



European
Commission

EU accession process

March 2020
#EUenlargement

A credible enlargement policy is a geostrategic investment in **peace, stability, security** and **prosperity** in Europe. It is based on fair and rigorous conditionality and the principle of own merits. It requires candidate countries to implement complex reforms in many areas such as the rule of law, the economy, the fight against corruption and organised crime. Reconciliation, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are of utmost importance.

Main steps to EU accession



1 Country submits an application to the Council.



2 Commission submits an Opinion on the application.



3 EU Member States decide unanimously to grant the country candidate status.



4 After conditions are met, the accession negotiations are opened with the agreement of all Member States.



5 Commission proposes a negotiating framework as a basis for the talks.



6 During negotiations, the country prepares to implement EU laws and standards. All EU Member States must agree that it met all requirements.



7 Once negotiations on all areas are finalised, Commission gives its Opinion on the readiness of the country to become a Member State.



8 Based on this Opinion, EU Member States decide unanimously to close the negotiation process. The European Parliament must also give its consent.



9 All EU Member States and the candidate country sign and ratify an Accession Treaty which enables the country to become an EU Member State.