

# What is the Screening Process and how does it work?

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#EUenlargement

## What is it



The screening process is the first step in the accession negotiations.



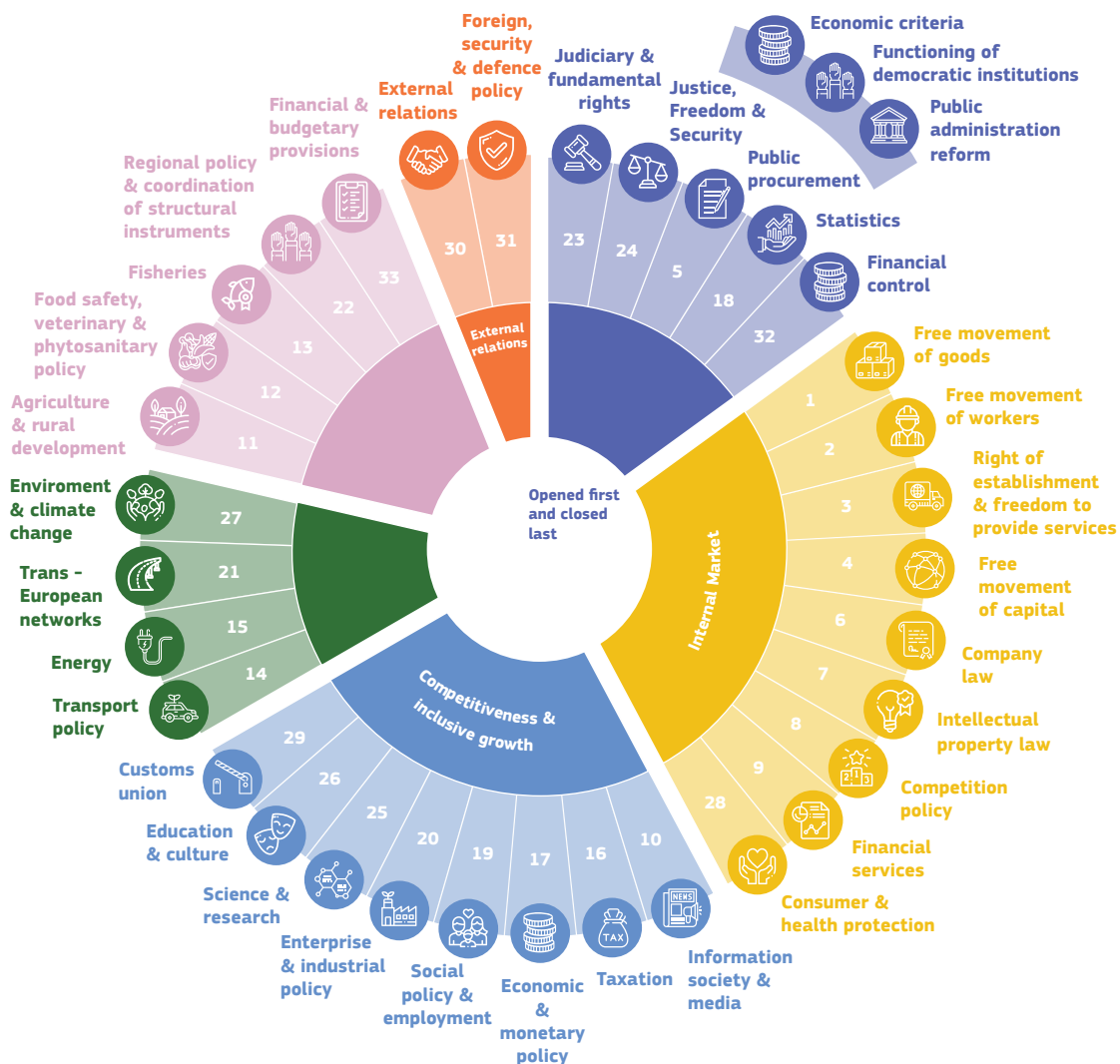
It is the analytical examination of the EU acquis.



It enables candidate countries to familiarise themselves with the acquis.

## How does it work

The screening is a process conducted jointly by the European Commission and the candidate country, and concerns 33 chapters of the EU acquis.



- 1 Fundamentals
- 2 Internal market
- 3 Competitiveness & inclusive growth
- 4 Green agenda & sustainable connectivity
- 5 Resources, agriculture & cohesion
- 6 External relations

The 33 chapters are gathered in **six thematic clusters** in line with the revised Enlargement methodology developed in 2020.

Within each cluster, the screening is carried out on a **chapter-by-chapter basis**, allowing to identify areas for accelerated integration.

\*Chapters "34. Institutions" and "35. Other issues" will be handled separately.

The screening exercise consists of two phases:



**The explanatory session:** where the European Commission services explain chapter by chapter what the EU acquis is about, in terms of legislative alignment and adequate administrative capacity.



**The bilateral session:** where the candidate country is invited to present where it stands, per each chapter, in its preparations to adopt and implement the EU acquis.

After the bilateral meetings within each cluster, a cluster screening report is drafted by the European Commission which:



evaluates the **degree of preparedness** of a candidate country on each chapter,



informs about the candidate country's **plans for future preparations**,



contains **preliminary indications** of the issues that will most likely come up in the negotiations.

## Results of the screening



The screening process will result in priorities for key reforms (opening benchmarks) being identified for the cluster as a whole.



The Council decides, by unanimity, whether to open the cluster concerned and may define the relevant benchmarks, based on the proposal from the Commission included in the cluster screening report.

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