

Key findings on Ukraine

Despite Russia's brutal war of aggression, Ukraine remains firmly committed to its EU accession path: it has successfully completed the screening process and has made progress in implementing key reforms. Ukraine has adopted roadmaps on the rule of law, governance and the functioning of democratic institutions, as well as an action plan on national minorities, which the European Commission has positively assessed. Ukraine has fulfilled the requirements for the opening of clusters: the first (Fundamentals), the sixth (External Relations), the second (Internal Market). The European Commission expects Ukraine to fulfil the conditions for the opening of the remaining three clusters; it is working to ensure that the Council of the EU can advance the opening of all clusters by the end of the year. The Ukrainian Government has already stated its aim to provisionally close the accession negotiations by the end of 2028. The European Commission is committed to supporting this ambitious goal, but believes that to achieve it, the pace of reforms needs to be accelerated, in particular as regards fundamental principles, especially the rule of law.

Next steps

The Council of the EU should now examine these recommendations of the European Commission and decide on the next steps in the enlargement process.

Background

Enlargement is a clear, fair process, based on the merits and objective progress of each country participating in it. The EU supports the transformation of institutions, democratic governance and public administration in such countries.

By promoting gradual integration, the EU offers advantages to countries even before accession. Initiatives such as the €6 billion Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, the €1.9 billion Growth Plan for Moldova and the €50 billion Ukraine Facility are helping countries to advance their reforms and to build links with the EU, such as through gradual integration and participation in SEPA and Roam like at home, the EU's single roaming area.

Each enlargement has made our Union stronger. The accession of ten countries to the EU in 2004 marked the EU's largest enlargement. Over the past twenty years, the countries that joined during that period have seen their living standards double, unemployment almost halve, life expectancy increase from 75 to 79, poverty and social exclusion fall sharply, and 6 million jobs created. For the current member states, trade has since more than fivefold; 20 million jobs were created. For the EU as a whole, the single market gained 74 million new consumers, and the EU economy grew by 27% despite the global crisis.