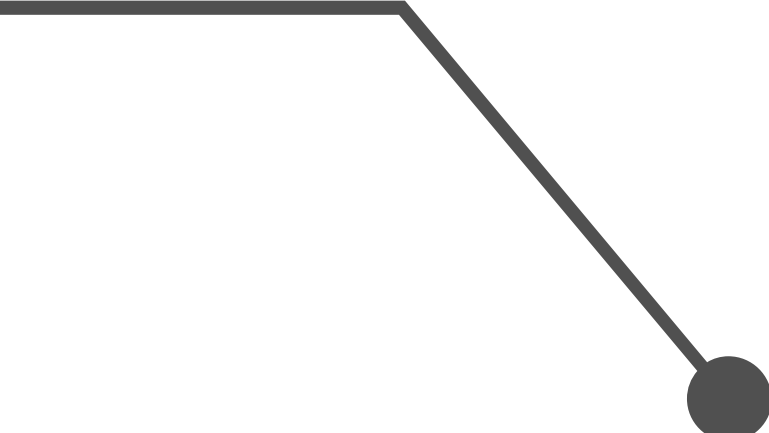
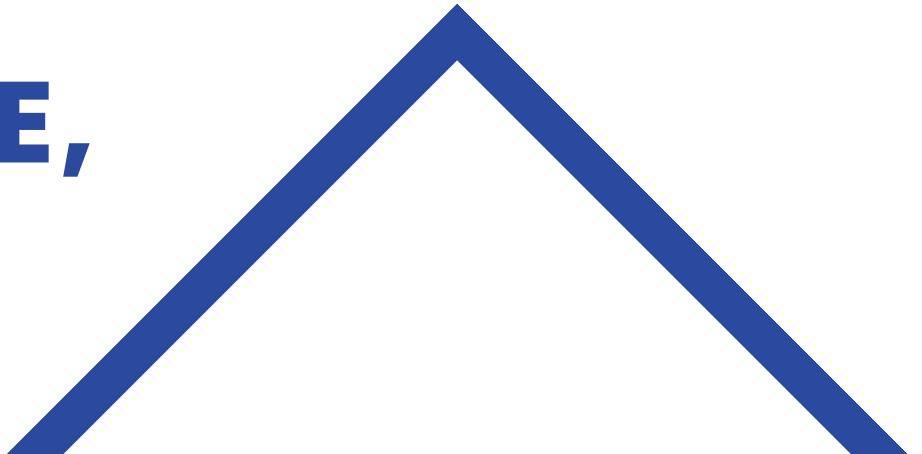
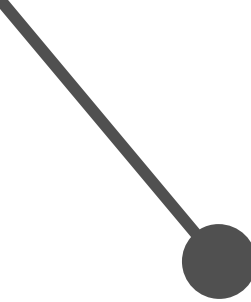




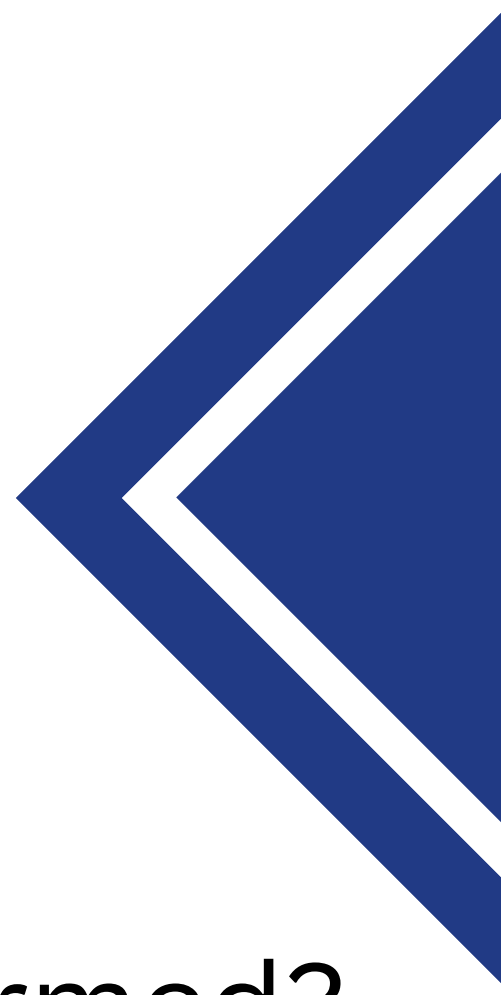
THE FUTURE OF EU ENLARGEMENT

**BY EMA LOŽIOVÁ, KATHERINE MCKENZIE,
MARKO SEMOV**



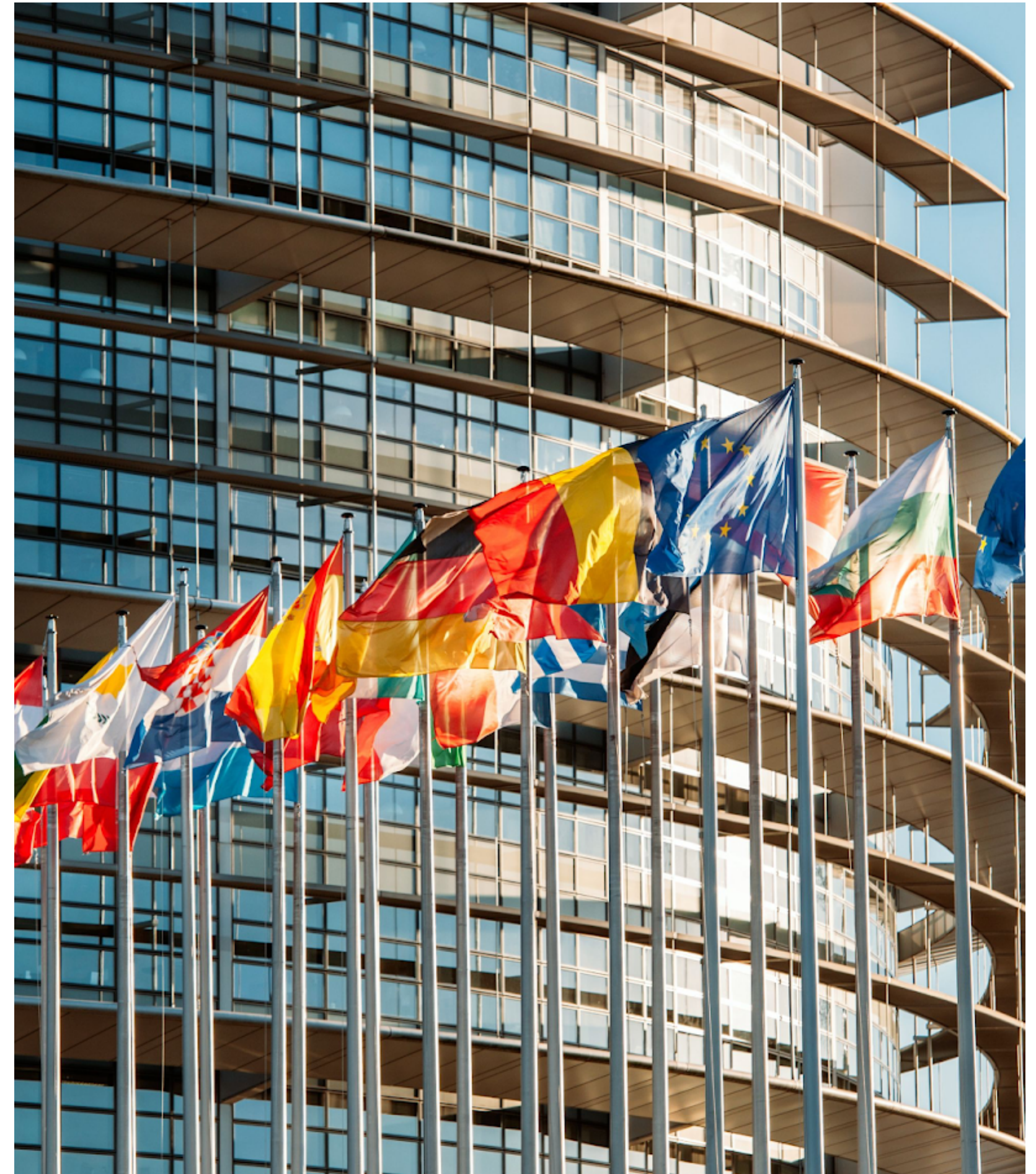


AGENDA

- What is EU Enlargement and its consequences
 - Western Balkans - Strategic Importance
 - Case Studies (Serbia, Ukraine & Georgia)
 - Outstanding Issues of Enlargement - Can it be reformed?
 - Where does Enlargement end?
- 

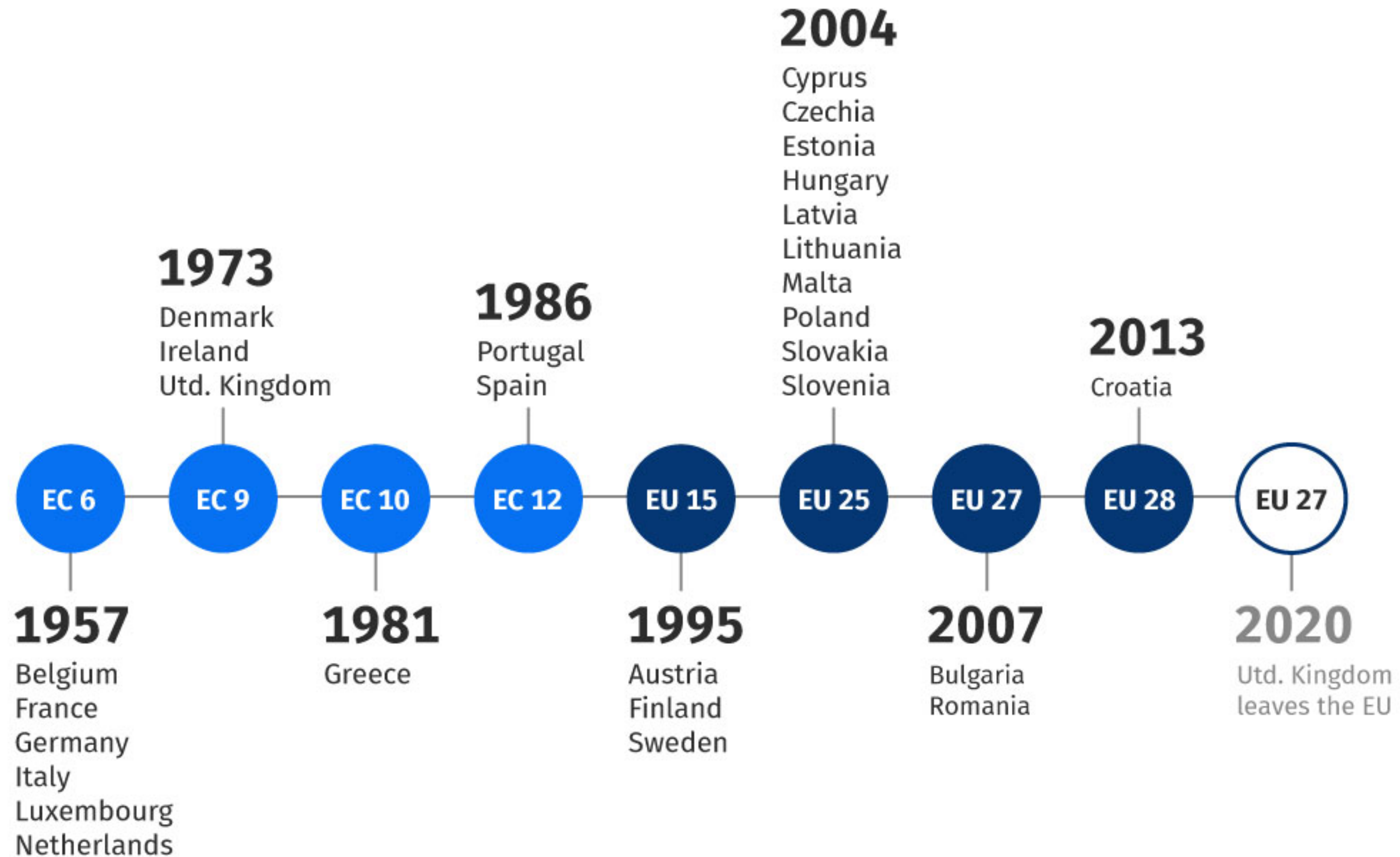
WHAT IS EU ENLARGEMENT?

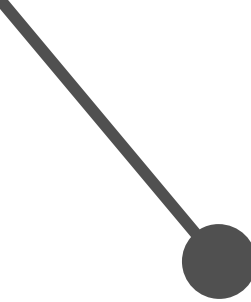
- Enlargement occurs when new countries seek to become members of the European Union.
- Thus has occurred several times throughout EU history, each time transforming both the EU and the countries that join.
- Enlargement has contributed to the spread of stability, peace and prosperity across the continent.



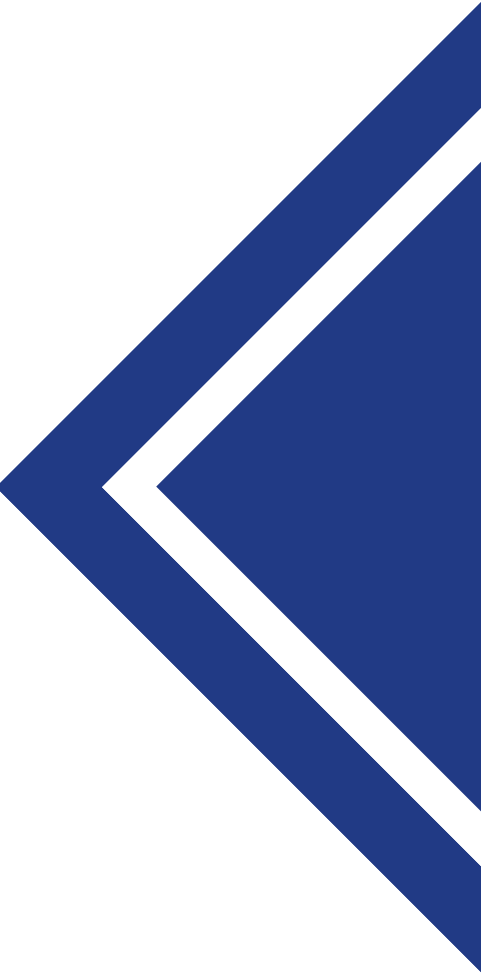
European Union timeline

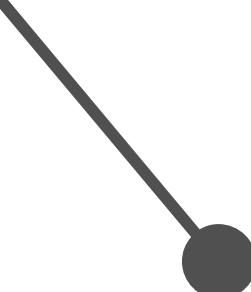
Year of entry to the European Community (EC) / European Union (EU)



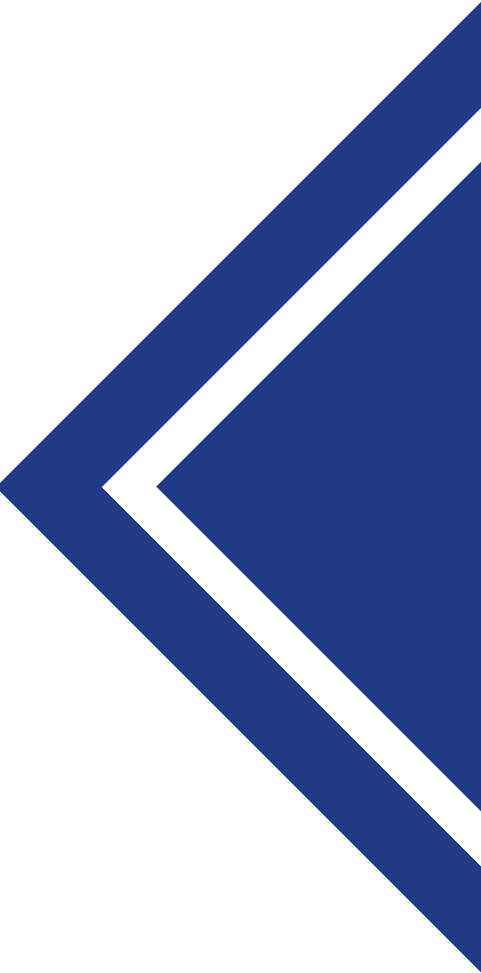


THE EFFECTS

- **A driver of long term security, peace and prosperity in Europe.**
 - **Has promoted the sharing of common values including democracy, rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, whilst also fostering economic growth.**
 - **Powerful stimulus for democratic and economic reforms.**
 - **Aims to guide, support and monitor changes in countries wishing to join the European Union.**
 - **Integration and cooperation across borders.**
- 



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- 1. Any European country can apply for membership if they agree to respect the EU's democratic values.**
 - 2. Must meet the Copenhagen Criteria.**
 - 3. Application must be approved unanimously by all EU member states - once approved the country is recognised as a candidate.**
 - 4. Formal Accession negotiations - Adoption of EU acquis**
 - 5. Drafting of an Accession Treaty**
 - 6. Ratification and Membership**
- 

COPENHAGEN CRITERIA

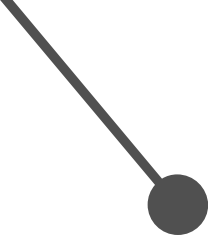
Accession Criteria or the Copenhagen Criteria sets out the conditions under Article 49 and Article 6 (1), to which any country that seeks to become a member state must conform to.

Stability and Guarantee of Democracy, rule of law and human rights

Functioning Market Economy

Take on obligations of membership - capacity to implement rules, standards and policies which make up the 'acquis'.





PROGRESS TOWARDS EU ENLARGEMENT

Strong Momentum - 2025 Package confirms that accession of new member states is within reach.

Enlargement remains high on EU agenda

Accession will continue to follow a merit-based approach

New countries advancing towards EU membership: (Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Turkey & Georgia.

New Reforms - Message from Ursula Von Der Leyen



Western Balkans



Six countries are currently in the accession process

Status of current EU accession candidates.

		Stage	Status
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Applied but rejected	Reforms required to meet accession criteria
	Albania	Received approval to begin negotiations	Reforms required before talks officially begin
	North Macedonia	Received approval to begin negotiations	Both sides preparing negotiating mandates
	Turkey	Negotiating since 2005	One chapter closed, last negotiating round in June 2016
	Serbia	Negotiating since 2014	Two chapters closed, last negotiating round in December 2019
	Montenegro	Negotiating since 2012	Three chapters closed, last negotiating round in December 2018

SERBIA

Population: 6.6 million

GDP (nominal): \$100.05 billion (estimate)

EU Candidate Status: Since 2012

Negotiations: Opened in 2014

Chapters Opened: 22/35

Chapters Provisionally Closed: 2

Why Serbia Matters:

- Largest economy in the Western Balkans
- The EU is Serbia's greatest trading partner
- Significant strategic position between central Europe and the Balkans



Rule of Law, Democracy and Governance

Rule of Law Concerns:

Political pressure and lack of full independence

High level corruption within the borders not being effectively dealt with.

Media:

Media outlets subjected to political influence, lack of pluralism

Democratic Functioning:

Concentration of political power

Freedom House - Raised concerns surrounding mistrust in 2023-2024 elections

Impact on EU Accession:

Reforms in the areas of Chapter 23 & 24 have been assessed as inefficient, EU is slowing the accession process

Normalisation & Economic Issues

In order for Serbia to be granted EU membership it must:

1. Normalise its relationship with Kosovo
2. Manage disputes over recognition
3. De-escalation of tensions and put an end to political blockages

Recent tensions in 2023-2024 have slowed the accession process.

Further need for:

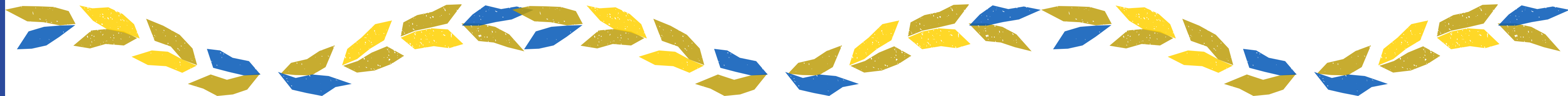
1. Increasing alignment with EU rules
2. More investment in climate infrastructure

Overall Assessment:

In order to meet accession requirements, Serbia must ensure credible rule of law, media, judicial systems, along with a normalisation with Kosovo

● WHY UKRAINE'S ACCESSION MATTERS?

- War-driven, exceptional case
 - Ukraine applied during a full-scale invasion; accession became a geopolitical tool
- Defensive enlargement
 - EU sees Ukraine as crucial for stability and containment of Russia
- Shift in EU logic
 - Enlargement now serves security first, values second.
- Strong public support in Ukraine
 - Civil society and reform commitment remain high despite war



Ukraine's Readiness: Reforms, Governance & Conditionality

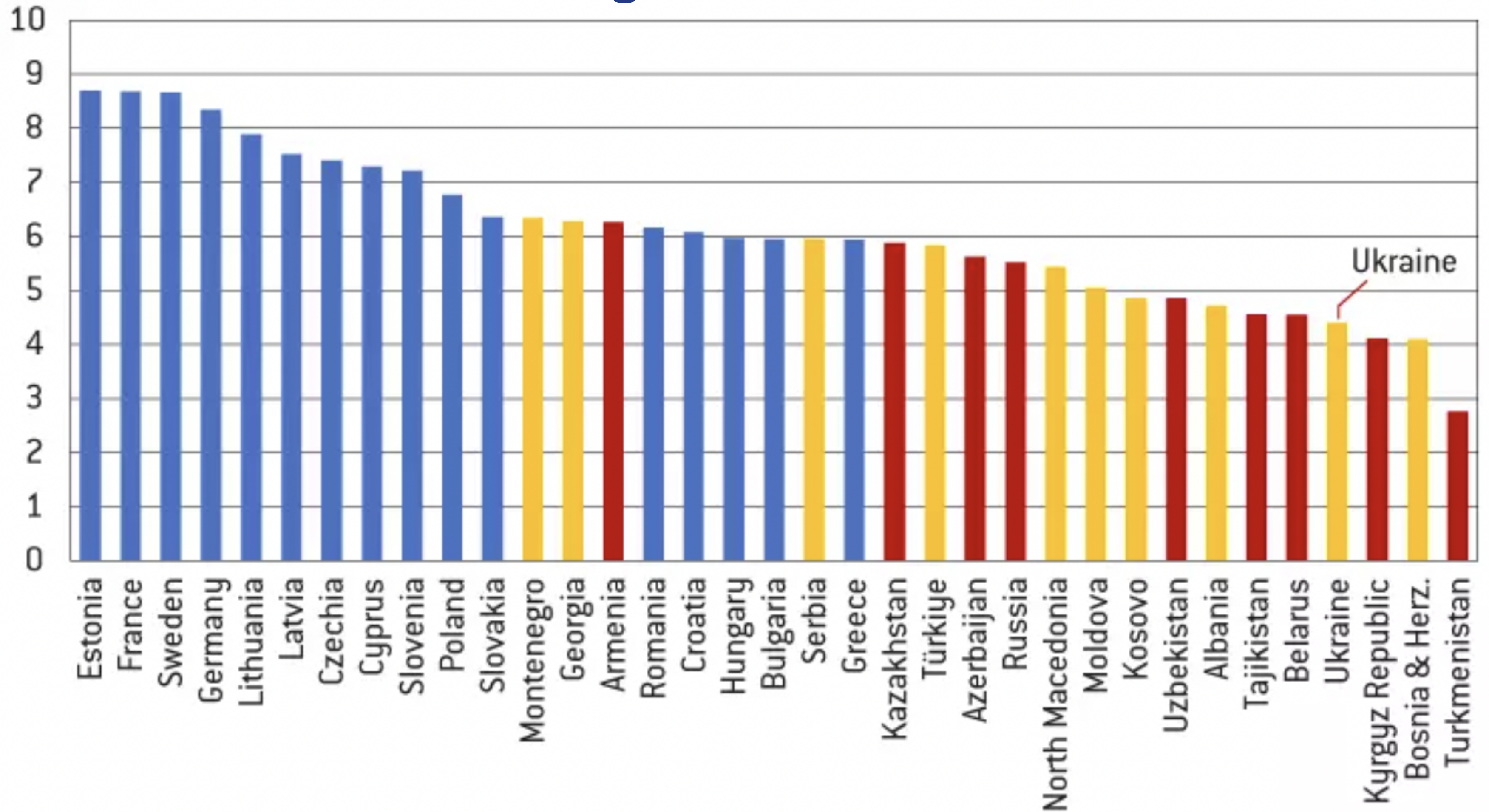
Governance challenge → Ukraine scores low on “well-governed” composite vs other candidates.

Rule-of-law + institutional reforms are essential: judiciary, public administration, procurement.

Reversibility principle → Progress must be reversible if reforms stall.

Progressive integration → EU already integrates Ukraine in energy, transport, payments before accession.

EBRD's governance scores



Economic Impact on the EU

EU budget impact → ~€136 bn (0.13% of EU GDP) in transfers if Ukraine joined today; largest costs in CAP.

Redistribution effects → Cohesion + CAP funds would shift eastward; current net recipients may lose shares.

Labour mobility benefits → Ukraine could help fill EU labour shortages.

Strategic supplies → Ukraine strengthens EU food, raw materials, and energy security.

Agricultural competition → Ukraine's low-cost, high-volume agriculture would pressure EU farmers — this requires CAP redesign.

Political Feasibility & What Must Change

EU reforms are required → Decision-making must be streamlined, EU budget strengthened, institutional capacity increased.

Divergent member-state reactions → Visegrád countries and others worry about budget shifts and farmer competition.

Risks of “false expectations” → Political rhetoric overestimates speed; realistic timelines are essential.

Reconstruction as accession → How Ukraine rebuilds its economy/agriculture will determine accession feasibility.

Credibility test → If the EU promises enlargement but fails to deliver, it risks disillusionment and instability.

GEORGIA



GEORGIA

- **Negotiations** - effectively stalled
- **Criteria** - some fulfilled, but serious shortcomings in the fundamentals
- **Issues** - lack of judicial independence, electoral integrity, media freedom, anti-corruption measures
- **Protests and Political Context** - massive pro-EU protests in 2024-25
- **Targets** - 2028?





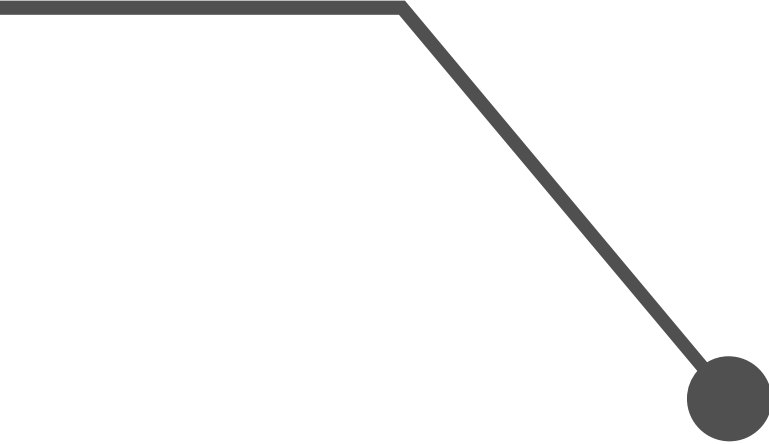
Faster, clearer conditions, stronger assistance, better alignment in a crisis?

REFORM ????

**Dilution of standards, political backlash,
legal complications**







**THANK Y(EU)
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**



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