

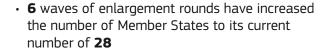
EU ENLARGEMENT FACTSHEET

http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement



HOW DOES THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS WORK?

What is currently the EU began in **1957** as the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community with **6** members: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands





- 1973: Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom
- **1981**: Greece
- **1986**: Spain, Portugal
- **1995**: Austria, Finland, Sweden
- **2004 and 2007**: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania
- **2013**: Croatia
- Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union (Excerpt from Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union)
- Values listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: respect for human dignity; freedom; democracy; equality; the rule of law; respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities

The following **8** countries are currently in the accession process:

- **6** candidate countries (still in the negotiation process or waiting to start): Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland (negotiations with Iceland have been put on hold following the decision of the Icelandic government), Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey
- **2** potential candidates (countries promised the prospect of joining when they are ready): Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*

^{*} This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.





MAIN STEPS TO ACCESSION

The applicant country (potential candidate) submits its application to the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In the light of the European Commission's opinion, the Council of the European Union decides whether to consider the applicant a candidate country. The Council may also set certain conditions that need to be met before accession negotiations can begin.

For the accession negotiations, the *acquis* is divided into 35 chapters, each of which covers a specific policy area.

The negotiations process aims to help candidate countries prepare to fulfil the obligations of EU membership. The chapters cover the major aspects of EU policy, such as free movement of goods, capital, and workers; economic policy, energy, transport, regional policy, foreign policy, fundamental rights, and more. Benchmarks are set in every chapter to guide the candidate towards fulfilling the obligations.

After the accession treaty has been signed, it must be ratified by the acceding country and each individual EU Member State according to their constitutional rules (i.e. parliamentary vote, referendum).

The European Commission makes an initial evaluation of the applicant country and submits its opinion to the Council of the European Union.

Once accession negotiations are opened, the European Commission investigates the candidate country in greater detail in a process known as screening. The resulting screening report identifies shortcomings in the candidate country that need to be gradually addressed in order for it to comply with the body of rights and obligations binding for all EU Member States (also known as the *acquis*).

After the candidate country has reformed its national laws so that they match the *acquis*, every criterion has been fulfilled, and every chapter has been closed, the agreements reached are set out in an accession treaty, which must be signed by the candidate country and all EU Member States. The accession treaty must also win the support of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. The candidate country then becomes an acceding country.

The acceding country then becomes an EU Member State on the date specified in the accession treaty.

SUPPORTING EU ENLARGEMENT

The European Commission has provided over 11 billion EUR to support enlargement countries in their reforms through the instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) over the period 2007- 2013.

- 11.7 billion EUR have been allocated for the 2014 2020 period (IPA II), which will help:
- Increase good governance and capacity building to align with EU laws and standards
- Support socio-economic development in line with the EU 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

