The EU Accession process

Step-by-step

November
2026

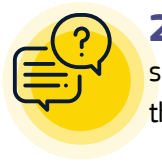
Every year, the Commission adopts an **Enlargement Communication**, which outlines its **recommendations** regarding the enlargement process, and dedicated reports, which provide a **detailed assessment** of the **state of play** and the **progress made by the candidate countries and potential candidates** on their respective paths **towards the European Union**.

These assessments are accompanied by **recommendations and guidance** on the reform priorities.

Main steps to EU accession



1 A country submits an **application** to the Council (EU Member States).



2 The Commission submits an **Opinion** on the application.



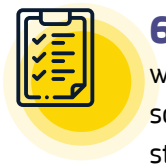
3 EU Member States decide unanimously to grant the country **candidate status**.



4 After conditions are met, Member States (unanimously) agree to **open the accession negotiations**.



5 The Commission proposes a draft negotiating framework as a basis for the talks. Accession negotiations formally start once Member States agree on the **negotiating framework**.



6 During negotiations, which begin with the screening process and are structured according to **clusters and chapters**, the country prepares to implement EU laws and standards.



7 Once negotiations on all areas are finalised, the Commission gives its **Opinion on the readiness** of the country to become a Member State.



8 Based on this Opinion, EU Member States decide unanimously **on the admission of a new Member State**. The European Parliament must also give its consent.

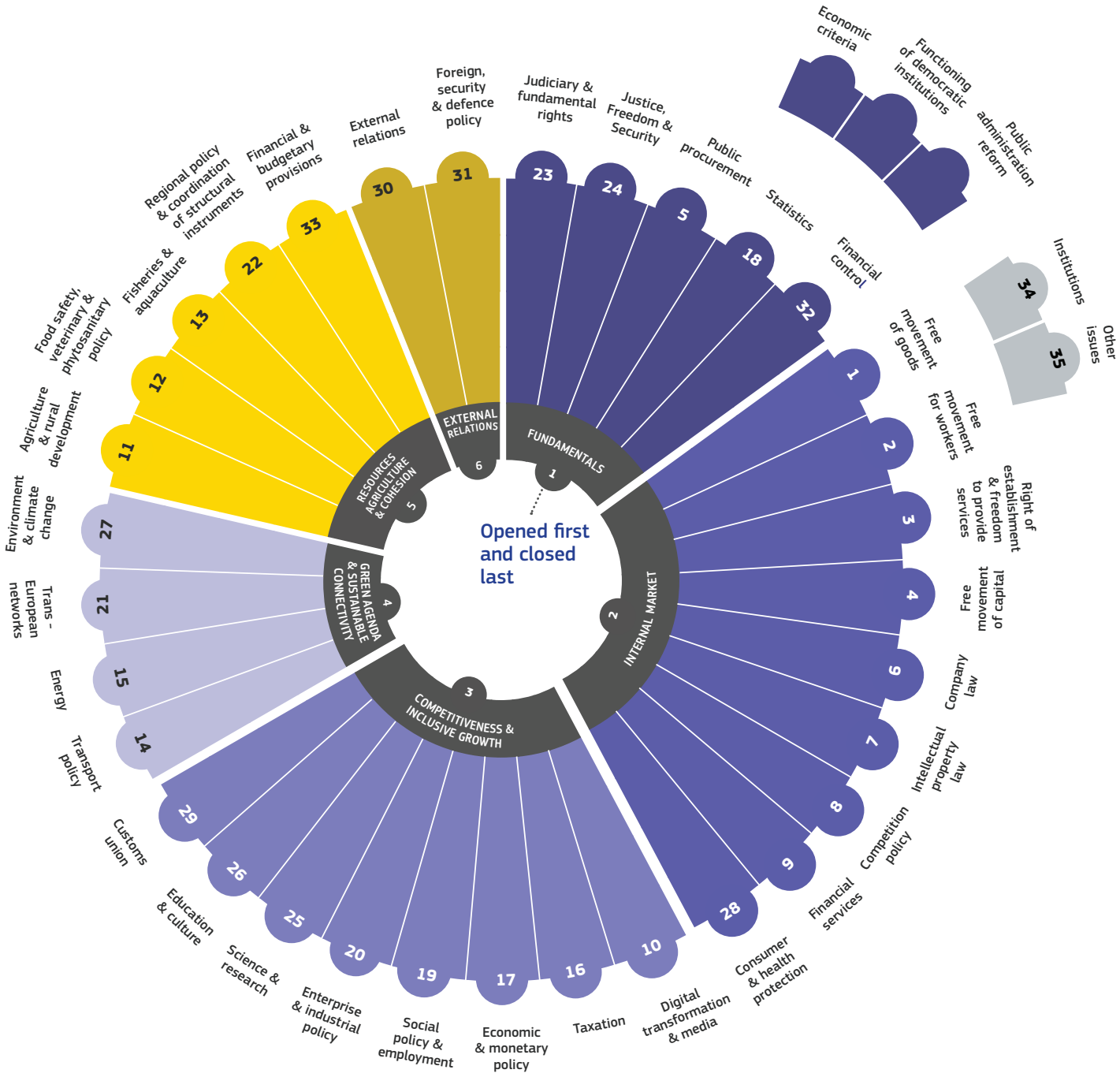


9 All EU Member States and the candidate country **sign and ratify an Accession Treaty** which enables the country to become an EU Member State.

Clusters of negotiating chapters

Negotiating chapters are divided in
six thematic clusters:

1. FUNDAMENTALS
2. INTERNAL MARKET
3. COMPETITIVENESS & INCLUSIVE GROWTH
4. GREEN AGENDA & SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY
5. RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE & COHESION
6. EXTERNAL RELATIONS



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