

## Cooperation agreement between GVH and the Montenegrin competition authority

**Budapest, 20 November 2023 - The Western Balkan country's competition authority, the Montenegrin Agency for the Protection of Competition (APC), and the Hungarian Competition Authority (GVH) have strengthened their cooperation. GVH President Csaba Balázs Rigó pointed out: it is in the national interest of Hungary that the European Union be enlarged as soon as possible with the countries of the Western Balkans. This cooperation will, among other things, contribute to the early alignment of Montenegro's competition rules with those of the European Union.**

The GVH and the Montenegrin competition authority have already maintained close relations, as the latter is a beneficiary of the Regional Centre for Competition in Budapest, jointly run by the GVH and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Since 2005, the Centre has been providing assistance in the field of competition law and policy, based on the expertise of both organisations, mainly to the competition authorities of Eastern, South-Eastern, Central European and Western Balkan countries. Hungary thus plays a leading role in the region in terms of participation in the development of transition economies and technical assistance.

The agreement signed on Monday at the GVH's headquarters includes, among other things, establishing strong and collaborative professional connections, receiving specialist assistance from the Hungarian side in intricate competition cases, exchanging knowledge on the digitisation of administrative processes, and promoting the Western Balkan country's accession to the EU in the alignment of competition laws.

Csaba Balázs Rigó, President of GVH, stressed that *"It is in Hungary's interest that the Western Balkan countries, including Montenegro, join the European Union as soon as possible. We will share our expertise in enforcement and competition matters and provide our Montenegrin friends with all the support they need to bring their competition rules into line with the European Union's legal system"*.

The latter is a priority area for the Montenegrin competition authority, whose visiting President is leading the government working group on the accession chapter of the competition negotiations.

*"Obligations from negotiation chapter 8 – Competition issues are key questions for the APC to manage. We see cooperation with our colleagues from EU as way to show that we can work together with EU partners and position APC as relevant partner to all competition authorities. EU partners are key to help us become acceptable member of the EU family. Bilateral*

*cooperation with our European partners is a priority for the Competition Agency. We look forward to benefiting from Hungary's experience in solving our more complex competition cases. We are also pleased to hear that our common goal is for Montenegro to meet the criteria for closing the competition chapter of the EU accession negotiations,"* said Dragan Damjanovic, Head of the Montenegrin Agency for the Protection of Competition.

Montenegro applied for EU membership in December 2008 and was granted candidate status in December 2010. Accession negotiations between the EU and Montenegro started in June 2012.

### **GVH Public Service Communications and International Section**

Further information:

Bálint Horváth, Head of Communication +36 20 238 6939

Katalin Gondolovics, Spokesperson +36 30 603 1170