Network Code on Harmonized Transmission Tariff Structures for Gas;
- Regulation (EU) 2017/459 establishing a Network Code on Capacity Allocation Mechanisms in Gas Transmission Systems; and
- Regulation (EU) 703/2015 establishing a Network Code on Interoperability and Data Exchange Rules.

This was ensured through the adoption of the network codes by ERE, although practical implementation is yet missing as there is no domestic natural gas market in Albania. There is **no alignment yet** with Regulation (EU) 312/2014 establishing a Network Code on Gas Balancing of Transmission Networks.

Regarding the Regulation (EU) 1227/2011 on Integrity and Transparency of the Wholesale Energy Market (REMIT), Albania is **partially aligned**. Articles 6, 8, 10, 19, 20 and 21 of REMIT, concerning reporting obligation, central data collection and market surveillance by ACER, are not aligned with Albanian legislation since these provisions are applicable for the members of ACER solely and the full REMIT will be adopted in a second phase in the context of the Energy Community Treaty. On enforcement, ERE monitors the performance of market participants and the implementation of electricity market rules within its competence. ERE has the mandate to impose fines on natural and legal persons for violations of electricity market rules.

b. Commission assessment

On **gas**, Albania has made some efforts, by aligning with Directive 2009/73 and gas network codes - Regulations (EU) 2017/460, Regulation (EU) 2017/459, and Regulation (EU) 703/2015 - rules on procedures for ensuring third party access to the transmission system and data availability on transmission, supply, distribution, operation in storage spaces, operation LNG and balancing market as key market data and at the same time their availability to all natural gas market participants as a prerequisite for the functioning of the market in a transparent and non-discriminatory way. However, the gas network code regarding balancing is not yet in place. Implementation of natural gas market rules through ERE's regulatory, market monitoring and supervisory powers should continue.

Further work and efforts are needed to align national law with Regulation (EU) 1227/2011, in particular concerning the implementation of the "full-REMIT" model. Likewise, consistent efforts are required for the alignment to Regulation (EU) 2019/942.

V.C SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – INTERNAL MARKETS

The legislation of Albania is **partially aligned** with the EU *acquis* on internal markets. Legislation on gas and electricity markets needs to be further aligned to allow for further integration of the Albanian energy market with the countries in the region and the EU.

VI. NUCLEAR ENERGY

a. Country presentation

Albania has no nuclear power plant, no research reactor, no fuel-cycle facility and no nuclear installation operating in its territory. Nevertheless, Albania has a considerable activity in applying radiation and radioisotopes in medicine, industry, agriculture. Albania has nuclear materials not currently in use, but previously originating from research activities by universities. Albania has signed all key conventions under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), these include: Non-Proliferation Treaty; Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol for the Application of Safeguards to all Nuclear Activities; Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; Convention on Nuclear Safety; Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident; and the IAEA platform USIE. Albania is

not member of the ECURIE²/ EURDEP³ (Council Decision 87/600/Euratom). The Albanian legislation is expected to be aligned with the Euratom Treaty upon Albania's EU Accession.

As regards Directive 2014/87/Euratom on Nuclear Safety of Nuclear Installations, Albania is **partially aligned**. Albania has a generic nuclear-safety related legislation already in place (competent authority, regulatory framework, licencing, training of staff), but Council Directive 2014/87/Euratom has not been implemented. This will be done, to some extent, through the adoption of a comprehensive nuclear law, which is at a very early stage of drafting and for which there is no concrete timeline. National authorities are currently analysing the legislation of other non-nuclear Member States to identify elements that would be useful for the Albanian law under preparation. It should be noted that Albania is a non-nuclear country and there is no intention for future implementation of nuclear program, therefore the following provisions of the Nuclear Safety Directive will not be applicable: Licence holders (Art.6), Nuclear safety objective for nuclear installations (Art.8a), Implementation of the nuclear safety objective for nuclear installations (Art. 8b), Initial assessment and periodic safety reviews (Art. 8c) and On-site emergency preparedness and response (Art. 8d).

The Radiation Protection Commission (RPC) has been established, and functions based on the Law no. 8025 on Protection from Ionising Radiation. RPC is the competent authority to oversee and ensure the implementation of the provisions of the law, as well as of the other legal and sub-legal provisions in the radiation protection field. One of the obligations of Albania, in the frame of the Agreement of Association and Stabilization, Art. 70/3, has been the implementation of EU legislation in the field of safety, security and protection against ionising radiation.

Albania is **fully aligned** with Directive 2013/59/Euratom laying down Basic Safety Standards for Protection Against the Dangers Arising from Exposure to Ionising Radiation, through the adoption of Law No 8025 on Protection from Ionising Radiation, as amended and the subsequent implementing Regulation on the Protection of the Public and Employees Professionally Exposed to Ionizing Radiation, and Safety Against Medical Exposures with Sources of Ionizing Radiation, adopted by Decision no. 801. This legislation lays down the requirements and rules for the safety of the public, occupational and medical exposures against risks arising from ionising radiation.

Albania is **not aligned** with Directive 2006/117/Euratom on the Supervision and Control of Shipments of Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel between Member States and into and out of the Community, repealing Council Directive 92/3/Euratom (Shipment Directive).

Albania is **partially aligned** with Directive 2013/51/Euratom laying down Requirements for the Protection of the Health of the General Public regarding Radioactive Substances in Water Intended for Human Consumption, through the Regulation on the Guidance Levels for the Indoor Radon Concentration and the Concentration of Radionuclides in Goods, Aiming to Protect the Public, adopted by Decision no. 957. This Regulation defines the reference levels for the activity concentration of radionuclides in water intended for human consumption. The provisions of the Directive which are already aligned are: definition of water intended for human consumption, radionuclides concentrations in water intended for human consumption, parametric values for radon, tritium and Indicative Dose (ID) of water intended for human consumption, monitoring of compliance, non-compliance and remedial action

² European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange system (ECURIE) .

³ European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) .

and exclusion. Sampling and frequencies analysis for monitoring the water intended for human consumption are defined in the Regulation for Public Protection from Environmental Discharges, Selection of Samples, Regions and Frequency of Measurement, adopted by Decision 313, which still need to be aligned with the values laid down in Council Directive 2013/51/Euratom. There is still no specific deadline for the completion of this task because the Albanian authorities are in the process of preparing a Roadmap/action plan which will indicate their future activities to ensure full approximation with the Euratom *acquis*, including Council Directive 2013/51/Euratom.

Albania is **fully aligned** with Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom establishing a Community Framework for the Responsible and Safe Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste (Waste Directive), through Regulation on Safe Management of Radioactive Waste adopted by Decision 638, as well as through a national programme (Policy on safe management of the radioactive waste and Strategic steps for the safe management of radioactive waste). The scope of the Regulation is to establish the requirements for the safe management of radioactive waste and to establish special requirements for the licensing of radioactive waste management facilities and activities.

Implementation of the Albanian legislation in the fields of radiation protection, nuclear safety and security is done through the following main processes: authorization, inspection and enforcement and approval for import export and transport of ionizing radiation sources.

b. Commission assessment

Overall, on nuclear energy, Albania has been making efforts to align its legislative framework with the Euratom *acquis* and is also currently part of all key Conventions concluded under the auspices of the IAEA. On the Shipment Directive only import related elements of Albania's legislation are aligned with the Directive, with Albania having plans to align with their legislation by 2029. On the Waste Directive, Albania did not provide details of national programme or the legislation but emphasised that they are **fully aligned** with the Directive, including its principles and definitions. Further details about the national programme - its milestones, timeframes, cost estimates, implementation concepts or plans and technical solutions for RAW management from generation to disposal; concepts or plans for post-closure period of disposal facilities lifetime; research and development activities and key performance indicators - would be necessary to assess whether Albania's legislation is fully aligned with the Waste Directive.

It is important that Albania speeds up its efforts to complete the work needed for its full alignment with the Euratom Treaty, with Council Directive 2014/87/Euratom (taking account the principle of graded approach) and with Council Directive 2013/51/Euratom. Albania is also encouraged to take steps to participate in EURDEP/ECURIE. It is noted the comprehensive safeguards agreement (and its additional protocol) between Albania and the IAEA. Albania would need to start adapting the existing systems of accountancy and control of nuclear materials in order to accommodate for the safeguards provisions (Chapter 7) of the Euratom Treaty in the future (and at least one year before the accession).

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – NUCLEAR ENERGY

The legislation of Albania is **partially aligned** with the Euratom *acquis*, therefore additional efforts need to be undertaken. Albania should prioritize its efforts on full alignment with the Nuclear Safety Directive, Euratom Drinking Water Directive and Radioactive Waste Directive and to ensure that all the requirements of the Basic Safety Standards are adequately covered by its legislation Albania should also speed up its efforts to join ECURIE and EURDEP. Albania should start alignment with the Shipment Directive.

VII. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - ENERGY

a. Country presentation

Albania has in place a national cross-cutting strategy against corruption and a related action plan for the period 2020-2023. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE) and all other institutions which contribute to the alignment and implementation of the *acquis* of this chapter have approved and published in their webpages a Transparency Program and have nominated the information coordinators, according to Albania's national Law on right of information 119/2014. The Action Plan on Integrity Risk Management for 2022-2025, was approved from MIE and published. In addition, public consultation law is in force since 2014, which obliges legal acts and strategic documents to go through an open public consultation process. For energy these are published in the webpage of MIE and/or other relevant institutions.

Albania has promoted digitalisation of services to prevent corruption, for energy this includes energy services and e-complaints in public procurement. Service digitalisation includes digitalisation of electricity bills in the e-Albania platform (online electricity bills, payments, status control); OSHEE Group Services for customers online (complaints, status of complaints, receiving information); electricity purchase platform; and electricity sales platform. In addition, transparency and information were also promoted through the publication of all information on the operating policies of MIE, ERE and the state-owned companies, periodically in the Web Transparency space; participation of electricity state owned companies in the network of Coordinators for the right of information and transparency programs; and publication of Information on energy companies' services based on Open Data and easily accessed.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has made some efforts to put in place anti-corruption measures, specially through digitalisation of energy systems, however further actions need to be taken across all fields of the institutions that deal with energy.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Albania has taken several measures to prevent corruption in the field of energy, however further actions need to be taken across all fields of the institutions that deal with energy.

D) CHAPTER 21 – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

This chapter covers the Trans-European Networks policy in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures, including the Community guidelines on the development of the Trans-European Networks and the support measures for the development of projects of common interest. The establishment and development of Trans-European Networks and the promotion of proper interconnection and interoperability of national networks aim to take full advantage of the internal market and to contribute to economic growth and the creation of employment in the European Union.

The Trans-European Networks (TENs) policy in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is governed by Title XVI, which includes Articles 170 to 172.

Trans-European energy networks (TEN-E) cover the transport and storage facilities of hydrogen and renewable gases as well as electricity transmission, energy storage and smart electricity grids, and make a significant contribution to the electricity and gas market. TEN-E responds to the growing importance for securing and diversifying the EU's energy supplies, incorporating the energy networks of the Member States and candidate countries, and ensuring the coordinated operation of energy networks in the EU and in neighbouring countries. The security of energy supply and the functioning of the internal energy market are key policy goals. Axes for priority projects and projects of common interest have been identified in this regard.

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy aims at building an effective, EU wide and multimodal transport network across the EU. It comprises railways, roads, inland waterways, short sea shipping routes, maritime and inland ports, airports and terminals. TEN-T policy also sets requirements that infrastructure must comply with, including on safety, quality for performing transport and alignment with environmental objectives. This policy has been a centrepiece in the projection of the EU transport policy to third countries and; it was integrated into the Economic and Investment Plan of the Western Balkans. The extended TEN-T covers the Western Balkans, Türkiye, and Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, the recently revised TEN-T regulation includes a dedicated Western Balkans Eastern Mediterranean Corridor, covering all the Western Balkan partners, with the aim of significantly improving transport connections with the EU.

A strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for the implementation and enforcement of EU TENs acquis.

I. TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR ENERGY

a. Country presentation

The national legislation is **not aligned** with Regulation (EU) 2022/869 on Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure (TEN-E Regulation). Alignment of the Regulation (EU) 2022/869 is planned by end of year 2025.

For electricity, Albania is connected to Greece, Montenegro, and Kosovo*, through high voltage network of 400 kV, 220 kV, and 110 kV. The Albanian Transmission Systems Operator (TSO), the national transmission operator OST, designs 10 years Grid Development Plans (TYNDP), with the current period of the TYNDP being 2015 to 2025, approved by ERE in 2017. However, the obligation to update the TYNDPs every two years has not been met by Albania. Albania aims to increase cross border capacity through the construction of 400 kV interconnections with North Macedonia (Bitola), Greece (Arachthos) and Kosovo* (Prizren-Fierza).

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **not aligned** with the TEN-E Regulation and indicated that necessary steps will be taken for alignment of this Regulation via amendments to Law 102/2015 on the Natural Gas Sector and Law 43/2015 on Power Sector and/or implementing bylaws by the end of 2024. Considering that natural gas infrastructure is outside the scope of the 2022 TEN-E Regulation, diverting all efforts to the amendments to Law 43/2015 on Power Sector is encouraged. Albania should carry out necessary strategies and assessment to investigate the potential for offshore renewables development and associated grids, and for the decarbonisation of industry and transport that might trigger infrastructure investment needs, notably in hydrogen and biomethane.

Albania presented the Ministry's current administrative capacity, giving no indication to how the aims of the new Regulation will be addressed. More specifically, there is no information on the resources dedicated to acceleration of projects, notably planning and permitting (one-stop-shop), and the cooperation with the national electricity TSO. Albania has yet to reflect to define its offshore development ambitions and any infrastructure needs that might derive from the decarbonisation of its industry. Albania should strengthen its administrative capacity to implement key TEN-E provisions on project implementation, notably carrying out permitting procedures within the swiftest periods in full respect with environmental diligence and assessments.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR ENERGY

The legislation of Albania is **not aligned** with the EU *acquis* on Trans-European Networks for Energy. Albania should focus on aligning national legislation with the TEN-E Regulation through its power sector law, strengthening its administrative capacity and carrying out relevant assessment for offshore renewable energy and decarbonisation of industry.

II. TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS FOR TRANSPORT

II.A TEN-T GUIDELINES AND CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY

a. Country presentation

Regarding TEN-T Guidelines and Regulation 1315/2013/EU on Union Guidelines for the Development of the Trans-European Transport Network, national authorities mentioned that there is **full alignment**.

The national legal framework is setting guidelines for the development of a trans-European transport network in Albania, comprising a dual-layer structure consisting of the comprehensive network (to be completed within 2050), and core network (to be completed within 2030).

The TEN-T Regulation is the legal basis which lays down the priorities and projects of common interest and specifies the requirements to be complied with for the management of the infrastructure of the trans-European transport network, in Albania. The country listed priority projects:

- Blue Highway including Rail;
- Corridor VIII multimodal;
- Ports / Port of Durrës - Porto Romano;
- Tirana International Airport.

Regarding **road** infrastructure, the corridor is partially built, but funding is required for completion according to European TEN-T standards.

For **rail** infrastructure the project of the rehabilitation of the railway line Tirana - Durrës and the construction of the railway line to the International Airport of are foreseen to be finalized in 2024.

For the **port** infrastructure, when it comes to the Port of Durrës - Porto Romano authorities have the necessary elements to draft the Master Plan of Durrës – Porto Romano Port.

On **future plans**, according to the High-level Understanding between the European Union and Albania on indicative maps of the trans-European transport network in Albania, the Rail Corridor VIII, will be reclassified from Comprehensive to Core Network. This will enable completion the Rail Corridor VIII, according to TEN-T standards, within 2040.

b. Commission assessment

On **TEN-T Guidelines and Connecting Europe Facility**, progress with the alignment of TEN-T legislation thereby highlighting the Transport Community Treaty framework as leading when it comes to TEN-T implementation is welcomed.

Application of Regulation 1315/2013/EU seems to focus mostly on infrastructure aspects. However, there is a need to ensure alignment with the complete TEN-T legislation.

It is to be noted that Regulation 1315/2013/EU has been revised and repealed by Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, which entered into force on 18 July 2024. It introduced an additional network layer – the extended core network with a deadline for completion of 2040. In addition, the revised Regulation reinforces certain infrastructure requirements, adds new ones and also includes for the first time operational targets for rail freight. More importantly, the revised Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 introduced new and reinforced old TEN-T infrastructure standards for all transport modes. It also included now operational rail freight targets. Albania has been integrated on the Western Balkans-Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor. As such, it should cooperate with the European TEN-T Coordinator in the elaboration of a work plan for this corridor, which sets the priorities for the development of the corridor in Albania. Such priorities should then also be translated in a high-level understanding which is based on the work plan of the European Coordinator.

It furthermore needs to be stressed that some pan-European corridors no longer exist in EU legislation. It should be clearly stated that nothing else apart from the TEN-T network should be considered as valid basis for the future. Any infrastructure planning at national level (as part of the application of the TEN-T Regulation) should correspond to the TEN-T networks.

II.B PUBLIC SERVICE OBLIGATIONS

a. Country presentation

Regarding public services obligations, the national legislation is **partially aligned** with Regulation 1370/2007/EC on Public Passenger Transport Services by Rail and by Road. Missing elements are related to the field of application, some definitions, the specification of public service obligations, the rules on allocation of costs. **b. Commission assessment**

Regarding public services obligations, advancement regarding Regulation 1370/2007/EC with Provisions on the Imposition of Public Service Obligations, Mandatory Content and Duration of Public Service Contracts and on Compensation is noted. Specific attention will have to be paid to enforcement of the principle that contracts for rail service should be awarded through competitive tender from end 2023.

II.C SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS – TRANSPORT

Albania is **partially aligned** on Trans-European Networks – Transport but is aware of the challenges that lie ahead. However, further efforts are needed to fully align and enforce the EU *acquis* across all modes of transport. In terms of institutional framework, the country needs to strengthen its institutional framework and administrative capacity for developing and monitoring TEN-Ts. In terms of priorities, the country needs to speed up the implementation of the TEN-T investment action plan of the Transport Community Treaty, which is still at a low rate. As this chapter requires heavy investments, the country need to develop its core transport networks in line with the national strategies for transport infrastructure investment prioritisation, under the single project pipeline.

III. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS

a. Country presentation

Albanian authorities presented their vision on fighting against corruption on chapters 21. The general policy framework is based on the cross-cutting strategy against corruption and action plan covering the 2020-2023 period. It focuses on three main pillars: prevention, repression and awareness raising. The institutional framework is in place, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

The main strategic objective is to support the digitalisation of public institutions, which have seen an increase of functional electronic services for citizens, businesses and public institutions.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and other institutions supporting the alignment with chapter 21 have approved and published in their webpages a Transparency Program and put in place Information Coordinators who can be contacted by the public. In addition, an Action Plan on Integrity Risk Management for 2022-2025 was approved by the Ministry of Infrastructure. Supporting transparency, legal and sublegal acts for transport sector are published in the webpage of Ministry.

In relation to digitalisation, the country focuses on the importance of fight against corruption in investment related project with the increase of transport services and e-documentation. So far, 52 transport services are listed in the e-Albania platform. Online services are also available on the official webpage.

In addition, the Ministry is supporting the implementation of all government policies on the fight against corruption, increasing the public participation of transport related initiatives and reinforcing security of information.

The National Coordinator Against Corruption is drafting the new Intersectoral Anti-Corruption Strategy covering the period 2023-2030.

a. Commission assessment

Progress was made by Albania to set up the institutions and legislative framework in place to effectively fight corruption.

C. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Albania has the institutions and legislative framework in place to effectively fight corruption.

E) CHAPTER 27 – ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

EU environment and climate policy promotes strong climate action, sustainable development and protects the environment for present and future generations. It is based on preventive action, the 'polluter pays' principle, the precautionary principle, rectifying environmental damage at source, shared responsibility and the integration of environmental and climate change considerations into other EU policies, according to Articles 191-193 of the TFEU. This integration is at the core of the European Green Deal, which is the new EU growth strategy, aiming at turning the interrelated environmental challenges (climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, the unsustainable consumption and production) into opportunities while making the EU climate neutral by 2050, based on a systemic and coherent approach under the “do no harm” principle.

The Chapter 27 *acquis* comprises over 200 major legal acts covering both horizontal and sectoral legislation (air quality, waste management, water quality, nature protection, industrial pollution and risk management, chemicals, noise, civil protection and climate change). Compliance with the *acquis* covered by this chapter requires significant investments and a structured co-operation among all stakeholders including local authorities, industry and civil society. Furthermore, transition towards the climate neutral and resilient economy as per the Paris Agreement and in line with EU Climate Law require robust reforms in all economic sectors, particularly energy, transport, agriculture and forestry, among others, and a coordinated effort to reach these ambitious objectives. Moreover, a strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for its implementation and enforcement.

I. ENVIRONMENT

I.A HORIZONTAL LEGISLATION

a. Country presentation

Albania has benefitted from **LIFE Programme** initiatives and is interested in being fully associated to the Programme in the future.

Regarding **environmental assessments** of plans, programmes, and projects, Albania stated that is **partially aligned** with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2014/52/EU and has an **advanced stage of alignment** with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC. There is a staff of 1.5 people dealing with EIA in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and 22 employees in the National Environment Agency (NEA). Since 2020, application for EIA is done online, through an electronic system. Albania is well aware of the challenges ahead in terms of further alignment and implementation. Albania is a party to the Convention "On environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context (Espoo Convention)".

In terms of **Aarhus Convention** related *acquis*, Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** with both Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Access to Environmental Information and Directive 2003/35/EC on Public Participation and Access to Justice. There are two Aarhus information centres in Albania: in Vlora and Shkodra. A National Commissioner for the Right of Information and a National Electronic Register for Notification and Public Consultations have been set up. Public participation in decision-making is ensured, notably through public hearing organised by NEA.

Albania has a **low level of alignment** with the Directive 2004/35/EC on **Environmental Liability (ELD)**, through the Law on the Protection of Environment in 2011. The “polluter pays principle” is integrated into this Law. Competent authorities have been identified. Implementation has not started yet.

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced level of alignment** with Directive 2008/99/EC on **Environmental**

Crime, through the amended Criminal Code, listing offenses and punishments. The objective is to reach full alignment by 2028, taking into account the proposal of revision of the Directive from 2021. An Inter-institutional Group against Environmental Crime is in place.

Albania stated that it has an **advanced level of alignment** with the Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an infrastructure for the Spatial Information in the European Community (**INSPIRE**). Relevant administrative bodies including a State Authority for Geospatial Information are in place. A national geoportal is in place since 2014. Full alignment is expected by 2025.

Regarding accelerated integration, Albania requested to be fully associated to the **LIFE** Programme to provide concrete projects to help better prepare with *acquis* implementation.

b. Commission assessment

In terms of **environmental assessments** of plans, programmes and projects, further alignment is required. Albania has presented a clear schedule on the future steps needed concerning legislative alignment and strengthening the administrative capacity and needs to follow that schedule scrupulously to achieve progress in this sector. Meaningful environmental assessments, including due consideration of possible impacts, all viable alternatives and necessary mitigation and compensation measures, need to be carried out properly and Albania needs to ensure that all infrastructure investments comply with the EU environmental assessments *acquis*. An efficient coordination among the different authorities as well as with all the stakeholders needs to be ensured. Particular attention should be paid to transboundary EIA, potential conflict of interests and effective implementation in general.

Regarding **Aarhus *acquis***, good progress is made on alignment, in particular on access to information and public participation as well as access to justice. The general legal and institutional framework is in place. There is further need for capacity building and awareness raising, on which the plans outlined seem to be fit for purpose. Further attention is needed also to implement access to justice requirements, especially when it comes to ensuring that the public concerned, including NGOs, can challenge plans.

Albania has a low level of alignment with the **ELD** with only some elements of the system in place. The concept of remediation for the damage in kind (as opposed to punishment, or financial compensation) has not yet been aligned or implemented. Full alignment is meant to take still several years and would require close monitoring.

The establishment of an Inter-institutional Group against **Environmental Crime** is welcome. Full alignment with and effective implementation of the Environmental Crime Directive and immediate measures to fight environmental crime are necessary, in order to improve the level of enforcement of all environmental legislation. Inspections and enforcement capacity should be rapidly strengthened. Further participation to the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) is encouraged. It is also important for Albania to follow the revision of the Environmental Crime Directive, which would notably increase the number of offenses and strengthen the enforcement chain.

On **INSPIRE**, Albania is at a rather advanced stage. The high level of alignment and the existence of a dataset is encouraging. It is important for Albania to further monitor other EU data legislation such as the open data one.

Regarding accelerated integration, the Commission looks favourably upon Albania's request to be fully associated to the **LIFE** Programme.

I.B AIR QUALITY

a. Country presentation

Albania's energy production is currently based solely on hydropower. Data on air quality show that exceedances of PM₁₀ and NO₂ has been recorded in Tirana due to the road transport; PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} have been recorded in Korçë due to domestic heating in winter season. Exceedances of O₃ has been recorded in rural areas in Shkodër and Korçë .

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with Directive 2008/50/EC on **Ambient Air Quality** (AAQ) and the 4th "daughter" Directive 2004/107/EC relating to Arsenic, Cadmium, Mercury, Nickel and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in the Ambient Air, through the Law on protection of ambient air quality from 2014. A National Strategy on Ambient Air Quality and a National Ambient Air Quality Management Plan have been adopted. Competent authorities are identified. Albania is divided into three air quality zones. An Air Quality Management Plan has been drafted for Tirana but is not adopted yet. The monitoring system is made of seven automated air quality monitoring stations (six fixed and one mobile), operated by NEA, located in the cities of Tirana, Fier, Shkodër, Durrës, Elbasan, and Korçë. There is a need to enlarge the network so that it can cover air quality assessment in rural areas. There is a need to establish air quality modelling. Data on air quality are available to the public in the form of an annual report but no real-time information system is established.

Albania is party to the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution but has not yet ratified the Gothenburg Protocol. Albania **stated that it is at an advanced stage of alignment** with Directive 2016/2284/EU on the Reduction of National Emissions of Certain Atmospheric Pollutants (NEC), but implementation is at an early stage. A National Strategy on Ambient Air Quality and a National Ambient Air Quality Plan are in place. There is no National Air Pollution Control Programme. Work on inventory depends on external support. Technical capacities should be strengthened.

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with Directive 2016/802/EU relating to a Reduction in the **Sulphur Content of Certain Liquid Fuels**. Albania is aligned with the Commission Implementing Decision 2015/253/EU concerning the sampling and reporting as regards the sulphur content of **marine fuels**. For both legislative acts, implementation remains partial, notably due to lack of inspection expertise and resources.

b. Commission assessment

More efforts are needed to align with the EU air quality *acquis*, including extending and improving the air monitoring system. The implementation of the national air quality strategy is still pending and the national plan on air quality management does not provide a functional monitoring system. There are only seven automatic air monitoring stations in the whole country, but data is not reported in real time and monitoring is not carried out during the whole year.

Major efforts are needed in the process of implementation of all air quality Directives, as this will require large scale investments, including from privately owned companies. The existing monitoring system and structures in charge of the collection and processing of data and of future reporting to the Commission also require reinforcement. The network of monitoring stations needs to be expanded. Further strengthening of administrative capacity is necessary. Albania should invest in necessary human resources and in equipment in order to be able to implement the Directives in the field of air quality. A clear table outlining the necessary human resources, the financial commitments, as well as a schedule of implementation would provide good guidance to that end.

I.C WASTE MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

Circular Economy is one of the three priorities of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, together with investments and governance. A new Circular Economy Directorate has been established in the Ministry in January 2023. Albania has introduced the Circular Economy principles into its Strategy on Integrated Waste Management and Action Plan 2020-2035. Albania has introduced by law the ban of single use carrying plastic bags below 70 microns from each side in June 2021. Other single use plastics will be assessed to be replaced/banned in the short run. Albania is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2019/904/EU on the **Reduction of the Impact of Certain Plastic Products on the Environment**.

There is **partial alignment** with the **Waste Framework Directive (WFD)**, through the framework law on integrated waste management and several secondary legislations. A new law on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is under preparation. Relevant authorities have been identified. The waste hierarchy is at an early implementation stage. The usual waste management practice is joint collection of waste at municipal bins and landfilling. The Masterplan of Waste 2020-2035 divides the country into 10 waste zones. There are five composting sites at municipal level, and five more planned to be established. Albania foresees to develop a Directive Specific Implementation Plan on the WFD and revise the framework law on integrated waste management starting in 2024.

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with the Directive 1999/31/EC on **Landfill of Waste**. Relevant authorities and responsibilities, including for permitting and reporting, are in place at national and municipal levels. Currently, there are four sanitary landfills, two engineered landfills and 199 non-compliant municipal landfills identified in 2019 in Albania, of which 12 rehabilitated or closed. There is no landfill for hazardous waste and only one for construction and demolition waste. Biodegradable waste is forbidden to be landfilled. The integrated waste management strategy sets target for the amount of municipal waste to be landfilled: 50% in 2025, 30% in 2030 and 10% in 2035 (of total amount of municipal waste generated).

Regarding the **Sewage Sludge Directive 86/278/EEC**, Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** although implementation is limited. A National Sludge Management Strategy has been drafted and is not adopted yet. An agricultural regional centre is in charge of data collection and equipped with a laboratory to be upgraded. As a pilot project, some sludge quantities produced by Korçë, Pogradec and Kavajë wastewater treatment plants have been provided to local farmers.

Albania stated that it has an **advanced level of alignment** with the **Batteries Directive 2006/66/EC**. Competent authorities, including the National Environment Agency in charge of licensing and setting obligations, have been identified. At national level, every producer, distributor or third party should ensure a collection rate of waste from batteries and accumulators of 25% by 2015 and 65% by 2025. Target for 2015 has not been met. The new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law, to be adopted early 2024, foresees the establishment of an EPR scheme for this waste stream.

There is **partial alignment** with Directive 2012/19/EU on **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)**. The upcoming law on EPR will also cover this waste stream. Currently, there are no companies for the treatment of WEEE in Albania. Most of the collection is done informally by waste pickers, which disassemble the products that are later sent for melting and recycling industry. Further assistance is needed to increase awareness at municipal level on WEEE and separate collection.

Albania stated that it is at a **low level of alignment** with Directive 2011/65/EU on the Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (**RoHS**). Implementation is at a very early stage.

Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 94/62/EC on **Packaging and Packaging Waste** (Packaging Directive), through waste management plans, the ban of single use carrying plastic bags and pilot projects on separate collection at municipal level. A new Law on Integrated Waste Management to fully align with the Packaging Directive is foreseen based on the development of a Directive Specific Implementation Plan.

According to Albania, there is **partial alignment** with the End-of-Life Vehicles Directive 2000/53/EC (**ELV**), through the Law on Integrated Waste Management and secondary legislation. Further alignment, including reuse and recovery targets, will take place through the improvement of the law on waste management and the adoption of the new EPR law. It is estimated that 30% of vehicle fleet are potential ELVs. Preventive measures and deregistration obligations are in place. There are 52 permitted companies by NEA for the storage and recovery of metal, scrap and other waste from end-of-life vehicles.

Albania is a party and reporting to the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, since 1999. Import of all types of waste into Albania, as well as the transit of hazardous waste is banned since 2013. Albania stated that Regulation 1013/2006/EC on **Shipment of Waste** is **partially aligned** into national legislation. A permitting and consent regime is in place for export of waste. Albania has stepped up administrative controls and on-the-ground enforcement of the cross-border transport of waste. Further alignment and developing a waste information and reporting system are required. Regarding Regulation 1257/2013/EU on **Ship Recycling**, Albania has a limited ship fleet and is at **low level of alignment**, through its Maritime Code. Full implementation for both Regulations is expected for 2028.

With regard to Regulation 850/2004/EC on Persistent Organic Pollutants (**POPs**) and the Regulation 96/59/EC on the Disposal of Polychlorinated Biphenyls and Polychlorinated Terphenyls (**PCB/PCT**), Albania has a **high level of alignment**, through various laws and secondary legislation. The 2019 – 2024 National Implementation Plan for phasing out and eliminating POPs provides the Management Plan on phasing out PCBs. A system is in place for identification, labelling, removal, storage and final disposal of equipment and waste containing PCBs. Implementation is at an early stage. Further assistance is required to develop legislation on POPs, build capacity and know-how and develop and maintain database. PCB inventory is being updated through a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) project. A National Implementation Plan as requested by the Stockholm Convention is to be prepared.

Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 2006/21/EC on the **Management of Mining Waste**, through the Law on the Mining Sector and secondary laws. Competent authorities have been designated. A permitting procedure, which requires a waste management plan, is in place. In the mining industry sector, a total of 559 entities are licensed for exploitation activities. The database and enforcement system (inspections and penalties) need to be strengthened.

b. Commission assessment

On **Circular economy**, Albania has been making some progress, making it a clear political priority and setting up a new dedicated directorate in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. However, the integration of circular economy aspects into national legislation is for now limited to the end-of-life stage of products, not taking into consideration non-waste related aspects of products' lifecycles. One concrete emblematic measure is the ban of plastic carrier bags below a width of 70 microns. While the intention is welcome, this raises some concerns in terms of alignment with Directive (EU) 2015/720 (Plastic Bags Directive), which bans plastic carrier bags with a wall thickness below 50 microns. Therefore, the Albanian alignment goes beyond the scope of the Plastic Bags Directive. This could raise some concerns for the internal market, in the future. Albania is **not yet aligned** with the Single Use Plastics Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/904).

There is only **partial alignment** with the **Waste Framework Directive** and most of the rest of EU *acquis*

on **waste** and is awaiting the revision of the framework waste law as well as the development of an EPR law. Provisions on specific waste streams, including hazardous waste, depends on this update of the legislative framework. The waste management system is not integrated, relies on basic collection and landfill disposal of municipal waste. More efforts are required on integrating the waste hierarchy into the national legislation framework, e.g. on waste prevention, separate collection and recycling. On **landfilling, sludge and POPs/PCBs**, the **level of alignment is partial**, but implementation is at early stage. On **waste shipment**, the new EU Waste Shipment Regulation (EU) 2024/1157 should be taken into account. The same goes for the new **Batteries** Regulation, that will establish stricter sustainability and waste management requirements over time.

Albania is well aware of the challenges waste management represents for the country and its tourism, on the rise. Some progress, including on awareness raising, have been done in recent years. However, alignment with EU *acquis* is only partial and implementation at an early stage.

In general, major efforts are needed in the implementation process of the *acquis* across the entire sector. Implementation will require large scale investments, and further strengthening of the technical and administrative capacity at national and local level. Some **Directive Specific Implementation Plans** will be further developed and are expected to provide further detail on the timing and financing relating to the alignment and implementation of the WFD, the Directives on Packaging and packaging waste, Landfill, WEEE as well as batteries and accumulators.

I.D WATER QUALITY

a. Country presentation

Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with the **Water Framework Directive** 2000/60/30 (WFD). Full alignment is planned for 2024. A river basin council has been set up in each of the seven river basins. A National Strategy for the Integrated Management of Water Resources will be drafted through a dedicated project. A national water monitoring programme with sufficient resources is yet to be adopted. Two river basin management plans (RBMP) have been adopted and are largely aligned with the WFD. Three other RBMPs are in the process of being adopted and the two remaining ones (Vjosa and Skumbini rivers) will be prepared by 2027. The project will also contribute to the implementation of the five RBMPs already or nearly finalised. Budget for the implementation of these RBMPs has been assessed. Good transboundary cooperation in the field of Integrated Water Management is achieved through bilateral and multilateral agreements with bordering countries (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding for the management of Extended Transboundary Drin Basin and Strategic Action Plan adopted by all riparian countries; Framework agreement between Albania and Montenegro on mutual relations in transboundary water resources management).

Albania stated that it is **largely aligned** with the Directive 91/271/EEC **Urban Wastewater Treatment (UWWT)**. The institutional framework is in place. A national Sectoral Strategy on Water and sanitation for the period 2023-2030 is under approval. There are Currently 10 WWT plants, four are under construction. Albania already has a significantly high connection rate (81% in terms of total load and 70% in terms of domestic load). A multi-criterion ranking system has been developed and applied to 165 agglomerations, based on the four following criteria: agglomeration size (cost-effectiveness of the investment), tertiary treatment, project readiness and typology of the measure. A plan for the implementation of this Directive is presented in detail in the Detailed Plan for the Implementation of the Directive (DPSD).

Albania stated that alignment with the Directive 2008/56/EC **Marine Strategy Framework (MSFD)** has not started yet. Albania has not established yet an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). There are two Marine Protected Areas and four AZA (allocated zone for aquaculture) identified along the Albanian coastline. There are 18 monitoring stations along the coastal line, but they are not working. Some initial steps to

start determining the targets and indicators related to the Barcelona Conventions objectives have been taken, through a dedicated project. Resources to follow-up are lacking.

Albania stated that it is largely aligned with the Directive on the Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption (**Drinking Water Directive**) from 1998. The alignment with the revised Directive from 2020 (2020/2184/EU) has not started yet. The institutional framework is in place. A national Sectoral Strategy on Water and sanitation for the period 2023-2030 is under approval. Some water safety plans have been established through a pilot project with WHO. An assessment of the gaps and investment needs for production, treatment and distribution of drinking water was carried out (with reference to the 1998 Directive), resulting in a prioritised investment plan. A Directive Specific Implementation Plan (DSIP) with a timeline of 2030-2040 is to be adopted.

Albania stated that **alignment** with the Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the Protection of Waters against Pollution Caused by Nitrates from Agricultural Sources (**Nitrates Directive**) is at an early stage. Further alignment is foreseen through the new law of water resources within 2024 and secondary legislation within 2025. Both Ministry of Agriculture (on fertilizers) and NEA (on water bodies) have been identified as main relevant authorities. Albania plans to increase its monitoring capacities to identify the pressure coming from nitrate applied on agriculture.

Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** with and has fully implemented Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the Management of Bathing Water Quality (**Bathing Water Directive**). The institutional framework is in place and well structured. Monitoring and the assessment of bathing water quality is carried out in line with the Directive requirements. The results are made available on the national website devoted to bathing waters: www.akm.gov.al. Albania has been reporting on its bathing sites to the European Environment Agency (EEA) since 2012 (following the model used by Member States).

Albania indicated that it is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2006/118/EC on the Protection of Groundwater against Pollution and Deterioration (**Groundwater Directive**). Full alignment is planned through the approval of the new law “On Water Resources” in 2024 and secondary legislation in 2025. The competent authority for the identification and reporting of groundwater sources, trends and impacts is the Albanian Geological Service. Some preliminary work on the determination of the quantitative and chemical status of each water body has been done through external support. Further drafting and implementation of four remaining RBMPs will integrate requirements from the Groundwater Directive. The monitoring system needs to be improved, and the network needs to be extended.

Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with the Directive 2008/105/EC on **Environmental Quality Standards in the Field of Water Policy (EQS)**. Full alignment is planned with the adoption of a new law on water resources within 2024 and secondary legislation within 2025. The chemical status of the surface waters is defined in accordance with the parameters and the frequency defined by the WFD. The quality class of the surface waters is classified in accordance with the limits set by WFD. Inventory of emissions, discharge and losses is done by NEAR for three UWWTP only. There is no monitoring capacity.

Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** with the Directive 2007/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (**Floods Directive**), through laws and strategies, including a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and related Action Plan on mitigation and adaptation, for the 2023-2030 period. Floods are among the three main risks of disasters that Albania faces. A strong institutional setting is in place, with a dedicated National Civil Protection Agency. A preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has been done for the entire territory. Hazard and Risk mapping is on-going until end of 2024. Flood Risk Management Plans will be prepared for all river basin by 2024. Future plans include financing the cost for rehabilitating and constructing of flood protection structures as well as strengthening human capacities.

Alignment with the Regulation (EU) 2020/741 on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse (**Water Reuse Regulation**) has not started yet in Albania.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is well aligned with the **WFD**. Finalising all RBMPs and securing the funding for their implementation is needed. Specific attention should be paid to the future development of the Vjosa River Management Plan, given the high ecological value and eco-tourism potential of the river and its national park status in Albania.

On **UWWT**, the institutional framework seems to be well structured with agencies in charge of planning and implementation between policy making level and municipalities. The investment plan presented is the result of a robust multi-criteria analysis. Investment and capacity-building needs are huge. Finally, the current revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive should be closely monitored by Albania: it foresees new areas of actions, e.g. smaller agglomeration, tertiary treatment.

Alignment with the **Marine Strategy Framework (MSFD)** needs to start. Albania needs to dedicate proper administrative and financial resources for aligning and implementing the requirements of the Directive.

Regarding the **Drinking Water Directive**, the alignment with the provisions of the revised Directive from 2020 has not started. These include monitoring measures taking into account new parameters and parametric values. The institutional framework seems to be well structured with agencies in charge of planning and implementation between policy making level and municipalities. Some guidelines on water safety plans have been developed for a progressive implementation in the medium term (2030-40). The country still faces huge challenges in the drinking water sector (aging infrastructures, quality issues, only 83% of population connected to a public water supply system).

Albania is at a **low level of alignment** with the **Nitrates Directive**. The timeline for further alignment is clearly established. However, there is not a timeline for the implementation of the different requirements of the Directive. Developing an operational national water monitoring system is a necessary preparatory step for the identification of polluted waters and the subsequent designation of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in land areas draining into the identified polluted waters.

On **Bathing Directive**, Albania has achieved a good level of alignment and implementation. Attention should be paid to poor bathing sites, to ensure proper management measures, prohibition when required (when classified as such more than five seasons) and to provide timely information to the public about the bathing water quality. Alignment with Commission Implementing Decision 2011/321/EU, on a symbol for information to the public on bathing water classification and any bathing prohibition or advice against bathing, has not started yet.

On **Groundwater Directive**, Albania has a **low level of alignment**. Full alignment by 2025 seems ambitious. Implementation is at an early stage and depends on the progress on RBMPs. Administrative and technical capacities should be strengthened.

There is **partial alignment** with the Directive 2008/105/EC on **Environmental Quality Standards in the Field of Water Policy**. Implementation is at early stage, with no proper monitoring system in place. Administrative and technical capacities should be strengthened.

On the **Floods Directive**, Albania has achieved a **high level of alignment** and implementation is on good tracks. Civil protection authorities have been set up. Extensive consultation for the whole cycle of the Floods Directive is in place and the coordination between WFD and the Floods Directive is ensured. Albania is well aware of future needs and challenges.

Level of alignment and implementation on water related *acquis* is generally **low**. The monitoring

networks for all water sources (surface water bodies, marine waters, and groundwater) is at an early stage of development. Albania needs to make significant efforts in its alignment with the *acquis*, its implementation and in strengthening administrative capacity, including the enforcement system and expertise. Further progress is needed on maintaining or improving the water bodies quality status and aligning further with the EU environmental *acquis*. Major efforts will be needed during the implementation process across the entire sector. Large scale investments will be required.

Albania is encouraged to monitor the developments of the proposal for a Directive amending the WFD, the Groundwater and EQS Directives.

I.E NATURE PROTECTION

a. Country presentation

For both Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (**Wild Birds Directive**) and Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (**Habitats Directive**), Albania stated that **alignment is partial**. Competent authorities have identified 44 sites for Natura 2000. There is no monitoring system in place. Future legal and institutional needs have been identified. Capacities need to be strengthened.

Regarding **Wild Birds**, a hunting ban has been renewed and is in force for Albania until 2025. Measures taken so far consist in the designation of Protected Areas (mostly coastal ones). 125 bird species present in Albania belong to the Annex I of Birds Directive (subject to special conservation measures).

Regarding **Habitats**, identification of areas of special conservation interest has been done. The Vjosa River has been recently declared a national park. Protected areas, which include all Emerald sites, cover 21,3% of the territory. A specific fund for protected areas has been established and would serve for further management of the areas.

Albania stated that there is a **low level of alignment** with the Directive 1999/22/EC relating to the **Keeping of Wild Animals in Zoos** (the Zoos Directive). Full alignment is envisaged by 2025. Implementation is at an early stage. Albania made progress in closing illegal zoos and transferring animals to rescue centres or other zoos. The country aims at establishing own rescue centres that are also supposed to contribute to conservation. For the time being, there is only one zoo in Tirana.

Regarding Council Regulation 3254/91/EEC Prohibiting the Use of Leghold Traps in the Community (**Leghold Regulation**), leghold traps are already prohibited under national legislation. The competent institutions are in place. Role and duties of customs will be clarified to guarantee a proper enforcement of the Regulation.

Albania indicated that there is **no alignment** with Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on Trade in Seal Products (**Seals**). Full alignment is foreseen by 2025. The competent institutions are in place. Role and duties of customs will be clarified to guarantee a proper enforcement of the Regulation.

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced level of alignment** with the Regulation 338/97/EC on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**). Full alignment is expected by 2024. Management authorities and scientific authorities are well defined. Required procedures are implemented, a permitting and licensing system is in place. Inspection and enforcement need to further improve.

Albania indicated that it is at an **early stage of alignment** and implementation of Regulation 511/2014/EU on Compliance Measures for Users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union (**ABS Regulation**). Provisions of the Nagoya protocol, that Albania ratified, are not yet fully included in the national legislation. There is no competent authority for allowing usage of internationally certified

genetic materials. The Ministry of Tourism and Environment is responsible to register the genetic materials. However, there is no register of users of genetic materials in Albania yet. There is no agreement with other countries on using international certified genetic material.

Albania has a good understanding of the Proposal for a Regulation on **Nature Restoration** (COM/2022/304 final). There are already some provisions in various laws, in line with the proposal on agricultural and forestry ecosystems as well as on pollinators. Albania stated that their future new Strategy for the Biodiversity Protection will be aligned with the Regulation.

Regarding Regulation 995/2010/EU laying down the Obligations of Operators who Place Timber and Timber Products on the Market (**Timber Regulation**), Albania stated that it is **partially aligned**. Secondary legislation to be drafted in 2024 will clarify roles and responsibilities as well as procedures relating to the Regulations. Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** with Regulation 2173/2005/EC on the Establishment of a FLEGT Licensing Scheme for Imports of Timber into the European Community (**FLEGT**). For both Regulations, implementation has not started yet. Forests cover 46% of the territory. There is a moratorium on commercial forest harvesting in place until 2026.

Albania stated that it has increased the total areas under protection by creating in 2022 two protected areas, the Porto-Palermo Bay Nature Park and the Albanian Tulip Nature Monument. Progress was made in March 2023 with the upgrade of the status of the Vjosa River - from a Nature Park (Category IV) into a National Park (Category II). The upgrade of the status of the Vjosa River took the form of also including the tributaries of this river, which is among the last of Europe's wild rivers.

On 22 February 2024, a new Law on Protected Areas no. 21/2024 has been adopted by the Parliament of Albania, which amended the previous Law no. 81/2017 for Protected Areas.

b. Commission assessment

Legislative alignment with the **Wild Birds and Habitats Directive** is well advanced but implementation remains limited. No specific timing is planned for full alignment and implementation. Improving monitoring and data gathering as well as defining clear responsibilities among authorities, including municipal ones, is needed.

Alignment and implementation of the **Zoos Directive** is at early stage. Robust and well-functioning processes for the licencing, inspection of zoos as well as for closure of non-compliant zoos is to be established.

A complete alignment with the **Leghold Regulation** would imply a ban on imports from third countries of fur products from the wild animal species listed in the Annex of the Regulation, if these animals have been caught with leghold traps or other trapping methods, which do not meet International Humane Trapping Standards. Since is quite unlikely that many fur products from those species would enter the market in Albania in the medium term, there is no real urgency for the full alignment.

Alignment with the Regulation on **Seals** may take some time, but this is not a problem as it is very unlikely that seal products (not covered by the "Inuit or other indigenous communities" exception), would enter Albania and then be placed on the EU market.

Albania is at a **partial level of alignment** and implementation of the **CITES Regulation**. Further efforts are required to strengthen the capacities of the relevant authorities in monitoring and enforcing Regulations on trade and import/export of wildlife species and goods.

There is a **low level of alignment** with the **ABS Regulation**. Albania has focused on the establishment of access Regulation to Albanian genetic resources. While Albania has all the right to take such initiative, this is not necessary nor useful to implement the Regulation.

Efforts to align with the **Timber and FLEGT Regulations** should be pursued. Strengthening capacities, including of customs, is required. Albania is encouraged to monitor the developments on the **Commission Proposal Deforestation-free Products Regulation**.

The new Law on Protected Areas allows the construction of water abduction for irrigation, touristic resorts and accompanying infrastructure inside the protected areas. These measures could potentially compromise the ecological and biodiversity values of Albania, and of potential Natura 2000 sites which might be counter to relevant European standards.

I.F CHEMICALS

a. Country presentation

Albania indicated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 528/2012/EU concerning the Making Available on the Market and Use of Biocidal Products (**Biocides**). There is a dedicated law “For biocidal products and services in public health” as well as secondary law, under revision. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection is the competent authority. The authorisation of import and for placing on the market of biocidal products are in place. Implementation and enforcement capacities are limited. There is no specific person working full time on biocides.

Albania also stated that **alignment is partial** with the Regulation 1907/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (**REACH**), establishing a European Chemicals Agency. Albania stated that it has an advanced **level of alignment** with Regulation 1272/2008/EC on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (**CLP**). For both Regulations, competent authorities have been identified. A State Inspectorate of Market Surveillance is in place. Albania is considering establishing a national register of chemicals (database), which should give a clear overview of chemicals/chemical products imported, exported or placed on the national market. Administrative capacities need to be strengthened, especially for enforcement.

Albania stated that it is **largely aligned** with Regulation 649/2012/EU concerning the Export and Import of Hazardous Chemicals (**PIC Regulation**), through a Law on chemicals management and a secondary law. Albania is a party to the Rotterdam Convention since 2010. Since September 2022, the Designated National Authority for PIC Regulation and the Rotterdam Convention is the Chemicals Office in NEA. Albania has submitted in total around 51-53 Import Responses for substances of Annex III, to the Secretariat of Rotterdam Convention. Implementation is considered to be at an early stage.

Albania stated that alignment with Directive 2010/63/EU on the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes (**Animal Experiments**) is at an **initial stage**. The competent authority has not been designated but institutions are identified. Albania does not have experience in protection of animals used for scientific purposes. There are no approved centres that use animals for scientific purposes. Implementation has not started yet.

Albania stated that it is at an **advanced stage of alignment** with Regulation 850/2004/EC on Persistent Organic Pollutants (**POPs**). Albania is party to the Stockholm Convention since 2004. In line with the Convention, a national implementation plan (NIP) is in place. Production, import, placing on the market and use of POPs is prohibited or restricted. Monitoring and reporting system of POPs need to be strengthened. No inspections have been conducted in this area and no penalties have been imposed.

b. Commission assessment

Albania should pursue efforts on further aligning with the **Biocides Regulation** and continue to build on the work done by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). Timeline for authorisation and placing on the market are rather short. Sufficient resources need to be allocated to implement the Regulation.

Resources for inspection and enforcement need to be reinforced.

On **REACH**, Albania is **partly aligned** and on **CLP** has a **high level of alignment**. On REACH and CLP, Albania did a very good analysis on which REACH and CLP legal obligations shall be implemented, and which ones should not. The analysis is very comprehensive and relevant. Even if national legislation required further amendment to implement several recent updates of REACH and CLP annexes, Albania is in a good track on REACH and CLP implementation. Some additional efforts should be made on resources, in particular for inspection, enforcement and national Helpdesk.

Albania has reached **low level of alignment** with the **PIC Regulation**. Further efforts need to be done on further alignment, implementation and enforcement.

On **Animal Experiments**, Albania is at a **low stage of alignment**. Alignment should start and the scope of the Directive needs to be clarified: “experiment” and “scientific purpose” do cover all use including efficacy and safety testing, which are actually taking place in Albania (e.g. to train students or use for vaccines).

On **POPs**, Albania has reached **low level of alignment** with the EU Regulation and Stockholm Convention. Further efforts are needed, especially in terms of inspection and enforcement.

I.G INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

a. Country presentation

Albania stated that alignment with Directive 2010/75/EU on Industrial Emissions (**IED**) and Regulation 166/2006/EC in European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (**E-PRTR**) is **partial**, through a large number of laws. A draft Law on Environmental Permits, which has not been approved yet, will further transpose numerous provisions of the IED. A draft secondary legislation on Large Combustion Plants (Chapter III of IED) is prepared. There is a permitting system in place, which is not integrated (one industrial site can have several permits) and does not include Best Available Techniques (BAT). There is a permits database, developed in order to make permitting procedures at NEA more efficient, but there is not any comprehensive list of all installations falling under IED. PRTR is available online. An assessment will be made of current legislative and institutional needs, regarding alignment and implementation of the IED, taking into account the amendments of Directive that are in the pipeline.

Albania indicated that alignment with Directive 2012/18/EU on the Control of Major-Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances (**Seveso-III Directive**) has not started yet and consequently there is no notification system according to the relevant requirements. However, as a party to the UNECE Convention on Transboundary effect of Industrial Accident (TEIA) since 2004 and also as a member of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) since 2022, Albania has a national system for notification of disaster and accidents. The National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction with Action Plan 2023-2030 identifies next alignment and implementation steps.

Albania stated that alignment with Directive 87/217/EEC on the Prevention and Reduction of Environmental Pollution by Asbestos (**Asbestos Directive**) is **partial**. There is a strong legacy of asbestos in the country from the 1930s up to the 1990s. The use of asbestos as a thermal insulating material in all types of construction for residential purposes and public use was prohibited in 1994. Implementation is at an early stage. Further technical and administrative capacities should be strengthened. As for now, there is no landfill for asbestos and no companies which can transport this type of waste.

Albania stated that it is **fully aligned** with Directive 2004/42/EC on the Limitation of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds due to the Use of Organic Solvents in Certain Paints and Varnishes and Vehicle Refinishing Products (**VOCs in paints**). Most of the products that are placed on the Albanian market are from EU origin, thus the VOC content does not exceed the limit values set out in Annex II of this Directive and have appropriate label. Implementation is focused on tracing the source of any non-

compliant paints back from the end user or the final point of sale. Strengthening administrative and technical capacities on monitoring and inspection is required.

Regarding Directive 94/63/EC on the Control of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions Resulting from the Storage of Petrol – Stage I – and Directive 2009/126/EC on Stage II Petrol Vapour Recovery During Refuelling of Motor Vehicles at Service Stations (**VOC emissions**), Albania stated that alignment is advanced. A secondary legislation is foreseen to be prepared in the future to support implementation of the Directives, which is at an initial stage. Terminals, competent authorities, and penalties are foreseen by the law. Roles and responsibilities have been identified. As for now, there is no dedicated budget or staff for VOC enforcement and inspections.

Albania indicated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 1102/2008/EC on the Banning of Exports of Metallic Mercury and Certain Mercury Compounds and Mixtures and the Safe Storage of Metallic Mercury (**Mercury Regulation**). Albania has ratified the Minamata Convention in 2020. A national mercury inventory was developed in 2017. Competent authorities for implementation of this Regulation are identified and their roles and responsibilities are determined. Implementation is still at an early stage. Further data collection for mercury and mercury containing products is needed. Strengthening technical and administrative capacities is required.

Regulation 66/2010/EC on the **EU Ecolabel** is **partially aligned** in Albania. The Ecolabel has been introduced through the Environmental Protection Law in 2011. A State Commission for the issue of Ecolabel has been established and is an inter-institutional entity. Implementation is at an initial stage.

Albania stated that alignment with Regulation 1221/2009/EC on the Voluntary Participation by Organisations in a Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (**EMAS**) is **partial**, through the Environmental Protection Law from 2011. Accredited bodies and verifiers are in place. Further strengthening of capacities is needed.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **IED** and **E-PRTR**, further efforts on alignment, implementation and enforcement are needed to reach a fully integrated approach. Albania is encouraged to closely monitor the revision of both legislations.

Regarding the **Seveso III Directive**, the ratification of the TEIA Convention and the participation to the UCPM are key steps leading to a consistent implementation of the Seveso-III Directive requirements.

Several steps are still needed before a full implementation of the Seveso-III Directive requirements: i) identification of the Seveso establishment in Albania, ii) reporting in eMARS the major industrial accidents that happened in Albania, iii) the citizens' rights to information, in particular regarding the availability of information for the public concerned on how to behave in case of a major accident, consultation in the decision making for the setting-up of the Seveso establishment and access to Justice.

Albania has reached **low level of alignment** with the **Asbestos Directive**. Given the strong legacy in the country, it is a matter of public health to swiftly align and implement the provisions of the Directive on demolition of buildings and asbestos waste, also in line with other EU legislation (REACH, hazardous waste, IED).

On **VOC in paints**, Albania has reached a good level of alignment and should continue efforts to further implement the requirement of the Directive. On **VOC emissions**, Albania achieved a **partial level of alignment**. Further efforts are needed to implement the Directives and dedicate proper financial and human resources.

Regarding **Mercury**, the ratification of the Minamata Convention is a good step forward. Further efforts are needed for Albania to comply with Mercury Regulation and the Convention. Albania is encouraged to

monitor the revision of the Regulation.

On **Eco-label**, Albania seems to have created a duplicate national label. It should be ensured that this national label would become the EU Eco-label, after accession. Albania is encouraged to follow the developments on the Proposal for a Directive on Green Claims. Beyond the set-up of the legislative and institutional framework managing the label, it is very important for the Ecolabel to benefit in Albania from pro-active support, active communication policies as well as incentives to make sure that the scheme is taken up by the private sector.

On **EMAS**, further efforts are needed. Since it is a voluntary scheme, the uptake will depend on the incentive set up by Albania. In line with the Regulation, Albania needs to assist companies to adopt EMAS and also needs to conduct communication campaigns.

Low alignment remains with EU legislation on industrial pollution and risk management. Capacity and financial constraints are hampering progress in implementing legislation.

I.H NOISE

a. Country presentation

Albania indicated that it is **partially aligned** with the **Noise** Directive 2002/49/EC through the law on “On Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise”. A National Action Plan for the Management of Environmental Noise has been set up and will be revised in 2024. Institutional responsibilities are identified. Albania performs urban noise monitoring in several cities and municipalities, in line with the national monitoring programme and according to WHO and national standards. In terms of implementation, no noise maps have been prepared. However, 13 local governments units have prepared local noise action plans. A needs assessment to comply with the Directive has been prepared and further capacity building is foreseen.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has achieved a **partial level of alignment** with the **Noise** Directive. The set-up of local noise action plans and the clear separation of roles amongst institutions is encouraging. Future needs in terms of alignment and implementation are well identified. It will be important to ensure the link with investments and the synergy with the use of geospatial data.

I.I CIVIL PROTECTION

a. Country presentation

Albania stated that it is partially aligned with the *acquis* on civil protection, through several laws and by-laws. A national disaster risk reduction strategy and an action plan for 2023-2030 have been prepared. A National Civil Protection Agency is in place and fully staffed. Albania joined the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) in November 2022. Future plans include further legislative and institutional alignment, strengthening infrastructure, response capacities at central and local level and establishing a National Training Centre for Civil Protection.

b. Commission assessment

Albania is **partially aligned** with EU *acquis* on civil protection and needs to continue working to further improve its civil protection system. It is an active member in UCPM. Linking its national emergency communication system to CECIS (Common Emergency Communication and Information System) of the European Commission needs to be established.

I.J SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – ENVIRONMENT

In general, Albania has some level of preparation on environment, with some areas still at an early stage. Further efforts

are needed to fully align, implement and enforce this complex and substantive acquis, which includes some heavy-investments Directives. There is a strong political commitment at highest level to align with the EU *acquis*. This is reflected in the institutional and strategic approach to align with the EU *acquis* on Chapter 27 which has a working group (with 17 members representing 30 institutions) as well as an Action Plan for 2023-2030. The action plan is elaborated through the program “Supporting Albanian Negotiations in Environment, Chapter 27” (SANE27). Albania has also sectoral strategies that support alignment with the EU *acquis* in areas such as air quality, nature protection, and water quality. Plans are not always associated to specific timing and budget, which shows that further planning is required and would hopefully be covered through Directive Specific Implementation Plans. The pace of alignment and implementation in the horizontal legislation (EIA/SEA), nature protection and waste management sectors need to be in particular accelerated, and technical and administrative capacities need to be strengthened in all sectors.

II. CLIMATE CHANGE

a. Country presentation

Albania is a contracting party to the Energy Community and most of its energy comes from hydropower. Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 2018/1999/EU on Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Change (**Governance Regulation**), through its Climate law from 2020. This Law has been the basis to adopt an Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) for 2021-2030. The main challenge is the process of data collection from different sectors and institutions. A dedicated Working Group composed of representatives from different institutions has been established. Within UNFCCC, four National Communication and one Biennial Update Report have been prepared through outsourcing to UNDP. Albania pledged climate neutrality by 2050 at COP26, in line with the EU ambition. The future strategy on climate change planned for 2024 will give more details on how to reach this goal. Albania stated that it is partially aligned with Regulation 525/2013/EU on a Mechanism for Monitoring and Reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions and for Reporting other Information at the National and Union Level Relevant to Climate Change (**MMR**).

Albania stated that it **has a low level alignment** with Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a System for Greenhouse Gas Emission Allowance Trading within the Union (**ETS Directive**). Albania indicated that implementation is at an early stage. Competent authorities have been determined. Installations are identified (13 operators, 21 installations) and informed about EU ETS obligations and upcoming changes in the legislation. By 2024-2025, Albania will focus on implementing its Monitoring, Reporting, Verification and Accreditation (MRVA) system for installations, which is indeed the first and indispensable step to prepare for ETS. A phase of voluntary reporting will take place first. Albania expressed a desire to use the E-Reporting Tool MRVA acceptance environment for submitting annual emission reports and monitoring plans. Further training of staff on MRVA will take place after further legislative alignment. A Directive Specific Implementation Plan on ETS will be prepared. Albania mentions its intention to start a national ETS that would be linked to the EU ETS at a later stage. Albania is aware of the revision of the ETS Directive and the inclusion of **maritime transport emissions** from 2024.

Albania stated that it is **not aligned** with Regulation 2017/2392/EU to Continue Current Limitations of Scope for Aviation Activities and to Prepare to Implement a Global Market-Based Measure (**ETS aviation**). There is only one operator in Albania, which is aware of the obligations from the Directive.

Albania indicated that it is **partially aligned** with Directive 98/70/EC relating to the Quality of Petrol and Diesel Fuels (**Fuel Quality Directive**), through a secondary legislation “On the quality of petrol and

diesel fuel". Provisions on GHG emission reduction part and biofuels have not been transposed yet. An effective monitoring system is in place. A Directive Specific Implementation Plan will be prepared.

Albania stated that **it is at an advanced level of alignment** with Regulation 1005/2009/EC on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (**ODS Regulation**). The phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) is planned for 2040 in line with the requirements for Art. 5 countries under the Montreal Protocol. A certification scheme has not been established yet. Reporting obligations will be aligned with EU requirements, though secondary legislation to be adopted by 2025. Albania mentioned that it could ask for a transitional period after EU accession to fully implement ODS Regulation.

Albania stated that it is **partially aligned** with Regulation 517/2014/EU on Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (**F-gases Regulation**), through a recent law on fluorinated greenhouse gases from 2023. It has ratified the Kigali amendment. Secondary legislation on licensing, registry and creating accredited bodies is to be adopted by 2026. Competent authorities and responsibilities have been identified. Albania stated that implementation is at an early stage. Full compliance is expected by the date of accession to the EU.

Albania stated that it has **not aligned** with Regulation 2018/842/EU on Binding Annual Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 Contributing to Climate Action to Meet Commitments under the Paris Agreement (**Effort sharing Regulation**). The Albanian Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), updated in 2022, contemplates an increase of its economy wide emissions of 18.1% by 2030. The target corresponds to -20.9% compared to the emissions that would be generated in a business-as-usual scenario. Albania has a set of mitigation policies and measures.

Albania stated that it is **not aligned** with Regulation 2018/841/EU on the Inclusion of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Removals From Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry in the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework (**LULUCF**). Forests cover 46% of Albanian territory. LULUCF sector is an overall net emission. The sector represents moreover a high proportion of Albania's GHG profile (around 20% of emissions). This is largely due to management of forest land, for which there is currently a legal moratorium on forest exploitation. Albania is working on improving reporting full LULUCF inventories under the UNFCCC.

Albania stated that it is **largely aligned** with Directive 1999/94/EC relating to the Availability of Consumer Information on Fuel Economy and CO₂ Emissions in respect of the Marketing of New Passenger Cars (**CO₂ Emissions from Cars and Vans and Heavy-Duty Vehicles Legislation**) but not with the implementing legislation. The Albanian registration system allows for the identification of vehicles registered for the first time.

Albania indicated that alignment and implementation of Directive 2009/31/EC on the Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide (**Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Directive**) have **not started** yet.

b. Commission assessment

Regarding **Governance Regulation**, Albania has made some good efforts by adopting a Climate Law and a NECP, being one of the first ones in the region. Further efforts, including on developing own capacities in monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG, should be pursued.

Regarding **ETS**, Albania is at a **low level of alignment**, and further efforts should be pursued. It is crucial for Albania to get a robust MRV and authorities in place to join the EU ETS on the date of accession. It will be important that the modalities of the transition phase before joining the EU ETS are discussed with the EU. No timeline for GHG permits and MRVA obligations have been defined. The start and duration of voluntary reporting first is not defined yet either. Currently, there are no verification bodies in Albania, however the national authorities intend to create synergies for verification purposes. Implementation of the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for **maritime transport emissions** is at **low**

level of alignment. Albania is encouraged to monitor the 2023 revision of the EU ETS Directive, which will result in the creation of a new and separate ETS for road transport and buildings.

On **ETS aviation**, Albania is at low **level of alignment**. The number of operators is not sure and there is no reporting.

On **Fuel quality**, Albania is at a **high level of alignment** with old legislation. It should pursue efforts in further aligning with consolidated Directive and all relevant Regulations, notably to cover biofuels and gas oil used in non-road mobile machinery.

On **ODS**, Albania is **aligned** with international obligations but not with EU ones. Phase out of HFCs has already taken place in 2000 in the EU, which means that controlled substances for refrigeration purposes are not produced or imported anymore. Having a transitional period until 2040 for Albania does not seem suitable and could cause internal market as well as custom union issues. Similarly, further alignment with EU requirements on licences for import/export of products and equipment containing or relying on ozone depleting substances is needed. Albania is encouraged to monitor the current revision of the Ozone Regulation, which will lead to a change in the licensing process.

On **F-gases**, Albania is at a **low level of alignment**. Training and certification of staff will be crucial. Albania is encouraged to monitor the new F-Gases Regulation, that foresees an even more ambitious phase-down of HFCs compared to the current Regulation from 2014.

Albania has no piece of legislation comparable to the **Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)**, the key purpose of which consists in regulating the sharing and distribution between Member States of climate change mitigation efforts in the sector formed by domestic transport (excluding aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry, and waste. The ESR is not susceptible of being implemented in a single country, and therefore Albania should not be required to adopt, before accession, an equivalent piece of legislation.

Albania has a good understanding of considerations needed to introduce a robust greenhouse gas inventory, and to support policy implementation in the **LULUCF** sector. Being at a **low level of alignment** and implementation stage, Albania should take into consideration the latest EU developments on LULUCF, including the current revision. Focus would be on the 2030 objectives and the framework needed, based upon a robust greenhouse gas inventory for the sector. Regional cooperation could be a way to facilitate this progress. Careful consideration should be made to ensure alignment with international reporting, to reduce administrative burden and enhance technical feasibility.

Albania has **not yet started aligning** its national legislation with the **CO2 standards Regulations for cars and vans and for heavy-duty vehicles** and the related legislation. It will be important for Albania to make sure its registration system is fit for purpose, i.e. that: i) the parameters needed can be retrieved through an appropriate IT system, ii) scope is covered and iii) first registrations can be identified. Albania is invited to explore the provisions in Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/392 concerning the Collection and Reporting of Real-World Data. Albania has **not yet aligned** into national legislation the **Car Labelling Directive** and is encouraged to closely monitor a potential revision of this legislation.

On **CCS**, Albanian geology has some potential. Since it has been recently acknowledged in the EU that climate neutrality would not be reached without CCS, it would be useful for Albania to start reflecting on a potential permitting system and on oil and gas companies' obligations to fund storage capacity by 2030 in the EU.

b. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – CLIMATE CHANGE

Albania has some level of preparation for tackling climate change, but alignment with the EU *acquis* still remains limited. Albania is committed to taking measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from different economic sectors such as transport, agriculture, land use and forestry, industrial processes and waste, according to its updated National Determined Contribution (NDC). But financial and human means are limited. Albania is preparing a national strategy on climate change that will need to be updated to consider the new climate targets set out in the revised NDC and, closer to accession, the new climate targets set by the EU. Capacity in the public administration for interpreting the climate change impacts on Albania and incorporating climate change into sectoral strategies and plans remains very limited; capacity building is very much needed in this regard. No emissions register is in place. Substantial investments and efforts are also needed for climate adaptation, as Albania is highly exposed to the consequences of climate change.

III. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

a. Country presentation

There is an Anti-Corruption Coordinator in NEA, National Protected Areas Agency (NAPA) and National Coastal Agency (NCA), which report case by case through the General Anticorruption Directorate and the National Anticorruption Coordinator (Minister of Justice). Complaints are dealt through the platform “Albania that we love”. Some digital tools are in place to prevent, detect, trace processes, enabling detection of potential abusive/corruptive practices, e.g. for the EIA, SEA and Environment permits. Regulation and training on ethics and prevention of conflict of interests are in place. There are some internal and external audit.

b. Commission assessment

Albania has a system in place to prevent corruption in the field of environment.

c. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS – FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Albania has the institutional and legislative framework in place to tackle corruption in the field of environment and climate change

