

POLICY BRIEF

Beyond the EPC: Gradual Integration and Consistent Oversight for an Enlarged Union

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The fundamental problem:

- Many challenges prevent the accession of new EU members:
 - **Economic disparities** between potential and actual member states.
 - **Internal tensions** within candidate countries.
 - **Skepticism** towards enlargement within the EU (**enlargement fatigue**).
- The **European Political Community (EPC)** can't solve the enlargement challenges:
 - It does not have the mandate to promote **internal reforms** in membership candidates.
 - It includes a **diverse set of countries** with varying interests and priorities (e.g. UK or Norway not even being interested in enlargement).
 - It is unable to provide a **clear and direct path to EU membership**.

Our solutions:

- 1) **More QMV and gradual integration:**
 - Implement **qualified majority voting (QMV)** when opening and closing chapters of the EU acquis.
 - Open negotiations about new policy chapters even **before closing the "Fundamentals" cluster**.
 - Allow for **partial integration steps** after specific conditions are met (e.g. deep trade agreements, security arrangements, participation in EU agencies & programmes).
- 2) **More EU presence:**
 - Dispatch **"EU Task Forces"** to candidate countries to:
 - provide **technical support**,
 - ensure **on-the-ground monitoring**, and
 - **make the EU feel more immediate**.
 - Create an **"EU Agency for Enlargement"** (in cooperation with **DG NEAR**) to coordinate these **"EU Task Forces."**
- 3) **More monitoring and conditionality:**
 - **Revise Art. 7 TEU** - to allow for sanctioning of new member states through **QMV** in their first **10 years of EU membership**.
 - Use the **current momentum for EU treaty reform** to ensure the revision of Art. 7 TEU before accepting new member states.