

Staged Integration for Future EU Enlargement:

Geopolitical Imperatives and
Liberal Leadership

Abstract:

European integration has resulted in an unprecedented period of peace and ever extending liberties for European citizens. When peace, security, and freedom on the continent are once again at stake, it is time to return to the fundamentals of the European project and renew our commitment to its initial purpose and vision. Based on the results of the 2022 ELF Working Group on staged integration, this paper proposes a policy model that can bring a solution to the long-lasting stalemate in EU enlargement. The first part problematises the lack of progress in the accession of candidate countries, outlines the geopolitical imperatives for renewing the enlargement project, and calls for liberal leadership in this process. The second part discusses the lasting need for a revised enlargement methodology and puts on the liberal policymaking agenda a proposal for a 'staged integration' approach to progressive accession across a variety of sectors, pending full membership. The paper then suggests modifications and updates to the existing template for staged integration models and concludes with recommendations for policymakers.



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Renewing the EU Enlargement Project: A Matter of Necessity, Not Choice

The EU in 2022: Security Threats and Illiberal Trends

Throughout 2022, the European Union has been facing existential decisions about its geopolitical present and future. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the collapse of the post-Cold War security architecture have shown that neither peace nor freedom should be taken for granted. Large-scale military aggression by an illiberal regime against a sovereign democratic state presents Europe with a major security threat. Furthermore, it also poses a challenge to the fundamental liberal values of the European project. Despite the high level of unity and determination of EU institutions and Member States to support Ukrainians' fight for freedom and right to self-determination, illiberal forces both outside and within the EU continue to limit the bloc's ability to act and protect itself and its values within its borders and right next to them.

When peace, security, and freedom on the European continent are at stake, it is time to come back to the fundamentals of the European project and renew our commitment to its initial purpose and vision. The integration of the European nations has resulted in an unprecedented period of peace and extended freedoms for Europe's citizens. As in decades past, the EU is yet again tasked with thinking strategically about the opportunities that internal integration may produce further down the road and how to extend them to nations beyond Europe's current external borders. Even more importantly, the EU should be fully aware of the risks of non-integration. There might be no other moment like this in the years to come.

This paper is based on the results of the 2022 ELF Working Group on Staged Integration for EU Enlargement. The international expert group brought together academics as well as practitioners from both within and outside the EU: professors from the University of Macedonia, American University in Bulgaria, Pedagogical University in Krakow, Vrije Universiteit Brussels as well as experts with policymaking and civil society experience in Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Croatia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Building on the 2021 ELF project 'Multi-speed Europe – Embracing the Reality' (Stefan, 2021), the Group focused on addressing a long-standing enlargement impasse and developing the concept of 'staged integration' – that is, the idea that 'countries acceding to only certain sectors of the Union, pending pull membership'.¹

¹ ELF thanks all the participants of the expert Working Group on Staged Integration, and especially Emil Kirjas, for their valuable input to this paper.

This paper is divided into two parts, the first outlining the problem and the second suggesting a solution. The first part consists of listing the geopolitical imperatives for EU enlargement, discussing the political momentum created by the June 2022 Council Summits (European Council Oversight Unit, 2022). The second part of the paper outlines a way out of the enlargement stalemate and presents a 'staged integration' model as an innovative approach to the EU accession process. Based on the previous work on this matter, further updates and upgrades of this alternative roadmap to the EU membership are suggested. The paper concludes with a list of recommendations for EU policymakers.

EU Enlargement after June 2022: Continuing Stalemate or a Long-Awaited Breakthrough?

Some 18 years ago, the Thessaloniki Summit opened the door to a European future for the Western Balkans. However, since then the impetus for enlargement has been steadily dissipating. On the one hand, the EU has shown acute signs of enlargement fatigue and a lack of visionary political leadership; on the other, Western Balkan countries have failed to keep up with the pace of reform required (European Commission, 2022a).² Alongside these unreasonably delays in the EU integration of the Western Balkans, the global rise of authoritarianism and competition for regional influence on the part of the EU's geopolitical competitors, namely Russia and China, is challenging the 'European' perspective of the region.

Following the enlargement promise to the Western Balkans region, in 2009 the EU also initiated the Eastern Partnership (EaP) instrument to coordinate its relations with its neighbours in the East. Although it has never voiced an explicit intention to eventually integrate the countries of the region as full members of the EU, it has brought under one regional umbrella six states with diametrically different, even conflicting geopolitical orientations. Allowing for the formation of the 'Associated Trio' of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (Cenusa and Longhurst, 2022), the EaP framework has left the aspiring countries stuck in limbo between the two geopolitical 'camps' embodied by the EU and Russia (Delcour and Kostanyan, 2014).

In 2022, Russia's fully fledged war against Ukraine made it clear that all the states in the EU's immediate neighbourhood region are under direct or indirect threat. The countries to the east of the EU are in danger of losing their sovereignty, freedom, and territories to the increasingly aggressive neighbour. The states of the Western Balkans region remain as exposed to Russian propaganda as to the growing Chinese influence (Marusic, 2022). On the eve of 2023, the EU

² A detailed up-to-date analysis of the state of EU integration in each of the countries in the Western Balkans regions can be found in Rrustemi, Steric and Drajić (2022).

enlargement and its 'stable and secure neighbourhood' projects could not seem farther away from reality.

Geopolitical Imperatives for EU Enlargement

EU enlargement was initially framed by the European Commission as a strategic investment in peace in Europe. Meanwhile, the security threats that it aimed to address have not disappeared. As during the wars in South Eastern Europe in the 1990s, in 2022 the EU keeps demonstrating its inability to both prevent and stop brutal military conflicts in its immediate neighbourhood. The EU's rationale of keeping the aspiring EaP countries at arms-length so as not to provoke Russian aggression has proven to be a dramatically misleading and eventually failed policy. On the contrary, the ambiguity surrounding the EU as an autonomous strategic actor has contributed to the instability of its direct neighbourhood, which is under the constant threat of military aggression.

Furthermore, both in the Western Balkans and in the EaP region, the EU's influence and attractiveness do not come without competition. The EU's increasingly aggressive geopolitical competitors, namely China and Russia, seek to promote alternative external agendas that challenge the spread of liberal values on the European continent (Buyuk 2022). The unreasonably slow pace of EU integration, the absence of achievable prospects, and lack of determination and consistency on the EU's part (increasingly seen as double standards) lead to the disappointment of the candidate countries, giving rise to anti-EU narratives, and inevitably result in democratic backsliding and illiberal developments (Bechev, 2022). Interestingly, Russian-backed governments might try to cooperate among themselves in opposition to the liberal forces in Europe (Stojanovic, 2022).

We need to see these developments against the backdrop of the fact that US foreign policy has been gradually shifting towards the Pacific region and away from the European continent. Although the US remains an important ally of the EU, every new election bring a growing risk of a dramatic change in its foreign policy, potentially leaving Europe one-on-one with its regional challenges (Montgomery, 2022).

In this challenging geopolitical reality, with an increasing threat of authoritarianism and military aggression, the EU Enlargement in the two strategic regions seems to be the only viable way to guarantee peace, security, and freedom on the continent. Closer relations with the EU, aspirations to join the club and get access to the benefits of European integration are the strongest driving factors behind EU neighbours' motivation on the path to liberal reform and democratic transformation (unless the democratic backsliding within the EU itself calls this into question).

June 2022: Match Point for the EU

Given the intensified geopolitical situation in the first half of the year, June 2022 became a watershed in EU relations with both the Western Balkans and the EaP

regions. Russia's aggression in Ukraine created the momentum to fast-track the EU integration process for the so-called Associated Trio from the EaP region. Granting the prospect of membership to Ukraine and Moldova (and, to Georgia, 'the perspective to become a member' (European Commission, 2022b)) has been immediately deemed 'historical' within the European political narrative (European Union, n.d). For the first time, the EU has formally admitted that its enlargement to the East (i.e. closer to Russia and its self-proclaimed 'sphere of influence') is a realistic and not merely a hypothetical possibility. This breaking point has resulted in bringing the two countries – as well as Georgia – out of the neighbourhood and into the enlargement policy basket, while simultaneously de facto dismissing the EaP framework as such.

In contrast, during the Western Balkans Summit held in June, the years of stagnation, fatigue, and unfulfilled hopes of the countries of the region reached boiling point, with zero progress achieved on any of the long-stalled EU bids (Gijs, 2022). The consecutive Council's decision to grant candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova was generally perceived as a blow in the face of those Western Balkans countries, which have been waiting on the EU doorstep for years (de Jong, 2022). Yet the EU's bold move towards its eastern neighbours amidst the prolonged stagnation vis-à-vis the Western Balkans could be seen a window of opportunity for the aspiring countries from both regions – as well as for the EU itself. The decision around Ukraine's application was a true match point for Europe, when the scales shifted towards completing the integration of the aspiring nations – to achieve enlargement. This was later proven by the eventual progress in overcoming Bulgaria's veto on the North Macedonian EU bid (Gotev, 2022). This was followed by the long-awaited green light from the European Commission to start accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania in July 2022 (Brzozowski, 2022). Coincidentally or not, this happened following weeks of tension and potential military conflict in the Western Balkans region (International Crisis Group, 2022).

Although the 'perspective' of membership does not in any way guarantee that accession will ever take place, what matters is not only and not primarily the speedy granting of the candidate status itself, but, above all, the changed geopolitical context that has led to a change of reasoning within the EU (Alesina, 2022). Not only this has shown us yet again that the EU, when pushed to the limits of its comfort zone by security imperatives, is capable of gathering the political will and taking much-needed, even if long-overdue decisions. Most importantly, this has demonstrated that the ice of the enlargement stalemate has finally been broken.

The credibility of enlargement has often been questioned, but the Russian war against Ukraine, which is also perceived as an act of aggression against the liberal world, has shown that there is no viable alternative. A war – the most fundamental negative driver of the European project – pushed the hesitation and internal disputes to the background and made all 27 leaders give their consent to formalising the European path of Ukraine and Moldova and to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. Most importantly, military aggression against a sovereign country is not a stand-alone phenomenon but a symptom of the multi-sided processes that have been taking place on the continent and which have started to turn the tide of political considerations.

Faced with a harsh geopolitical reality, the EU, willingly or unwillingly, has taken historical decisions, which are, however, yet to be backed up by practical steps and political determination.

The EU's united front in supporting Ukraine has created a unique impetus for the bloc to extract solutions from the current security crises and improve and expand the European area of prosperity and stability. There is now no way back. To preserve Europe as a continent of freedom and peace, enlargement has become a matter of necessity, not choice. This is the time for the EU to become creative in how it approaches its own functioning as well as how it interacts with the world beyond its borders.

The EU's political leadership is currently exploring how to bring aspiring countries into the European club and facilitate their closer integration. Among the options on the table are proposals for a new European (geo-)Political Community initiated by the French President Emmanuel Macron (Stratulat, 2022) and the European Council President Charles Michel (Emerson and Blockmans, 2022). These initiatives, if further elaborated, can bring added value to strengthening the wider pan-European political unity of democratic countries. However, they should not and cannot become an alternative to the enlargement project, as they will not address the geopolitical issues discussed above nor provide sufficient mechanisms for fully-fledged integration.

Part 2: From Candidacy to Membership: EU Accession Roadmap Revised

Apart from putting enlargement at the top of the political agenda, the granting of candidacy to Ukraine and Moldova has foregrounded consideration of the practicalities of the accession process itself. What is thus clear at this point is that the EU accession process needs to be redesigned in order to address the grey zone between the receiving of candidate status and actual membership, a zone in which a country can be stuck indefinitely without any tangible progress.

In 2020, to address the lack of progress, the European Commission adopted a revised enlargement methodology (European Commission, 2020). It aimed to provide fresh impetus for fundamental political reforms in the Western Balkan countries. Even though the methodology has received mixed reactions among experts, it has introduced a key improvement by packaging the 35 negotiation chapters into six clusters, enabling all of them to be worked on simultaneously. This has certainly made the process more dynamic. However, despite this, the Commission's revised methodology has failed to properly address and practically resolve such major issues as the lack of tangible results for citizens and the countries during the lengthy accession process, the lack of tailored country-specific approaches to measuring the results and progress, insufficient involvement of civil society and national parliaments in the accession procedures (Lazarević and Subotić, 2021). The initiative has thus acknowledged the need for revision, but to date has not fully delivered.

As the EU can no longer afford the integration process for its aspiring neighbours to stagnate, accession must become dynamic, visibly progressive, and tangible. It must aim at strengthening liberal values in all the (potential) candidate countries and include a clear timeframe and improved cooperation mechanisms.

2.1. Regional perspective vs. country-specific approach and conditionality

The EU has consistently argued that each candidate country has to be assessed individually according to its progress and commitment, while recognising that a country's historical background and regional context cannot be deliberately ignored or put aside.

The Balkan and the three EaP countries aspiring for EU membership are comparable in regard to the political, legal, and economic criteria. On political and legal criteria, the Balkan countries' average ratings were slightly higher than those of their Eastern European counterparts, although in recent years there has been a noticeable decline in the functioning of their democratic institutions (Stojanovic, 2020). At the same time, the Eastern partners are dealing better with regard to trade and economics, achieved due to their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) with the EU (a detailed comparative analysis is provided by Emerson et al., 2021a).

Taking a regional perspective to EU integration certainly has added value: for example, it can provide insights into region-specific systemic problems and foster intra-regional cooperation. Nevertheless, it can also limit the countries' individual potential, ambitions, and progress. Even in the case of the Eastern Partnership, where accession has never been presented as a goal, the EU has eventually come to understand that it is impossible to have a one-size-fits-all umbrella policy addressing the specificities of six different countries.

Thus, when we talk about the accession roadmap for countries from two different regions, with diverse historical, societal, and geopolitical influences, the need for a country-specific tailored approach is evident and unavoidable. One-on-one relations would allow for developing a more accurate and specified accession framework for each candidate country. Such an approach helps uncover the unique potential of each future member state and its strongest internal drivers, and thus develop and apply the most effective conditionality instruments (Mirel, 2022).

2.2. A staged integration approach: countdown to full membership

The simple binary of 'full member vs. an outsider' no longer corresponds to geopolitical realities or to internal developments in the neighbouring countries. For the enlargement strategy to adequately reflect the EU's liberal agenda and current geopolitical challenges, the approach needs to be revised and updated with concrete, tangible, and pragmatic milestones and programmes as well as the political will and commitment on the part of the EU to achieve real progress on the issue of enlargement. Considering that differentiated integration is quickly becoming a de facto reality in Europe (Stefan, 2021), it is time we asked whether

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there are different ways to renew EU enlargement in these crucial regions. A so-called staged integration approach could be a means to achieve progressive integration while avoiding the delays and potential stalemate of the membership/no-membership binary.

In the past few years, the concept of staged, or differentiated integration has been introduced within the expert community as a potential solution to the stalemate in the Western Balkans accession process. Based on studies independently conducted by think-tanks in Brussels and Belgrade, a common proposal was eventually developed by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and

Center for European Policy (CEP) (Emerson et al., 2021b). It suggests a roadmap for candidate countries to 'progressively and conditionally access the rights and benefits of EU membership' pending fully fledged accession, which remains the ultimate final goal.³ This framework thus proposes an alternative accession model based on gradual opening of a members' rights and obligations, including increasing access to the EU structural funds and involvement in EU institutions. This happens upon the fulfillment of concrete pre-defined criteria and benchmarks and is based on the system of strict monitoring and conditionality.

As to the general framework, the proposal envisions two implementation instruments: a new legal text adopted by the EU outlining the progressive accession stages and the bilateral agreements with candidate countries marking the transition from one step to the next. At the same time, the experts insist on upgrading and improving the monitoring and assessment mechanisms in order to ensure the transformative effect and credibility of the accession process.⁴

The model breaks the process down into four progressive stages: 'initial', 'intermediate', 'new Member State', and 'conventional membership' (Emerson et al. 2021b). Based on the six-clusters-framework suggested by the 2020 Commission's revised methodology, it suggests opening all the clusters in the very first stage (Emerson et al. 2021b). Upon the fulfillment of the required ratings of cluster averages, the country graduates to the next consecutive stage. Closing all the six clusters leads to the third accession stage, while the fourth and final stage is linked to getting unrestricted access to all forms of voting, including veto

rights. Throughout the entire process, passing to each new stage brings an increase in EU funding and broadens the country's participation in EU policies and institutions. Specific details and criteria for each of the stages can be found in the template.

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³ 'The Enlargement Impasse and the Necessity of its Transformation', TEN, CEPS, 2021, available at ..., p.1.

⁴ Ibid.

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throughout the entire integration process, even if substantial work remains to be done by their governments to unlock access to full membership rights. This implies a switch both in perception and in the accession methodology: instead of seeking a potentially unachievable and uncertain goal, the country goes through a countdown towards fully fledged membership. Accession thus becomes a dynamic and predictable process of gradually removing all the restrictions and barriers, conditioned exclusively on the country's progress in adjusting its standards and practices

to the club's norms and requirements. A new EU legal text is needed to outline the process of staged integration as well as details and procedures related to signing accession treaties with, in the context of the new geopolitical reality.

For this framework to work and reach its full potential, it needs to be driven by two key factors: criteria, or milestones, and timing, or deadlines. Based on the template outlined above, further modifications are suggested in these key dimensions. First, to fully cover the integration process, a starting 'zero stage' needs to be added to the milestones. It signifies the country's EU aspiration and is linked to submitting the membership application. Currently, all the candidate countries are at this initial, 'zero' phase. They will have to pass a qualification test for entering the first stage, from where their countdown to full membership begins. At this moment, the EU and a candidate country sign a legally binding Accession Treaty, which sets out all the details and milestones of the process. These bilateral treaties also open up the possibility for introducing transitional mechanisms and adjustment or improvement of the treaty on the functioning of the EU.

Second, the factor of timing needs to be introduced. While the criteria for all the stages have been set by the *acquis communautaire* and the milestones suggested by the previous template, adding the aspect of timing and pre-defined deadlines makes the process more credible and tangible and keeps both sides committed and accountable. A shared final deadline is suggested for the Western Balkans countries: final accession must take place in 2030 at the latest, marking the 20th anniversary of the Thessaloniki agenda which has promised membership to all the countries of the region. A 2035 accession deadline should be set for Ukraine and Moldova and suggested for Georgia and Turkey. After this point, if the country still does not qualify for full membership, either the process is considered closed or a new extended deadline can be set. The set of intermediary deadlines for the passage to each consecutive integration stage needs to be agreed upon for each individual country.

Staged Integration for EU Enlargement: Policy Recommendations

To put into practice the reasoning outlined above – to place enlargement on the liberal family's agenda and promote it as part of the EU's *modus operandi* – a set of recommendations for implementing the staged integration approach is formulated as follows.

Revised frameworks for relations with candidate and neighbouring countries

- The priority for future EU enlargement lies in advancing negotiations with the Western Balkans and the three interested EaP countries that have expressed their EU aspirations and demonstrated certain progress in implementing the reforms requested by the EU. These countries should be followed by Turkey, on condition that its political regime reconfirms the country's willingness to advance the accession process while implementing the required democratic reforms. This suggestion and a deadline can be considered the final call for the long-standing candidate country, after which the process is either repeated or the case becomes officially closed.
- A move from a geography-based enlargement strategy to the merit-based approach is required, while designing tailor-made accession roadmaps and bilateral relations freed from regional categorisation. However, this does not exclude overlaps and takeovers in addressing region-specific issues and supporting intra-regional cooperation.
- Due to the radical change in the geopolitical and security context, the EaP framework must be reviewed and even replaced with other forms of interaction between the EU and the countries of the region, by investing in bilateral channels and multilateral formats better suited to dealing with the new challenges.

Facilitating accession for EU candidates

- Mentorship, or sponsorship: Develop and apply the concept of political mentoring of candidates or sponsorship by EU Member States to share the experience of joining the EU. This has been the case in the past, when Greece helped Bulgaria; Denmark was close to Latvia and Finland to Estonia.

- Upgrading the 'more-for-more' principle: Membership based on closed clusters (chapters) should result in access to pre-defined EU programmes, funds, and agencies. This enables a phased enlargement of the EU to be launched, during which candidate countries can see tangible results as they move towards full member status thanks to a 'more-for-more' approach.
- A new 'carrot-and-stick' mechanism should be established and clearly defined as to increase public awareness in the candidate countries of possible losses for the country and maximise political costs and pressure on political elites. The carrots must include the opportunities for the candidates to benefit from the structural funds. Material rewards have the potential to incentivise overcoming difficult chapters, as in the case of Serbia it is chapter 35 on normalising relations with Kosovo. New sticks should include the possibility for reversible sectoral integration for the candidate countries, such as the limitation or exclusion of certain EU programmes or funds, as well as the reintroduction of visa obligations for particular groups of stakeholders responsible for democratic setbacks or the rule of law (judges, politicians, etc.).
- Rules of the game: At the procedural level, the conditions and criteria of the extension must be pre-defined and should not be subject to change throughout the accession process, as to avoid confusion and frustration among the public and the political elites of the candidate countries. This includes setting fixed deadlines, benchmarks, and a reward system as well as clear criteria for reversing the benefits in case of backsliding in the reforms process. However, we must ensure that the process does not become too rigid and technical and instead embrace flexibility by taking into account delivering reforms with political-electoral cyclicity in the EU candidate state for greater benefits.

EU functionality and liberal positioning

- Before addressing the new approach to EU enlargement, the decision-making process should be changed by removing the unanimity rule and replace it by QMV in order to avoid any future blockages when it comes to accepting new member states.
- A radical, new staged integration approach should be evaluated. The candidate countries must be admitted more quickly as members, with conditionality clauses introduced in the accession agreements, with full admission in certain aspects of the Union or the voting rights in the various institutions (Parliament, CoR, Commission, Council) will be linked to the reform progress (similar to the transnational clauses for the full access to the labour market of the Member States which were included in the last enlargement cycles).
- A new EU narrative must be created to emphasise that the EU is not only an economic power dealing with the looming risks of growing inflation but also, and primarily, a political project aimed at achieving peace and security in a new context of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

- Liberals should continue working on promoting EU enlargement and supporting liberal forces across Europe while preparing new emerging liberal elites in order to consolidate the support for EU enlargement among the public at large. During official visits to the candidate and aspiring countries, European liberal leaders and politicians should not refrain from having direct meetings and engagements with liberal and pro-European political forces, instead of focusing only on government-to-government links. This will send a clear message to the public in those European nations that the democratic pro-European forces enjoy support and endorsement.
- Accelerating effective EU enlargement and European integration should serve as a way to revitalise liberal democratic values, counter the stagnation of liberal democracy and the pread of illiberal regimes among the EU members, neighbours, and candidate countries.

Managing relations with external spoilers and autocracies

- The Western Balkan countries and the (potential) candidate countries of the EaP should be involved in the European conversation about the present and future of the EU project. At the same time, the fight against disinformation and anti-democratic propaganda must address not only the discourses of Russia and China, but also the messages used by local politicians who aim to promote illiberal regimes domestically.
- The normalisation of relations with Russia should not be a precondition for the enlargement of the EU towards Eastern European candidate countries. However, the Russian factor should not be ignored. For the (potential) candidate countries of the Eastern Partnership, the EU should develop strategies to decoupling their economies from dependency on Russia (energy, trade, movement of people, supply chain, transport routes, etc.).
- The promotion of democratic values through foreign affairs must be at the core of the EU's external actions, with the aim of creating a balanced approach between defending human rights and developing a strategic energy dialogue with countries such as Azerbaijan. Strategic relations with third countries should not be detrimental to the EU's liberal profile and agenda or to the enlargement process.
- Conditionality linked to the rule of law and the fight against corruption must remain at the heart of the accession process, using temporary and group-targeted sectoral disintegration (visa liberalisation) and cuts in access to EU finances to offset setbacks and increase costs for responsible national stakeholders. ■

EU relations with the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries:
advancement timeline

State	Application	Avis	Candidate status	Accession negotiations	Closed chapters
Serbia	2009	2011	2012	2013	2
Montenegro	2008	2010	2010	2012	3
Northern Macedonia	2004	2005	2005	2022	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2016	2019	-	-	-
Albania	2009	2010	2014	2022	-
Kosovo	End of 2022	-	-	-	-

State	Association Agreement	DCFTA	Visa-free regime with the EU	EU Membership application negotiations	EC Opinion
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	-	-
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-
Georgia	June 2014	June 2014	March 2017	March 2022	June 2022
Moldova	June 2014	June 2014	April 2014	March 2022	June 2022
Ukraine	March 2014	June 2014	June 2017	March 2022	June 2022

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About ELF

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the official political foundation of the European Liberal Party, the ALDE Party. Together with 47 member organisations, we work all over Europe to bring new ideas into the political debate, to provide a platform for discussion, and to empower citizens to make their voices heard. Our work is guided by liberal ideals and a belief in the principle of freedom. We stand for a future-oriented Europe that offers opportunities for every citizen. ELF is engaged on all political levels, from the local to the European. We bring together a diverse network of national foundations, think tanks and other experts. In this role, our forum serves as a space for an open and informed exchange of views between a wide range of different EU stakeholders.

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DOI: 10.53121/ELFPP20

ISSN 2736-5816



Graphic Design: Altais
Cover image: Unsplash

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