



HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY MESSAGES FROM THE SPEAKERS

1st Accession Exchange Forum

Kyiv, 28-29 November 2022

In partnership with:





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The Accession Exchange Forum is organized by the New Europe Center in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, the International Renaissance Foundation, the Institute for European Policies and Reforms and the Soros Foundation in Georgia. The Accession Exchange Forum is taking place with EU support, within the EU-funded EU4USociety project implemented by the International Renaissance Foundation.

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Design: Olga Pugina

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INTRODUCTION



During 28-29 of November, The New Europe Center organized the 1st Accession Exchange Forum with the participation of high government officials and leading experts in Kyiv. The two-day offline event was devoted to exchanging thoughts on the accession process, discussing good practices, new ideas, lessons learned, and exploring the opportunities in the relations between European Union, countries of Eastern Europe and Western Balkans.

In addition to creating the exchange platform devoted to the accession process, NEC contributes to Ukraine's accession to the European Union by regularly monitoring its progress in implementing the 7 reforms. An ad-hoc collation of organizations led by NEC produces the "[Candidate Check](#)" that is tracking the reforms. Moreover, considering the critical importance of opening of the accession negotiations and the unprecedented conditions in which Ukraine should follow this path, Alyona Getmanchuk, Director of the New Europe Center, and Leo Litra, Senior Fellow, published the discussion paper "[Preparing for accession negotiations with the EU: what is important to know Ukraine from the experience of other countries](#)". The paper studies the experience of 4 EU member states (Poland, the Czech Republic and Latvia, Croatia) and two candidates (Montenegro and North Macedonia) and is based on 37 interviews and meetings. As a result, a list of specific recommendations for the Government of Ukraine were presented.



INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



Alyona Getmanchuk,
Director of the New Europe Center:



"Everything should be pretty clear: to secure Ukraine's survival we need weapons, to secure Ukraine's development we need membership in the European Union. But before we need to start a real accession process. We don't ask for special treatment, we are not looking for shortcuts. We just want to have an accession process which is real, which is meaningful, and which is merit based".

"Ukraine as a European state has been a key partner for EU for years. The relationships that we have are among the most intensive that the EU has with any partner country".



Matti Maasikas,
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine:



Oleksandr Sushko,
Executive Director of the International Renaissance Foundation:



"Ukraine is no longer in a position to waste a chance. There is a significant strength in our country. Approaching EU colleagues, we should not say "take us aboard, we will be a big weight for your train". Now Ukraine will be one of the locomotives of the European future".

SESSION 1. EU CANDIDATE STATUS FOR UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA AND POTENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR GEORGIA: THE ROAD TO MEMBERSHIP



Ihor Zhovkva,
Deputy Head of the
Office of the President
of Ukraine:



- It's difficult to give strict deadlines for the beginning of opening accession negotiations with Ukraine in the world of diplomacy. But Ukraine has already united the EU around its issue. In March, there was skepticism on the candidacy for Ukraine. But we did the job of convincing the skeptics: Ukraine is capable of fulfilling our home task!
- EU-UA summit will happen at the beginning of 2023, and it's very important to have the deliverables. First of the deliverables would be a joint plan to further integrate Ukraine to the single market. Second deliverable is macro-financial assistance of 18 bln euro.
- It's important to prepare our partners that (candidate status) it is not a stop point for Ukraine. We were not even celebrating candidate status. This is a beginning of the process which will be complicated, time-consuming, but we'll overcome it. And we'll be members of the EU!
- We were good students, we listened attentively to our partners in the EU. For example, we started to use a regional approach initiating the Association Trio. Ukraine was at the creation of this... Everything which is good for our EU integration, we will utilize. Everything which prevents us, we will not use it.

- The war in itself has not hampered any processes of EU integration. It's very much on Ukraine's capacities of delivering on 7 recommendations, on adopting regulations and standards to better integrate in the EU single market. The quality of the legislation in order to implement the free trade agreement in the field of agriculture is absolutely commendable.
- The two major laws that Rada adopted in the summer of 2021 laid a very good basis for sweeping judicial reform. The Ethics Council for the High Council of Justice actually never stopped working and the High Qualification Commission of Judges resumed its work in the summer. These laws are being implemented.
- I'm 100% convinced that the EU's very quick swift and further coming decisions on Ukraine and other countries were supported by the public opinion in the EU member states.
- For all democratic member states, that has been a very important element that Ukraine's democracy functions in times of war: parliament meets the civil societies as active as ever the newly reformed local municipalities are working for the citizens.



Matti Maasikas,
Head of the Delegation
of the European Union
to Ukraine:



Susan Stewart,
Senior Fellow in the
Eastern Europe and
Eurasia Research
Division of the German
Institute for International
and Security Affairs
(SWP):



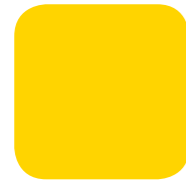
- We've seen that Germany has put a very strong emphasis on the reconstruction process, including with the recent conference on the 25th of October and we've seen that also from the comments of Chancellor Scholz that this is seen very much in the context of working toward accession.
- On both sides, previously, there has been very positive and substantive cooperation in various sectors (for example, in economics, energy support). I think at the elite level in Germany there has been a positive association with previous cooperation with Ukraine, which is an important basis for moving toward the accession agenda.
- On the other hand, if you look at the larger context, I think right now Germany is still difficult in coming to terms with the idea of Russia as an adversary or even enemy based on a variety of things but also a number of fears that appear in this context. Fear of further escalation of the war, fear of instability in Russia itself which would then have spillover effects to the EU, and a fear of the consequences of Ukraine having total victory in taking back territories including Crimea.

- The EU candidates have action plans, which we are working on individually, but we also have common challenges. Here I'd see the room for cooperation in terms of understanding better what we could do. We all struggle with justice system reform. We all want to clean up our judiciaries better. We all want to have better prosecutors. Here is something that we could share, but there are individual problems, of course.
- I want to acknowledge the EU's role and the fact that it really did the impossible. What we have witnessed within a year is really cutting through the bureaucratic red tape within months, which usually took years in Brussels to happen.
- EU accession is not a competition, it is a process that all of us muddle through because of the complexity of the reforms that we need to implement. At the same time, it is important for every country to be assessed based on merit on how fast it is able to move with its own path of reforms.



Cristina Gherasimov,
Head of Office of President
of the Republic of Moldova.





KEY MESSAGES OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION OLGA STEFANISHYNA.



Olga Stefanishyna,
Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine



- We applied for membership also investing into the European project as such, saying that we believe that it is the only way to move forward into a democratic united Europe.
- The spirit of 7 European Commission's recommendations is different – we do not have only to tick the box, we need to preserve the spirit of our commitment to the reforms, which has been enshrined in every of 7 recommendations. Therefore, we bear a double responsibility for every step we take.
- As long as Ukraine is holding the wheel and is ruling the agenda on European integration, there is no room for hesitation from our partners.
- We are fully committed to the membership process and we will be driving the agenda of enlargement by ourselves. It means that we will prepare the negotiation position shortly, next year for the beginning of the negotiations and consultations with our business. And by the end of 2023, we hope



to bring back the consensus of the EU countries to start the negotiations.

- It is not the EU or Ukraine that start from scratch. Granting the EU candidate status to Ukraine was not to begin the process, but to praise the reforms, which have been on the way for years.
- We already want to proceed with the assessment of 7 recommendations in early 2023. Everything we had been doing before the candidate status was considered a gesture of goodwill in a good spirit of cooperation without a clear understanding that everything what has been done was done for Ukraine to become a part of the family of European nations.
- Before Ukraine became the candidate country, European institutions have been ready for something symbolic in the spirit of cooperation. Now it is the opposite – we are still where we are in terms of our sectoral proposals, but the European institutions already, consider having their mandate, know that Ukraine will become part of the EU. So, the scale of thinking is absolutely different.



SESSION 2. WESTERN BALKANS AND EASTERN EUROPE IN ONE BASKET: REFORMS, PERSPECTIVES, AND SYNERGIES FOR SPEEDING UP THE ACCESSION PROCESS



Georg Ziegler,
Deputy Head of the
Support Group for
Ukraine, European
Commission:



- What is not in common between Western Balkans and Ukraine's path to the EU? It is the speed. There is the tremendous speed in the first steps of Ukraine. This is a tremendous experience for European Commission colleagues dealing with Western Balkans to see such a determination from the side of Ukraine. It will be good to see how we can also use Ukrainian enlargement process to dynamize, to speed up the enlargement process for the Western Balkans.
- Ukraine's speed was not at the detriment of quality, the replies for EU questionnaire were of the high quality. In case with Bosnia & Herzegovina, it took us 18 months to go back and forth on the questionnaire; and with Ukraine we went back and forth in a few months. Ukraine achieved not only enlargement perspective, but also a candidate status.
- EU fundamentals are in common for Ukraine and Western Balkan countries – rule of law, anticorruption & judiciary. That is Copenhagen criterion #1. Ukrainian homework is very much linked to this. The speed in Ukraine, how to respond to this hopefully is much quicker than we've seen in Western Balkans.
- So far Ukraine has taken up its homework quite intensively. There is no surprise because for Ukraine there is no alternative. NATO is not open, there is a war, Russian aggression, Ukraine needs to go! That's where this all determination comes from. I wish sometimes that in the Western Balkans we would see a bit more of this determination to move forward.

- Today we are a candidate country, it means we have a lot of work to do. But also, the EU has to do reforms of policies, both looking at Eastern Neighbourhood policy, but also looking at the enlargement policy, which was recently revised, in 2020.
- We managed to sign the Association Agreement, which is essentially much more comprehensive than the stabilization association agreements the Western Balkans had.
- 70% of EU acquis is already part of our acquis. In that sense this provides for us some opportunities in terms of the next steps. So, we don't start from scratch, we engage into the process which provides more opportunities for countries like Ukraine, Moldova and potentially Georgia. But we already did some homework.
- To make accession happen we need to address the fundamentals. We definitely know what we need to do, and the steps the Commission identified for us to implement to open negotiations are very realistic to be done by the first half of the next year.
- The only part we need to address is the resistance of the system to change. If we try to focus on this process, we will do it.
- Countries like Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia should not be in competition with Western Balkan countries – we have to learn from experience, and we have a lot of things in common, we will all benefit from learning from each other, working together and really demanding the EU to change the accession process.



Iulian Groza,
Executive Director
of the Institute for
European Policies
and Reforms (IPRE), the
Republic of Moldova:



Fredrik Wesslau,
Deputy Head of the
EU Advisory Mission to
Ukraine (EUAM):



- The big obvious difference is the geostrategic one – Ukraine is fighting against the Russian war of aggression for its existence as a state, while at the same time trying to move forward at the accession process and reform. It is important in this context to really acknowledge how much Ukraine managed to deliver in these extremely difficult circumstances.
- This geopolitical context has also somehow opened up for the decision by the European Council in June, which is a truly historic decision for Ukraine, Moldova and for the EU as well. This decision is such a massive repudiation of what Moscow's geopolitical ambitions are in the region and the real confirmation on the EU side about where Ukraine and Moldova belong.
- There is enormous societal support in Ukraine for EU membership, there is tremendous goodwill within the EU, within the institutions as well, and there is momentum. In the Western Balkans, we see much stagnation. So, my main message to Ukraine here is to make the most of this momentum.
- Some of the risks that we've seen in the Western Balkans are also common to Ukraine:
 - 1) the risk of backsliding (so do whatever you can to avoid it, especially when it comes to the Copenhagen criteria of course);
 - 2) not to cut corners (we see when a candidate country cuts corners, it somehow backfires. It is a political, but also a technical process. And the Commission will always look at cutting corners with great skepticism).

- We have seen in the Western Balkans that the accession process can really take a very long time, it can take much longer than a typical political cycle, which means that an average politician does not have the incentive always of moving forward, as there are no concrete deliverables. And this is my message to the EU. The EU really needs to look at instead of having one big carrot in the end, having lots of small carrots along the way for the candidate countries (for example, membership in the Single market).

- Judicial reform is number one out of several priorities connected to Ukraine's EU integration, its candidacy, and further accession negotiations. Obviously, this is paramount for Ukraine's successful transformation. If you look at the map, there is no successful country without a rule of law and independent courts.
- After the war started the Venice Commission said because of the war we are watering down the reforms that are crucial for the EU. They started to say that something is not obligatory to do. The decision-makers take it like a flag saying that the Venice Commission said we can do whatever we want and can forget about reform basically. You are not helping by watering down reforms, you are not helping by making the Constitutional Court more dependent. Please, help Ukraine by helping it make good reforms.
- We are expecting the EU to be tougher about this reform not to let it slide back sliding.



Mykhailo Zhernakov,
Chair of the Board of DEJURE
Foundation, Ukraine

- The accession is not the finishing line in this race. In a way, it's a starting line and this is what we learned in my country. Also, the job is not over, we ended up with a mechanism which was called National Certificate (MCV) – the mechanism for cooperation and verification which is a basically a safeguard on Judiciary and anti-corruption reforms which we perceived as a key areas.
- No country was ever ready when they joined the EU. Not only in 2004 and 2007. What does it mean to be ready? Nobody's ready. You should join when you have an opportunity. But don't forget the parallel agenda: you should still reform the country internally.
- We need the mechanism to support the existence of civil society after accession because you know what we learned is that all the mechanisms are demolishing their effectiveness over time, especially after the accession. We have learned from our experience that after accession you will lose a lot of support, and a lot of donors will leave.
- Anti-corruption and judicial reform are the fundamental political areas of reform. It's very sensitive, but if you succeed in judicial and anti-corruption reform, you will change the structure of power in the country and create a new sort of politics and society.



Sorin Ionita,
President of Expert
Forum (EFOR),
Romania:



Zoran Nechev,
Head of Center of EU
Integration at IDSCS,
North Macedonia:



- What I see now with this Associated Trio and the motivation within the EU is extremely strong and we have to use that. We need to work together; we are in the same basket.
- There is a political will of the EU at the moment created with the candidate status of both Moldova and Ukraine. We have to use that opportunity and push for things that we think will help us in the accession process, not only domestically but also at the EU level.
- What happens next in the Western Balkans will depend much on Ukraine. When Ukraine was given candidate status along with Moldova, obviously, it was the opinion within the EU that we have to do something with Western Balkans. We had like additional issues that could be resolved in a short period. That is why we have seen France resolving the bilateral issue with North Macedonia and Bulgaria.



SESSION 3. PARLIAMENTS' ROLE IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS: POLITICAL CONSENSUS ON ACCESSION REFORMS AS A DRIVER OF SUCCESS



Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze,
Chairperson of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union:



- We can reach serious results when we unite our forces. That is exactly what happened when the Office of the President, Cabinet of Ministers, NGOs, and MPs worked together, providing a great opportunity for us to get candidate status in June.
- Ukraine is taking a huge speed with which the state is trying to achieve seven conditions accompanying the decision on candidate status. I would welcome the speed if we were not losing some of the quality. This is a big mistake to underestimate the quality component.
- Ukraine does not have clear benchmarks for each of the seven conditions from the European Commission by which it will be judged. We know from our visa-free experience: there was always a temptation from the EU side to add additional requirements we had to fulfil.
- Our task is to carry reforms out not only quantitatively but qualitatively. We are in such a drastic existential war that we have no right to manipulate. Unfortunately, some of these tiny cheating things are still happening. For example, the rules for the NABU Director competition were changed.
- We are interested in being assessed by the EU in the best way. But when we have tiny cheating things carrying out reforms, we'll finally not get the expected result. A lot has been done, but a lot still needs to be done.

- The EP resolution on (Russia sponsor, ed) terrorism can open the doors to follow on the EU level with some kind of legal regulation that Americans have. In that case, seizing Russian frozen assets would become much easier. I hope we'll push a special resolution in the EP on the tribunal. And, of course, our dream to have Ukraine as a member of the EU and NATO demands from us very active steps.
- That is why we created a parliamentary network 'United for Ukraine' where we have more than 400 MPs (both former and current ones). I am sure that parliaments are the most important political bodies.
- I know how much Rada is devoted to EU integration agenda. Of course, we are focusing now on the priorities to win the war. And because of this, the West needs to give Ukraine weapons, weapons and weapons! But the second priority is the European integration.
- The reason why Putin started the war was not to allow Ukraine to become a successful European country with integration towards the EU. So, EU needs to answer to that with a clear agenda of Ukraine's integration. That is what we are pushing in Berlin, Paris, other capitals.
- Parliaments are the most important instrument to convince partners in the EU (Spain, the Netherlands, and others). At the end, for the integration towards the EU there will be a need for political approval in all the capitals. Parliamentarians are the best players for this very big challenge.



Andrius Kubilius,
Member of European Parliament, Prime Minister of Lithuania (1999-2000; 2008-2012):



Adrian Balutel,
Member of the EU integration Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova:



- Despite the small differences that might occur in between countries on the political level, one thing is certain: we should move towards the EU altogether. And I'm happy that despite some minor ups and downs, it was true for Moldova and Ukraine, and we moved together. I hope Georgia will have an opportunity to catch up.
- Moldova has no political consensus in the parliament (there are two Russian proxy parties and the majority Party of Action and Solidarity). Two proxy parties are openly against the European path of the Republic of Moldova. That is a sad reality we have to work with.
- What the parliament together with the President and the government are trying to do is to build and maintain a societal consensus. This work is in progress. We try to involve as many civil society organizations as possible.

- Georgia is progressing on the EU road. And this is not just my words. You can look at international rankings, open budget, ease of doing business, and effectiveness of public institutions and see proof of this. The EU agenda usually facilitates these reforms, but more importantly, these reforms are implemented with strong political will from the government of Georgia.
- Despite the disappointment about the candidate status for Georgia, we cherish the EU perspective, and this has been a hugely historic decision. For many of us, it was beyond a dream, obviously. But this moment has come so quickly due to the heroic fight of Ukraine. We are acting on how we can move on to make this dream come true.
- Georgia is committed to EU integration, and we see Europe as a community of values and, at the same time, as a choice, a solution, and a key to modern challenges.
- If you ask me if Georgia is already ready for EU membership, I will say no. The European Parliament can criticize Georgia, but we do a lot of things and that is normal because Georgia is in transition country. We make mistakes, not crimes. But we get up and move on. Because if we don't get up and don't move on, the geopolitical sharks sailing around will swallow us. This is the Georgian reality.
- The real problem for Georgia is radicalization rather than polarization. Radicalization is when political actors don't recognize democratic institutions such as elections or the parliament, the legitimacy of your opponent, which means that they don't engage and build consensus. In this highly radicalized political environment, if consensus is imperative, it may lead to nowhere. The solution to that problem is for the responsible actors to sit down and build consensus, sometimes ignoring radical opponents.



Levan Makhasvili,
Head of the Speaker's
Cabinet, Parliament of
Georgia:



SESSION 4. RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS



Stanislav Secieru, Senior Analyst at European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS):

- The war removed the taboo of discussing enlargement to the East. Before the war, there was no such discussion, and it was a sort of a pie dream. Also, the war compelled associated countries to move faster. We expect associated countries to use this momentum and maybe even have the progress of implementation of conditionalities in spring.
- The war also made the EU think about the enlargement not only as a technical process that prepares these countries but also as a security tool that provides sustainable insurance for the long-term security of the EU. This accession will go hand in hand with much closer cooperation in security.
- Now Ukraine has to do three things: defend itself, keep the state's functionality, provide basic services and conduct reforms.
- The EU has to provide more human resources assistance to these countries and also to help them to build the capacities to be able to defend implemented reforms.

- The war clearly showed that all the narratives about Ukraine as a failed state are nonsense. When people saw how Ukrainian mayors reacted to the damage, how much regional administrations were part of the relief effort, nobody could say it was not a functional government. It is a functional one! That changed a lot of attitudes in Europe toward Ukraine.
- Ukraine needs security and for that, it needs a victory or undeniable defeat for Moscow. This is what we can't substitute by money or promises. We have to achieve this now by the delivery of arms.
- Every tank delivered to Ukraine is a huge good investment in the long run. It is much cheaper to pay for an expensive tank now than for much more expensive sustainability aid in the future.
- EU Macro-Financial Assistance 18 bln euros is a huge sum but if you consider that the war effort costs Ukraine between 30-40 mln euros a day, you will understand that it is not so much. If you multiply 30-40 mln euros by 365 days, you end up with a shortage of 15 bln euros Ukraine will have to spend next year just to sustain the war.



Gustav Gressel, Senior Policy Fellow with the Wider Europe Programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), Germany:



David Stulik, Senior Analyst and Head of the Eastern European Programme at the European Values Center for Security Policy, the Czech Republic:

- There can't be any new security structure in Central Europe that would not contain and would not include Ukraine. For us, Ukraine is part of our future security. Without Ukraine and the Ukrainian army, we don't even see the future. Any future regional institutional setup is now unthinkable without Ukraine.
- We're now rather looking for the formation of a coalition of the willing rather than counting on a uniform EU or NATO response. So, it's kind of an attempt to bring the countries who want to support Ukraine.
- I think that here we have sort of a mismatch in approaches and expectations on the side of the EU and Ukraine. The EU is very much following this conventional thinking, it's not ready and willing to think out of the box about these creative solutions. The EU offers only evolution, while Ukraine needs a revolution in this enlargement process.
- In the reform of the EU, the main task will be how to change the decision-making process to qualitative majority voting.

- Now Georgia must do three things: first, implement these 12 EU conditions, second, regain the trust among European and Western partners and thirdly, repair the ties with Ukraine. That is something that really can help the EU integration process.
- Three key things about Georgia: despite all misunderstandings, there is absolute support for Ukraine and its soldiers from our civil society. Second, the fight for the freedom of Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine must be appreciated and seen properly. And last, Ukraine must win the war, and Russia must badly defeat. Supporting Georgia means you should support Ukraine.
- There are no shortcuts when it comes to EU integration, but we saw that EU conditions are very broad and leave huge room for interpretation by political forces.



Vano Chkhikvadze,
EU Integration Program
Manager at Open Society
Foundation Georgia
(OSGF):

- I don't see an opportunity of reforming the enlargement process to make such a possibility, like when we're closing some chapters and then integrating. But I see an opportunity to have two parallel processes: apart from doing accession negotiations, we should integrate into the EU common market. For that, we should extend in the Association agreement the possibility of integration in more sectors. Also, Ukraine can participate in different configurations of the council of the EU to understand the discourse.
- Ukraine almost completed decentralization reform before the full-scale war started. We should strengthen the focus on a local level and capacity for communities with resources. I think it's an opportunity to reach out to partners of the West to say what they need to help with deliveries. And it's also an opportunity for the EU to build partnerships with Ukrainian cities.
- I see that Ukrainian civil society shies away from criticizing the reform process because of war. If we keep it on a constructive level, not politicizing it, we still have to talk about problems we have, for example, with media law and other reforms.



Iryna Solonenko,
Senior Fellow at Centre
for Liberal Modernity,
Germany:



SESSION 5. STAGED ACCESSION AND REFORM OF THE ENLARGEMENT METHODOLOGY: HOW TO ACCELERATE EU MEMBERSHIP?



Gerald Knaus, Founding chairman at European Stability Initiative (ESI)

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- What do we need to see in Ukraine in the next few years? I call it the Vilnius miracle: the countries having 37% of the GDP per capita of the EU average in 1999 moved to 81% a few years later. The way they achieved this Asian tiger style conversion was by fully integrating in the EU single market: goods, services, capital, and people.
- What is likely to happen in the nearest future in terms of EU enlargement is, unfortunately, not what must happen. It will be dependent on the current mood in key capitals. And the mood in Europe is that giving candidate status was already a big step. France believes that enlargement weakens the EU, Germany says that the EU at the moment can't accept new candidates.
- Let's look at the history of accession talks – when they started and they ended. They took 34 months for Slovakia; 56 months for Slovenia; 58 months for Bulgaria. It took 5.5 years for

Croatia. What about Serbia and Montenegro? It is never-ending accession: they start and they never end.

- Crisis of enlargement is not acknowledged by the EU. The Commission says we have a process, it is working. In reality it is not working because there is no final goal linked to merit. Countries are like a hamster in a wheel: how fast you run, you will not get anywhere because some states tell us openly: we don't want more members soon.
- Imagine that in the European Commission report in four years Ukraine has a good level of preparation in every chapter. What will happen? At the moment – very little. But something needs to happen at that stage. We propose: make strict Commission assessments the key to reach a meaningful goal. The EU has to define what happens when a country meets all these conditions. And that should be negotiated now.



Emmanuel Dupuy, President of the Institute for European Perspective and Security (IPSE):

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- In France we understand that the EU needs to change the methodology of the voting process and shift from consensus to qualified majority, when we will need the vote of at least fifteen among the 27 states. As of now already 80% of the legislative acts are based on qualified majority votes. We need to bring that to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as well because it is the same necessity to act fast and more rapidly.
- We have to take into consideration the momentum where we are, besides the new methodology raised by the EU. There are certain numbers of new formats that can be useful and can accelerate the accession process for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. For example, the Baltic, Adriatic, Black Sea (BABS) Initiative.
- The defense of Europe is not only about collective security, it is also about deterrence, crisis management, and preventing the next conflict to come. We should focus on the need to build a new security and peace architecture.

- The existing methodology of EU voting is not good enough and has to be reformed. There is the issue of switching to the qualified majority voting.
- Internal market inclusion is a huge part of the vitally important process, but do not do the free movement of labor too fast. In this new Ukrainian situation, imagine the government lifting its state of emergency restriction on men's movement. Well, then, they would love to join families abroad, and they might move to live in the EU. Therefore, be careful with that.
- For Ukraine to have seamless access to the single market of goods only 3 things are needed: 1) complete adoption of product standards; 2) reform of the customs services; 3) achieve qualitative assessment standards. These are already prime elements on the agenda and you in Ukraine are already working on them. You have it all in your hands. This is not the new offer being proposed by the EU to join the single market.
- It is not terribly interesting to advocate accession to the internal market, because it is already there, in the process and you are already working on it. What is not done is reformulation of the incentives by stages in order to accelerate the process.



Michael Emerson,
Associate Senior Research
Fellow at the Center for
European Policy Studies
(CEPS):



Dmytro Naumenko,
Co-founder and Senior
Analyst at Ukrainian Centre
for European Policy (UCEP)

- To be ready for the single market integration, we need to make lots of efforts in the customs area. We need some relief in customs procedures, transport, regulations etc. Also, we need to develop a common infrastructure. For example, the cross-border points which are governed jointly with European Union border states.
- An issue of post-war reconstruction would be crucial. It is a moral obligation of the EU, many items will be rebuilt. But if these funds, whatever they come from, will be spent transparently, it will give us a chance to move further on these accession methodology steps. If not, it will block your perspective of accession to the EU for a long period.
- We need to understand now which kind of sectoral landscape we will need to develop to be integrated into the EU single market. Our old generation capacity will be destroyed and we will need to decide which energy system to rebuild. And it should not be the monsters of the soviet-type generation, which were built for completely other purposes. It should be a modern decentralized design based on the EU standards in energy efficiency.

- The big accelerator of EU enlargement today is Russia's war against Ukraine, and it was this new geopolitical context that revitalized the enlargement again. And the EU used it as a political tool to affirm the countries' civilizational choice and to affirm the commitment to this choice.
- There are a lot of tasks in DCFTA, but it is an economic track, and of course we need to speak about the clear political track and the measures to socialize Ukraine, Moldova and other candidates. Ukraine has already informally participated in the European Council meetings, there is a configuration of the Council of Ministers and I think many of the ideas might be put forward to implement this.
- Democratization and the rule of law reform are very important, which DCFTA does not offer, and which is also critical to maintain a positive dynamic of enlargement.



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- I think there are two keywords about political will. The first is "convergence" and the second is "integration". Before discussing EU membership, I think we need to really emphasize these two important elements. As long as we have success on these dimensions, I am sure we will have a political will to progress with the EU enlargement.
- Three conditions for how to move faster with the bureaucratic process of the EU integration with certainty:
 - 1) First of all, EU candidate countries need certainty. If countries achieve the commitments or the conditionalities, we will not run like that mouse in the wheel and we will get a clear EU perspective not by words, but by actions.
 - 2) Second, the EU together with Ukraine and Moldova have to work more to have a clear understanding of conditionalities and indicators to measure reforms implementation. When Moldova got the candidate status, we had 9 conditionalities, 4 of which were measurable and specific. Most of them are quite general and provide many maneuvers, subjectivism and basic uncertainty about how we will be evaluated. One particular example is deoligarchization. How can you achieve deoligarchization, in that short time frame? What is deoligarchization? There is no clear ground.
 - 3) Third, Moldova and Ukraine must achieve integration in as many sectors as possible. I resonate very much with the idea of entering a single EU market. We need good trade liberalization. Moldova does not need quotas to export, for example, plums or apples, to the EU market because we are so small and do not compete with the big producers in the EU.



ABOUT NEW EUROPE CENTER

The New Europe Center was founded in 2017 as an independent think-tank. Despite its new brand, it is based on a research team that has been working together since 2009, at the Institute for World Policy. The New Europe Center became recognized by offering high-quality analysis on foreign policy issues in Ukraine and regional security by combining active, effective work with advocacy.

The New Europe Center's vision is very much in line with the views of the majority of Ukrainians about the future of their country: Ukraine should be integrated into the European Union and NATO. By integration, we understand not so much formal membership as the adoption of the best standards and practices for Ukraine to properly belong to the Euroatlantic value system.

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