

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001053/25
to the Commission**

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(12 March 2025)

Subject: Need for a revision of the EU enlargement process and gradual integration of Ukraine

Hungary is currently blocking the opening of cluster 1 of Ukraine's accession negotiations. Coming back from Kyiv, we've witnessed the Ukrainian Government's frustration facing this blackmail. This needs to change, and swiftly. In November 2022, Parliament recommended:

abolishing the requirement for unanimity when deciding on the opening and closing of individual negotiating clusters and chapters;

rewarding progress with the phasing-in of candidate countries into EU policies and the single market, as well as with access to EU funds and observer status in official EU bodies.

Even though Ukrainians have been fighting for European security for three years while simultaneously conducting ambitious reforms, a single Member State can still arbitrarily block intermediary steps, including technical ones, on Ukraine's accession path.

1. Does the Commission recognise the urgent need to reduce the unanimity requirement in the Council for each step of the accession process, however technical, and will it act upon this need?
2. Will it put forward steps for the gradual integration of Ukraine into the EU's security and defence sector, the single market for defence and the common energy market, including enabling Ukraine to benefit from relevant EU funds and programmes?
3. Will it enable Ukraine to participate in the work of EU bodies as an observer?

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Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(20 May 2025)

The use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) would allow for flexibility on certain intermediate steps in the enlargement process such as the opening of clusters. The final decision on accession would still be taken by all Member States unanimously. The Commission stands ready to engage with Member States to explore ways to apply QMV to some aspects of the enlargement process.

Gradual integration of Ukraine into the single market ahead of EU accession is a priority of the Commission⁽¹⁾. In the energy sector, the Commission is working to facilitate Ukraine's electricity market integration with the EU by spring 2027 as well as further integration in the EU gas sector. Priorities for Ukraine's integration into the EU security and defence sector are defined in the recently adopted White Paper for European Defence — Readiness 2030⁽²⁾. In addition, the new Security Action for Europe instrument would allow the Ukrainian defence industry to participate in collaborative procurements on the same footing as EU-based industry. Gradual integration is a useful tool supporting integration of enlargement partners in the EU through alignment with the EU *acquis* and early participation in some EU policies and processes. Nevertheless, this approach must be coupled, where appropriate, with robust institutional safeguards to guarantee both the uniform interpretation and implementation of EU law and the capacity to address non-compliance effectively. As part of the screening process, enlargement partners can express their interest in participating in the work of EU bodies as observers. The Commission then issues recommendations to this end, as part of the screening report.

⁽¹⁾ As laid out in the new Priority Action Plan for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area implementation (2025-2026).

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025JC0120>.