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Press release | 06.10.2026

Enlargement: New incentives and rules for candidate countries

Today, the European Commission presented its long-awaited proposals on how to prepare the EU for future enlargements. The package looks at how the EU must adapt its institutions, policies, budget and rule of law safeguards in order to remain strong and able to act in a Union of more than 30 members.

Thomas Waitz, Greens/EFA MEP responsible for EU enlargement policy, comments:

"Europe is stronger when more stable democracies are part of our Union. The Commission's package gives candidate countries the right incentives on their path towards membership, including gradual access to EU programmes, agencies, expert groups and parts of the Single Market, where conditions are met.

"With Canada as a future associated partner, the EU is also showing that closer European cooperation is no longer only a question of geography, but of shared values in a tense geopolitical situation.

"The experiences in Hungary and Poland show that enlargement must not repeat the mistakes of the past. When the EU takes in new members, democracy and the rule of law must be protected from the very beginning, and democratic backsliding must be prevented effectively. A larger EU will only be stronger if it can defend its values.

"The Commission is now promising clearer roadmaps for Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Moldova. That is an important signal, which we need to give every candidate county. North Macedonia must not be left behind. North Macedonia's future clearly lies in the European Union. Commissioner Marta Kos must also deliver a credible perspective for North Macedonia. Its people have worked too hard and waited too long for Europe to be overlooked now."

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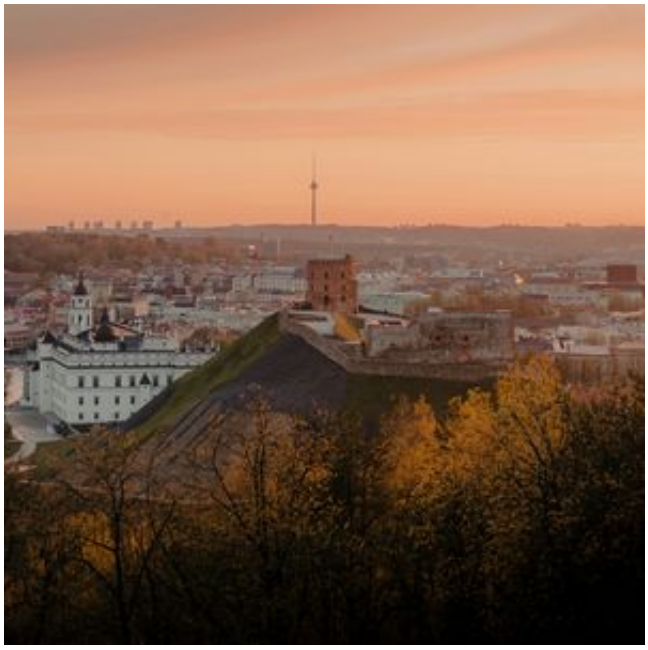

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Responsible MEPs



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