



# Trade, Development, Enlargement

## The Future of EU Enlargement

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*By Emília, Laman, Francesco*

# What is EU Enlargement?

- **Process of new countries joining the EU.**
- History of EU Enlargement, EEC Treaty: EU was born out of a crisis (WW2), wasn't meant to be a closed club.
- *“If we're connected economically and politically, we won't go to war again.”*
- One of the biggest success stories of the European Union (foreign policy) European model of integration + Single Market.
- Peace, stability, security, bigger Single Market, regional reconciliation, democratization, global voice, funding & investment.
- Copenhagen criteria, solo accession/ accession wave, conditionality, arduous discussions, unanimous agreement.





# Candidate Countries

- **EU Candidate Countries:**

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine

- **Integration Process:**

Different for each country, depending on the reforms required in political, economic, and legal areas.

- **Western Balkans:**

Albania, Serbia, Montenegro applied early, but little progress has been made.

- **Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia:**

Granted candidate status recently due to geopolitical shifts.

- **Turkey:**

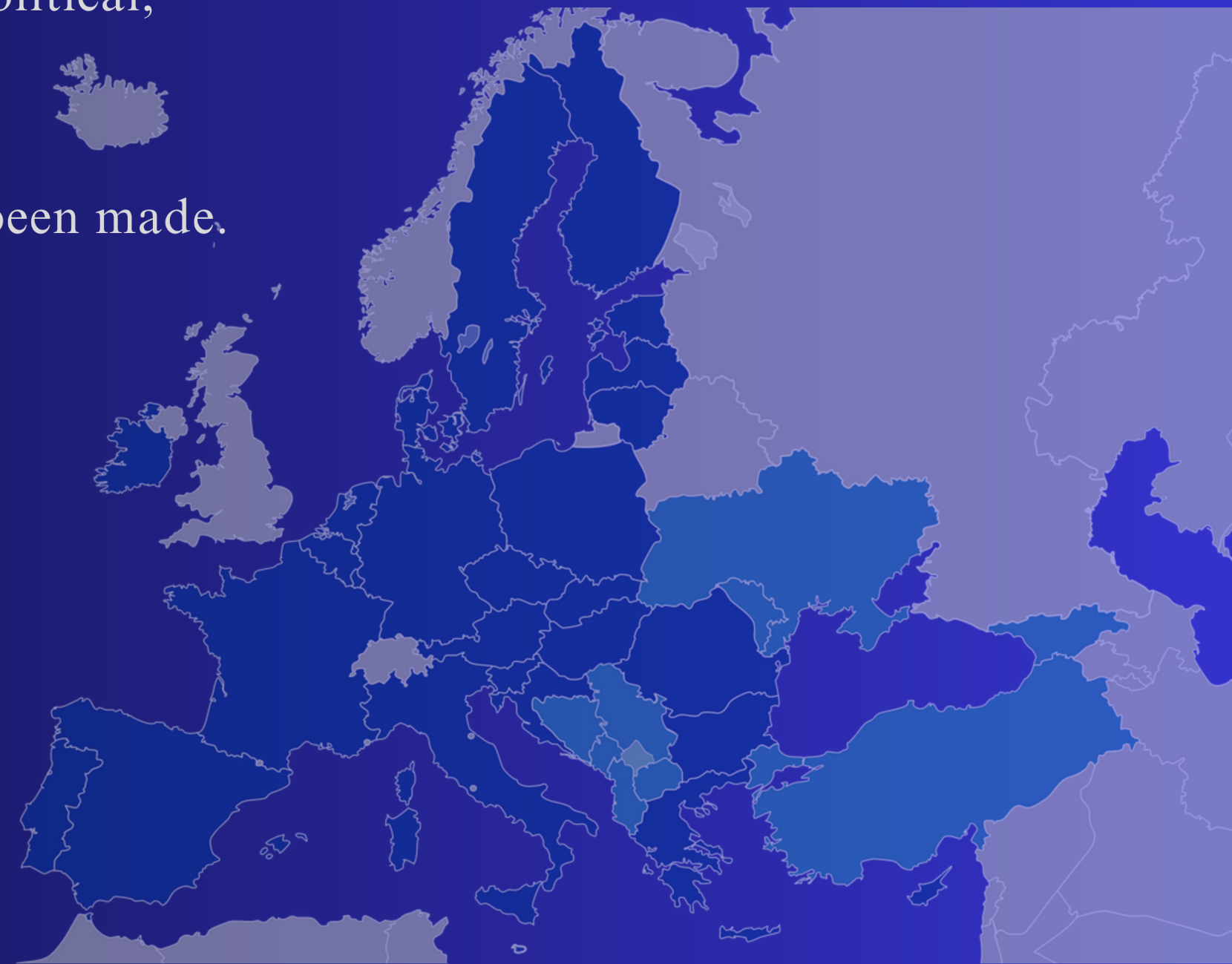
Not much progress due to political instability.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

Recently became a candidate, and is making reform progress.

- **EU Enlargement:**

The focus is on security, rule of law, and prosperity.



# Copenhagen Criteria

→ Established in 1993 by European Council, they set out requirements that any country must meet to join the EU:

1. Political criterion
2. Economic criterion
3. Administrative and Legal Capacity

→ While these criteria seem objective, their application is political.





# SERBIA

## Key Milestones

- **April 2008**: Serbia signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), that came into force in 2013.
- **March 2012**: Serbia granted EU candidate status by the European Council.
- **January 2014**: The accession negotiations are formally opened at the first inter-governmental conference.
- **November 2023**: The Commission adopts a new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.
- **To date**, 22 out of 35 chapters have been opened, complex path toward full EU membership.





# SERBIA

## Current Situation

- Serbia's accession in the EU represents both an opportunity and a challenge.
- Serbia possessing a credible Reform Agenda
- Normalization of relations with Kosovo, alignment with EU foreign policy, and improvements in rule of law, democracy – remain key obstacles.
- Open for Ukrainian refugees, EU remains Serbia's primary trading partner.
- Ursula von der Leyen in frequent communication with Aleksandar Vučić and her praise of Serbia's progress towards the EU.



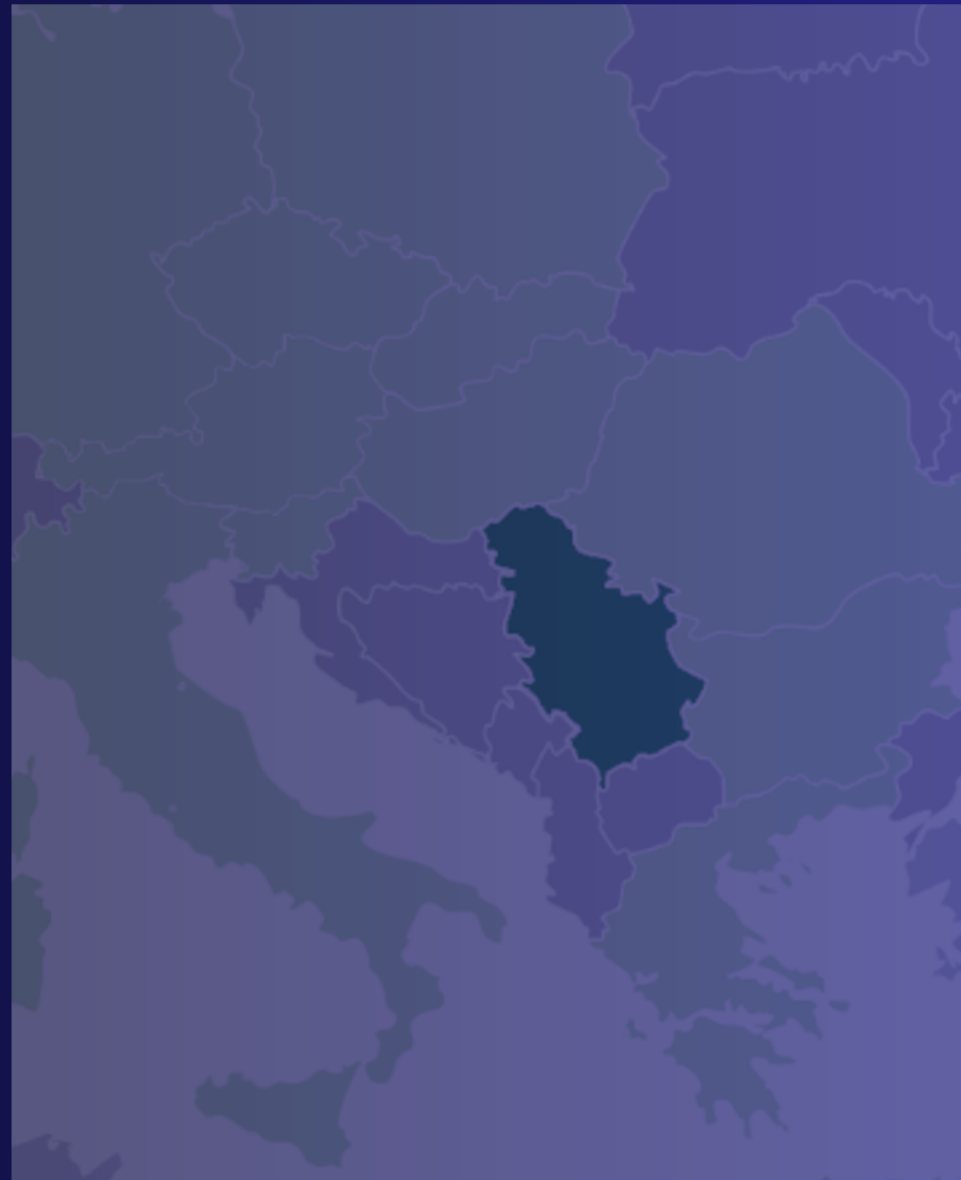
46% in favor, 30 opposing, the rest indifferent- 2024 IPSOS survey

## FOR SERBIA:

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- Greater political stability, economic growth, strengthening of democracy.
- Reforms in areas: judicial independence, anti-corruption measures, and political accountability.
- Single Market entry, EU job market.
- Media freedom, more control of the electoral processes (Bosnians voting 2022).

### Broader Impact



## FOR THE EU:

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- Highest investment rating among EU candidates (S&P Global Rankings).
- 3,5 billion for Belgrade Waterfront.
- In the past 7 years Serbia's GDP has grown at a rate 2 times faster than the one of the EU (IMF, 2018).
- Well-educated workforce, with a strong emphasis on engineering, IT.



# SERBIAN STUDENTS DEMANDS ARE AKIN TO THE EU VALUES!!!





# MONTENEGRO

## Key Milestones

- October 2007: signing of Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), that came into force in 2010.
- December 2008: sent application for EU membership, that was issued in 2010.
- December 2010: Candidate status.
- 29 June 2012: negotiations began.
- 2020: slowdown due to political instability
- June 2024: Eu recognized Montenegro met interim benchmark for Chapter 23 and Chapter 24.



# MONTENEGRO

## Current Situation

- Most advanced candidate in Western Balkans; turning point was in June 2024.
- Kaja Kallas' recent visit to Montenegro recognizes the country's commitments to align with EU's requests.
- It is already a part of NATO and is completely aligned with EU on foreign policy, which makes Montenegro stand out.
- Montenegro is closer than ever in joining EU.





# MONTENEGRO

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## Broader Impact

- Represents a **low-risk, high-reward** enlargement case.
- Not a threat to EU **voting dynamics** or **budget structures**.
- Some consider it the key to “unlock Western Balkans”.
- Already uses **EURO**; the economy is small but functioning.





# UKRAINE

## Key Milestones

### Early Relations:

- 1994: Ukraine signed cooperation agreements with EU.
- 2002: EU acknowledges Ukraine's future membership potential.
- 2004: Orange Revolution → pro-EU president Viktor Yushchenko.

### Association Agreement and Euromaidan:

- 2013: Viktor Yanukovych dismisses EU Association Agreement, leading to Euromaidan protests.
- 2013: Euromaidan protests advocate for closer relations with the EU.
- 2014: Yanukovych removed from office; new government signs the EU Association Agreement.

### Candidate Status:

- 2022: Russia invades Ukraine → Ukraine applies for EU candidate status.
- 2023: EU officials agree to begin accession discussions.



# UKRAINE

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## Current Situation

- Since April 2025, Ukraine's pursuit toward EU membership has been advancing.
- The EU supports Ukraine's EU integration, stated during the April 9th, 2025 meeting.
- Cooperation and reform adjustments are improving.
- The EU granted 2.1 billion euros to financially support Ukraine.
- Ursula von der Leyen stated Ukraine could join the EU by 2030 if the pace of reforms continues.
- The conflict with Russia has to be resolved quickly for EU accession.
- The ongoing war could cause economic, political, and social destruction, negatively impacting the EU.



# UKRAINE

## Broader Impact for Ukraine

### Economic Impact:

- Ukraine's integration could increase EU GDP by 1%.
- Growth in trade, migration, and foreign direct investment, increasing employment and production.

### Population and Labor:

- Ukraine's integration would increase EU population by 41 million.
- Assist in countering labor shortages and accelerate the economy → might negatively impact other EU countries.

### Geopolitics and Security:

- EU's geopolitical position; influencing Eastern Europe.
- Ukraine's security against external threats will improve.



# Questions that Emerge

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**Was Bulgaria's and Romania's accession wave fair considering that they did not meet the Copenhagen Criteria?**

**How can Ukraine's immediate EU candidacy status be justified when the Balkans have faced the same situation but have not been granted the same treatment?**

# THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION

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