



European
Commission



Enlargement of the European Union

Enlargement
Negotiations



GROWING TOGETHER

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Foreword

Dear readers,

Since it was founded, the EU has kept its doors open to new members who shared its commitment to peace, stability and prosperity. This has brought mutual benefits both to the European Union and to the countries that joined, bringing together 28 Member States today.



There will be no new EU members in the period of the mandate of the current Commission, as realistically no partner will be fully ready by the end of 2019. This does not mean that our work will come to a halt or that our commitment to the Western Balkans and Turkey has dwindled. Quite the contrary. The European Commission continues to work closely with the countries that wish to join the EU and helps to ensure that when the time comes, the new members will be thoroughly prepared for their future responsibilities and fully equipped to benefit from membership.

There are three key issues aspiring countries need to tackle with the utmost seriousness and commitment – the rule of law, fundamental rights, and a functioning economy. These need to be complemented by the necessary administrative capacity. These are the essentials, and in the negotiations our motto will be “Quality before speed”. Deep reforms are needed and will take time to achieve. The EU will give strong support to this process.

We also know that the efforts to reform do not go unrewarded. The prospect of EU membership can have a powerful transformative effect, triggering democratic, political, economic and societal changes in the aspiring countries. Just as EU enlargement has brought new opportunities for EU citizens, be they students, travellers, consumers or entrepreneurs.

In this brochure you can read more about how the EU enlargement process works. I wish you an enjoyable and interesting read.

Johannes Hahn
Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy
and Enlargement Negotiations



A bit of history

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 European countries. It was created in the period following the Second World War, when European countries were determined never to let such dramatic conflicts occur again. To do this, the first steps were to encourage economic cooperation: the idea behind this was that countries that cooperate closely with one another would be more likely to avoid conflict. And indeed, there has not been a war within the EU since 1945 and former enemies have become close allies.

The economic cooperation project was launched in 1951, when six countries founded the European Coal and Steel Community. Later in 1957, they also created the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community:

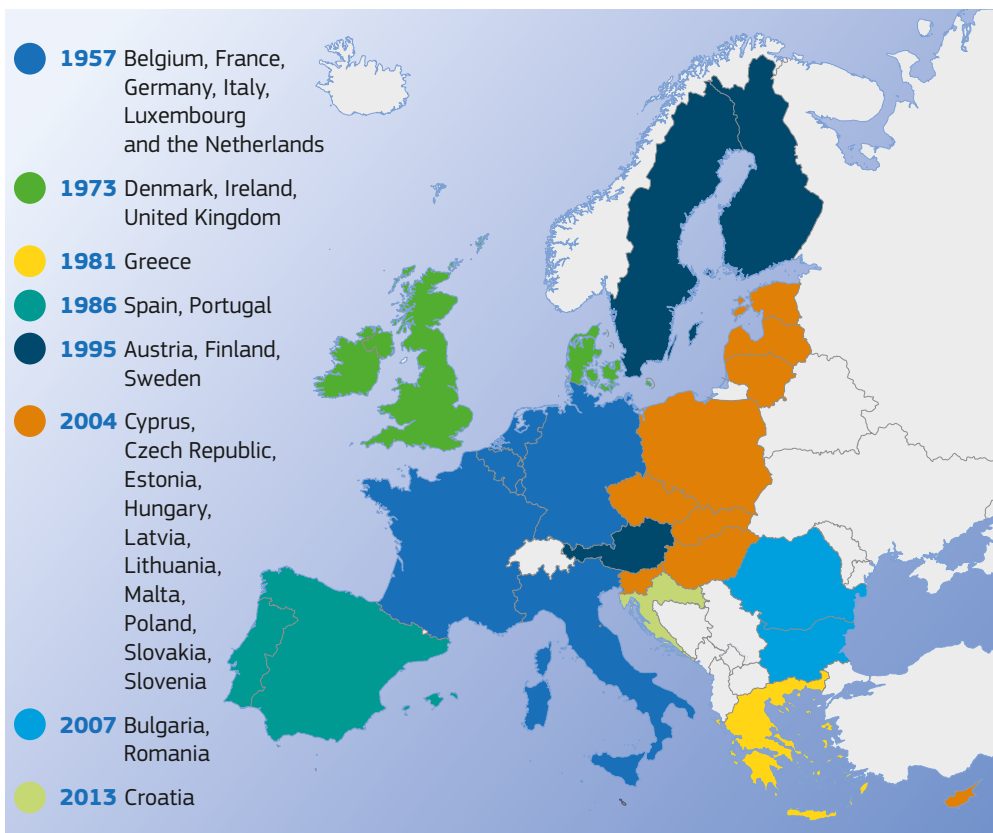
- Belgium
- Germany
- France
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- the Netherlands.

Twenty-two other countries have since joined the EU, including a historic expansion in 2004, which marked the re-unification of Europe after decades of division.

In time, the Member States decided to extend the economic cooperation to other areas, including the political one. This is how we have come to speak nowadays of a European Union, or simply of the EU.

The EU covers over 4 million km² and has over 500 million inhabitants – the world's third largest population after China and India. With just 7% of the world's population, the EU's trade with the rest of the world accounts for around 20% of global exports and imports.

However, the EU is more than a single market, or an association of countries trading with each other without restrictions or tariffs. It represents a vision of peace and prosperity on the European continent. It is about values and ideals of peace, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. These values and ideals are common across a continent that, at the same time, is defined by the diversity of its cultures, traditions, and languages.





What's in it for me as a **citizen**?

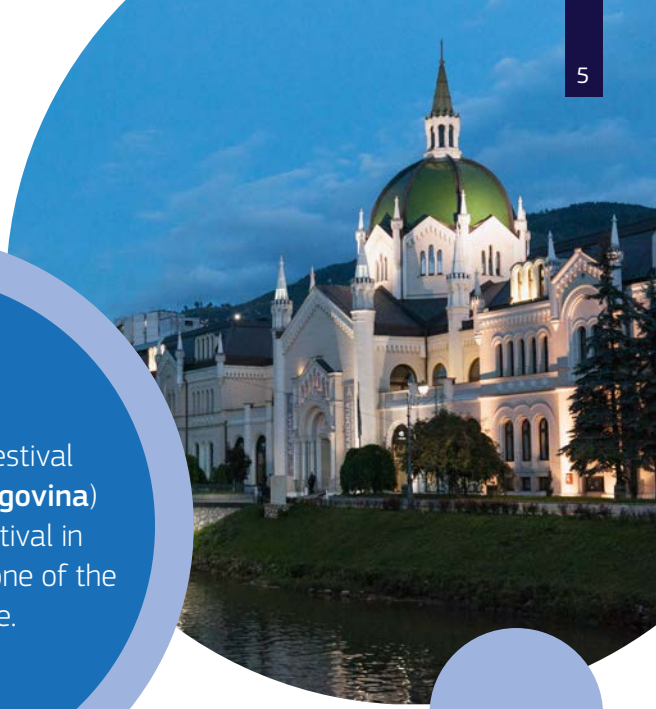
The EU is active in many areas of everyday life:

- moving around Europe freely and safely – do you remember the long waiting time at borders when visiting a neighbouring country?
- studying, living, or working abroad
- getting a fair deal at home and away as consumers – just think how much roaming tariffs have been reduced in the past years
- higher environmental and food standards
- fighting crime and policing borders.

With each successive enlargement, the EU has been able to extend its benefits to more citizens. Its scope has also grown with the various interests that the countries joining the Union have brought to the table, such as external action, the environment, regional policy, and setting up a single market for goods and services.



The Sarajevo Film Festival
(in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**)
is the largest film festival in
Southeast Europe and one of the
largest in Europe.



Changing the tune of Europe's music industry

Dominik Bagola is the leader of the band Balladero from Slovenia. He was 23 and working for Slovenia's biggest advertising agency when Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004. At that point he began studying at the Tech Music School London, where he experienced the city's multicultural European and global mind-set. As the markets opened up, he started working as a freelancer, collaborating with agencies and organising concerts abroad.

The young musician explains: *"Music has always been my passion and my international music career started after joining a band for a European tour. Being part of the EU allows an easier flow of communication and getting international projects done faster. Strict check-ups for music equipment at border controls, for instance, stopped when Slovenia joined the EU."* He further commented: *"I am an EU artist now, which makes it easier to become recognised in a global market. Hopefully the future creates an even stronger Europe."*





Who can **join**?

The EU treaties – the fundamental, binding agreements between EU Member States – set out that only European states respecting EU values and committed to promoting them may apply to join the Union. The application process can only be launched at the express wish of these countries, and with the agreement of all existing members.

Article 2 – Treaty of the European Union

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States.

Article 49 – Treaty of the European Union

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.

What are the conditions to get in?

To make the process objective and transparent, the Member States have set out a number of rules and criteria to help them decide when an applicant country is ready to join the Union and become a member.

These criteria refer to the:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities (political criteria);
- existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces within the EU (economic criteria);
- ability to take on the obligations of membership (e.g. applying EU legislation).

At the same time, the European Union must be able to continue to function effectively and to further develop while taking on new members.

Business changes that sit well with a Latvian manufacturer

Normunds Bremers is the director of Wenden Furniture, a company based in Jaunpiebalga, a small village in Latvia. The company was founded in 2005, shortly after Latvia joined the European Union. Wenden Furniture mainly produces chairs made of wood, and has reached a capacity of over 10,000 chairs a month. The company strives to expand and develop the range of products to cater to different customers in different countries.


Normunds Bremers commented: *“Joining the EU has had many benefits, not only for me personally, but also for the company. We export 98% of our products, mainly to other European countries. Now that we are a part of the EU, we have less bureaucracy and don’t have to fill in as many documents, but rather we can concentrate on our work. It also means that our products reach our customers much more quickly and easily. Business partners and investors see us as a reliable partner, with whom it’s safe to work. Due to the fact that we are in the European Union, business development is sustainable. Latvia might be a small country, but together with others in the EU it has a lot of opportunities. The EU guarantees stability and development.”*



Who might be next?

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey all have a European perspective. This has been confirmed by all EU Member States, and it means the countries might join the EU if they fulfil all necessary conditions. They are at different stages in the process.

For the Western Balkans, the membership conditions go hand in hand with requirements on regional cooperation and good relations with the neighbouring countries.

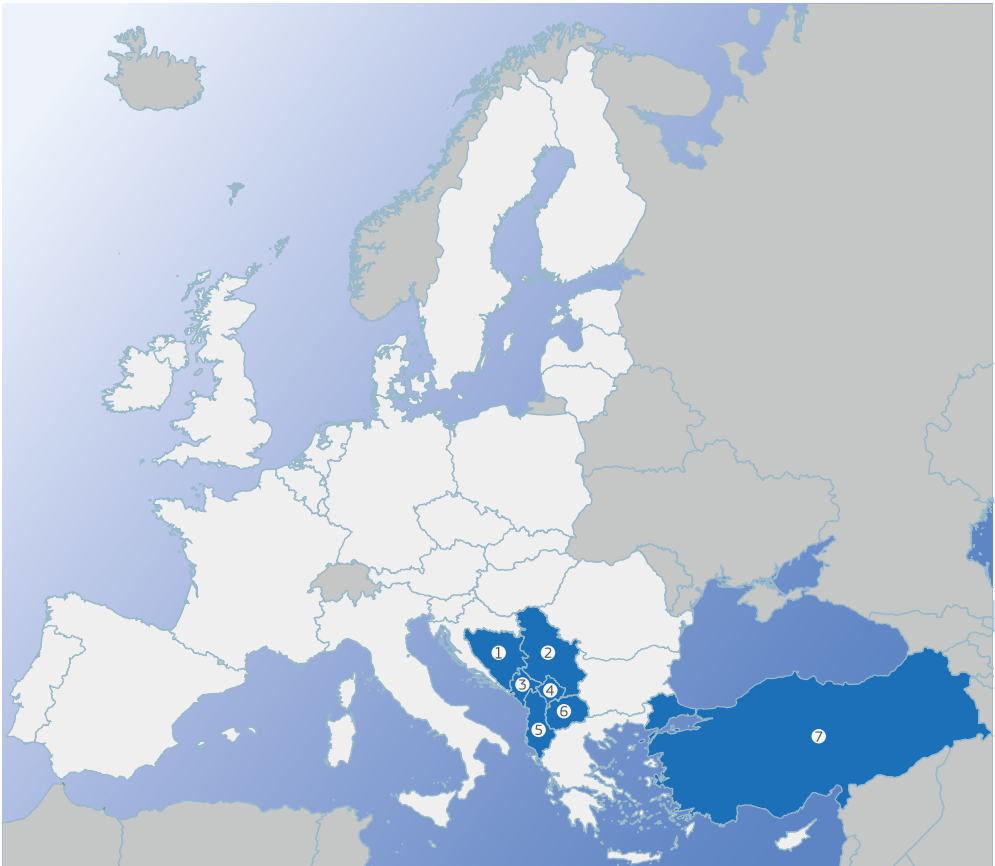


	Land Area (1,000 km ²)	Population (million)
Albania	28	2.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	51	3.8
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	25	2.1
Kosovo	11	1.8
Montenegro	13	0.6
Serbia	77	7.1
Turkey	783	77.7
European Union	4,356	508.2

Figures are for 2015. Source: Eurostat

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Albania uses hydropower to generate 90% of its electricity. A new hydropower plant project on the Devoll River in southern Albania will increase the country's electricity output by 17% and provide power to 300,000 Albanian households.



The Enlargement countries

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. Serbia
3. Montenegro
4. Kosovo
5. Albania
6. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
7. Turkey



Who decides?

Three main players represent the EU in the decision-making process: the Council of the EU (Member States), the European Commission, and the European Parliament.

Each of these three institutions represents on different levels the EU citizens and their interests:

- the Council of the EU (also known as simply “the Council”) – made up of the Member States’ governments. It is where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies;
- the European Commission (or simply “the Commission”) - the executive body, which takes care of the general day-to-day running of the European Union;
- the European Parliament – directly elected every five years by citizens who have voting rights in the Member States. In most areas it adopts the EU laws together with the Council.

The candidate country’s citizens are represented by the government at the political level, and by civil society.

A Serbian start-up with a bright idea

Strawberry Energy is a start-up from Belgrade that has developed a unique global technological innovation – a portable mini solar charger called the ‘Strawberry Tree Mini’. Converting pure solar power into electrical energy, this innovative product can be used to charge small portable devices on the go, such as mobile phones, cameras and mp3 players.



Strawberry Energy is one of many new enterprises supported by the Innovation Serbia Project (funded through the EU’s Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance), which aims to stimulate innovation by funding early-stage, private, micro and small enterprises. The team of young entrepreneurs is currently looking to expand in the EU, stating: *“We truly believe that unlimited mobility of ideas, knowledge and people are essential for everyday processes. Not only can we gain new ideas, but we also feel that we have so much to offer to people across the European Union.”* The first Strawberry Tree to be constructed in the European Union will be installed in front of the European Parliament in Brussels.

Serbia has grown into one of the premier investment locations in Central and Eastern Europe. Nearly 90% of investments by foreign companies in Serbia are funded by European companies.





How does it work?

The country submits an *application* to the Council, declaring its wish to become a member of the EU. Then the Commission, which closely monitors the aspiring countries, submits an *opinion* on the application. On this basis, the Member States' governments decide *unanimously* if they accept the application and grant the country candidate status. Unanimity means that *all Member States* have to agree.

What are we negotiating?

The next step is opening the *accession negotiations*, which again is done only with the agreement of *all Member States*. To prepare for EU membership, the applicant country must adopt and implement the EU's laws and rules. The negotiations refer to *how* and *when* the rules are adopted and implemented. The conditions stay the same for everyone, that is, a country cannot pick and choose which parts of the EU legislation it will apply. In exceptional cases, some transitional periods may apply. For example, access of the new Member State's citizens to the EU's labour market can be temporarily limited or the new Member State can be given more time to adopt the EU's laws and rules on the environment.


To simplify the process, the whole body of EU law is divided up into the different areas where the EU, together with the Member States, carries out activities and proposes legislation – e.g. employment, agriculture, education, rule of law, the environment, consumer protection, etc.

The negotiations take place in each of these areas, within a framework set out by the Council and based on a Commission proposal. All Member States and the applicant country meet regularly to discuss the progress in conferences at inter-governmental level.

The standards the countries need to fulfil may refer to:

- legislative measures – e.g. adopting new laws;
- administrative measures – e.g. bringing their customs administrations in line with EU requirements;
- judicial instances – setting up an independent and efficient judiciary system;
- economic measures – e.g. achieving price stability, liberalised prices and trade.

When the applicant country fulfils the defined benchmarks, the negotiations on any given area are completed. However, the EU may reopen negotiations if the applicant countries no longer satisfy the conditions. The Commission checks this, and continues its monitoring until accession. The on-going monitoring allows the Commission to give the countries more guidance as they prepare to take on the responsibilities of membership. It also guarantees that new members are ready for accession.



The Tara River canyon,
located in northern **Montenegro**,
is the longest in Europe.
The canyon forms part of the
Durmitor National Park, which is a
UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Steps to membership



The European Commission: the executive body, which takes care of the general day-to-day running of the European Union.



The European Parliament: directly elected every five years by citizens who have voting rights in the Member States.



The Council of the European Union: made up of the Member States' governments. It is where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies.

01.



The country submits an application to the Council, declaring its wish to become a member of the EU.

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The European Commission, which closely monitors the enlargement countries, submits an opinion on the application.

03.



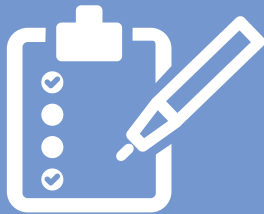
On this basis, the Member States' governments need to decide unanimously if they accept and grant the applicant country candidate status.

04.



After certain conditions are met, the accession negotiations are opened, which again is done only with the agreement of all Member States.

05.



The country must now work to implement the EU's laws and rules. All EU Member States must agree that the country has met all of the necessary requirements and that it has adopted EU standards.

06.



Once the negotiations on all areas have been finalised, the Commission must give its opinion on whether or not the country is ready to become a Member State.

07.



Based on these recommendations, the Member States need to decide unanimously whether to close the process and sign an Accession Treaty with the country concerned. The existing Member States and the upcoming member all sign the Treaty. The European Parliament must give its consent as well.

08.



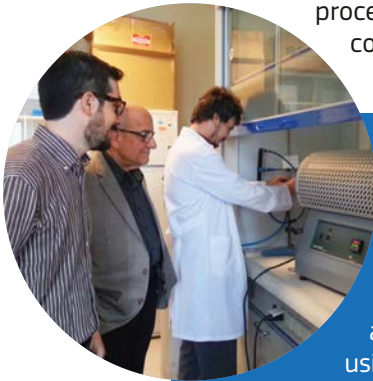
Only after the Accession Treaty has the formal approval of all existing Member States can the country become an EU Member State.

Is there a timeframe?

How long does it take to conclude the negotiations? The EU cannot make predictions on the timeframe and say that, for example, a country will become a member 5, 10 or 15 years after it submits the application. The pace of negotiations largely depends on the applicant country's real progress. The quicker and the more effectively it fulfils the conditions, the closer it can get to membership.

Final steps towards membership

Once the negotiations on all areas have been finalised, the Commission must give its opinion on whether or not the country is ready to become a Member State. The European Parliament must give its consent as well. Based on these recommendations, the Member States decide unanimously whether to close the process and sign an Accession Treaty with the country concerned.



Collaborating today for cleaner energy tomorrow

At Sabanci University in Turkey, graduate students and staff are currently researching ways to make using coal cleaner. This entails decreasing the levels of sulphur dioxide emitted to the atmosphere by removing the sulphur content of coal before combustion. Researchers are combining genetic engineering methods with microbial desulfurization to improve the organic sulphur removal from Turkish and Bulgarian coals. The Bulgarian Academy of Science also participated in the earlier phase of the research. Desulfurization produces coal that is more environmentally friendly and cheaper than the chemical and physical desulfurization.

Professor Yuda Yurum from Sabanci University and Dr. Gizem Dinler-Doganay of Istanbul Technical University in Turkey commented: *“The research is still at the laboratory stage and is currently being tested. The next step will be the pilot phase. The Bulgarian team, led by Professor Stefan Marinov, worked on two projects that have been integrated in the study. It has been a fruitful collaboration and we hope to work with them again in the future.”*

Breakthroughs in this area could help the EU make its coal consumption cleaner, especially now as the fuel is seeing a resurgence in use among some Member States.

The EU is **Turkey's** number one import and export partner while Turkey ranks 7th in the EU's top import and 5th in export markets.

After the signature, each of the Member States and the candidate country formally approve the Accession Treaty according to their own constitutional rules (through parliamentary vote, referendum, etc.).

Between the time the Accession Treaty is signed and until it gets the formal approval of all Member States, the future member is entitled to certain rights. It gets 'active observer status' in most EU bodies and agencies, where it is entitled to speak, but not yet to vote. This will follow once it becomes a full member. It can also comment on draft EU proposals or initiatives, since these will have an impact on its citizens as well. Only after the Accession Treaty has the formal approval of all existing Member States can the country become an EU Member State.

Helping future members prepare

The EU helps the countries that wish to become members with financial and technical support. This makes it easier for them to apply the new regulations, or to be able to implement the new requirements in order to bring their own systems in line with the European one. The benefit is that once this is done, the country can benefit from, for example, being able to open its market to both exports to and imports from the EU. It also helps the EU and its current members to make sure that things can continue to run smoothly when the new member joins, and that the





Lake Ohrid, located on the border between **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** and **Albania**, is the oldest lake in Europe and one of the oldest in the world. It is home to a great number of species of plants and animals that cannot be found anywhere else.

existing arrangements will continue to everyone's benefit.

The European Commission gives the countries financial support through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance. From 2007–2013, the EU dedicated EUR 11 billion to this fund, with another EUR 11.7 billion foreseen for 2014–2020. The EU and the national authorities decide on the areas where to invest the funds.

Money is allocated for supporting democratic institutions and the rule of law, public administrations, and organisations that implement EU legislation at central, regional, and local levels. This enables the institutions and organisations to effectively implement the legislation, and to have the capacity to manage their participation in EU programmes like the Common Agricultural Policy, or the European Social Fund, when the country becomes a member. The EU supports the development of the necessary institutional structures or the training of the staff responsible for applying EU rules in the country. Experts from EU Member States give advice on implementing the EU legislation through “Twinning” arrangements, or through short-term workshops.

The pre-accession funds allow the EU to invest in the sustainable economic development of the countries that wish to become members. The goal is to have a functioning market economy, support SMEs, and create a sound business environment. This has an impact on both the future and the existing Member States,

Kosovo is home to the youngest population in Europe with a median age of around 27 years.



by extending the EU's single market and giving new opportunities to EU firms.

Growing organically – from lower Austria to the Czech Republic

Johannes Gutmann is the founder and director of Sonnentor, an organic herb, tea and spice company in Austria. The company grows and collects products from over 150 organic farmers, packaging and selling them under one logo. Sonnentor also has a strict policy with regards to sustainable regional development and supports small rural structures, which have a long tradition in the Waldviertel district of lower Austria.

According to Johannes Gutmann: *“The 2004 EU enlargement was a milestone in our development. We had already had a subsidiary in the Czech Republic since 1992, but with border restrictions gone, both companies could grow much faster. In the past ten years the number of employees has risen from 45 to 225 here in Austria and from 20 to 85 in the Czech Republic.”* Since 2004 Sonnentor has been able to export to all new Member States and buy a lot from them, too. Mr Gutman further commented: *“Relations have really developed over time and enlargement has very much contributed to a better mutual understanding, trust and appreciation, too.”*



By working on improving social inclusion in the aspiring countries, the EU is also investing in people. This basically means trying to improve the terms in which people take part in society and to avoid the exclusion of people on grounds of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, or sexual orientation (to give just a few examples). By offering people more opportunities, they can improve their education and their living conditions, or find new or better jobs.

The scope of the support extends to agriculture as well. This gives European consumers access to quality products, which can be either regional or from all over the EU, and bought at affordable prices. Top quality, however, must go hand in hand with high environmental and animal health standards. For the aspiring countries, adapting to EU standards means that both farmers and consumers can profit, in these countries themselves, but also in the EU.

In addition to this, the future members are also allowed to participate in EU programmes, for example in the areas of public health, research, or education. This allows them to become familiar with EU policies from first-hand experience.



Partnering up to protect marine wildlife

Together with other cities, universities, NGOs and marine biology institutions from Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia, the Institute for Marine Biology in Montenegro as well as two of Albania's marine associations (Herpetofauna Albanian Society and Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania) are collaborating on the Network for the Conservation of Cetaceans and Sea Turtles in the Adriatic project, which seeks to protect cetaceans and sea turtles in the Adriatic Sea. These marine animals have a shared endangered heritage, which cannot be managed by a single country alone. Through their cooperation, Montenegro and Albania help protect Adriatic wildlife and work with EU Member States towards marine conservation.

Valeria Angelini, a project officer at the Italian NGO Cetacea Foundation explained: *"The project has enabled the development of a common database between the partner organisations, which has improved our cooperation. We now have a dedicated area in the Adriatic sea where we can monitor and provide medical treatment to sea turtles. Scientists can also track and study the cetaceans with photo-identification."*

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