

## EU ENLARGEMENT FACTSHEET

http://ec.europa.eu/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
- 6 waves of enlargement rounds have increased the number of Member States to its current number of 28



- **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:

- **5** candidate countries (still in the negotiation process or waiting to start): the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey
- **3** potential candidates (countries promised the prospect of joining when they are ready): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*

<sup>\*</sup> 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.

If the European Commission has a favourable opinion of the applicant country's status, the Council of the European Union may decide to consider the applicant a candidate country.

The *acquis* is divided into 35 chapters, each of which covers a specific policy area. Negotiations begin so as 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.

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 findings to the Council of the European Union.

The European Commission investigates the candidate country in greater detail in a process known as screening. The resulting screening report identifies the gaps in the body of common rights and obligations binding for all EU Member States (also known as the *acquis*) that the candidate country will have to fill.

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