

DOCUMENTS



Presidency Conclusions on Enlargement by the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 16 December 2025

1. The Council of European Union reconfirms the geostrategic importance of enlargement as a major contribution to European peace, security, stability and prosperity in the twenty-first century. An efficient, merit-based and credible enlargement process must be sustained, based on the Copenhagen criteria, established principles, and methodology.
2. The Council urges all partners to seize the opportunity, use the current momentum and take all necessary steps to accelerate their progress on the EU path. In an increasingly volatile geopolitical context, with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine being fought on our continent, the European Union remains an anchor of peace, prosperity and security. Respect of international law, peaceful resolution of conflicts, reconciliation and regional cooperation are principles of the highest importance to which the Union is committed.
3. The Council reiterates that the progress of all partners who aspire to join will continue to be assessed on the basis of fair and rigorous conditionality and their own merits: a cornerstone of the accession negotiations, with rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights at its core. They must respect and promote the values of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. EU membership presupposes the ability to fully take on all the obligations of membership. Progress on the fundamentals remains the key benchmark for progress towards EU membership. Special attention should be given to address any shortcomings reported by the Commission.
4. The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining its ability to function effectively and develop, is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries. Looking ahead to the prospect of a further enlarged Union, both the EU and future Member States need to be ready. In parallel to aspiring members stepping up their reform efforts, the EU needs to lay the necessary internal groundwork and reforms, as set out in the Granada

Declaration and the European Council conclusions of June 2024. This will make the EU stronger and will enhance European sovereignty. The Council will remain seized of this matter and take work forward in accordance with agreed procedures.

5. Full alignment with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) remains a key aspect of the EU integration process, and a strong expression of a partner's strategic choice. The Council expects all partners to fully align with the EU CFSP, including on restrictive measures. The Council welcomes partners' continuous contributions to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations.
6. In the Western Balkans, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation remain essential elements of the enlargement process, as well as of the Stabilisation and Association Process. The Council strongly encourages partners to solve their bilateral disputes and issues rooted in the legacy of the past, in line with international law and established principles, including the Agreement on Succession Issues.
7. Bringing partners closer to the EU already before accession remains a priority. The Council calls on candidate countries to make the most of existing opportunities and invites the Commission to make further proposals on gradual integration.
8. Effective strategic communication on enlargement and its benefits by all partners and the EU remains crucial.
9. The Council takes good note of the Commission's Communication and reports of 4 November 2025, and welcomes in particular:
 - the significant breakthroughs and progress achieved by several candidates in 2025 despite significant challenges caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and continued hybrid activities. Commending the progress, the Council looks forward to taking further steps to advance the respective accession processes as soon as the criteria have been met and conditions permit.
 - that Montenegro has advanced further in its accession negotiations and that 12 negotiating chapters now have been provisionally closed. The Council looks forward to the provisional closing of further chapters as soon as possible, when the conditions are met. On the basis of the overall progress achieved by Montenegro, the Council decides that the Ad hoc Working Party on Drafting the Accession Treaty with Montenegro will be established. In this regard and as a matter of priority, the Council looks forward to the

necessary preparatory work to ensure the effective operation of the Ad hoc Working Party upon its establishment, including on clarifying the key principles of future accession treaties.

- that Albania has now opened all 6 negotiating clusters and is advancing in its accession negotiations.
- the successful and timely completion of the screening process by Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter: Moldova) and takes good note of the Commission's assessment that all six clusters are ready to be opened. The Council looks forward to the opening of clusters with both candidates, starting with the fundamentals cluster without delay and followed by the other clusters, in accordance with the methodology and the negotiating frameworks. The Council is carrying out work with a view to preparing the next steps.
- the partners' EU-related reforms which have enabled unprecedented additional financial support now being disbursed through the Ukraine Facility and the Growth Plans for the Western Balkans and for Moldova.

10. The Council welcomes the new concrete benefits brought by gradual integration, while fully preserving the integrity of the EU internal market and a level playing field. It looks forward to, in particular:

- Ukraine and Moldova joining the 'Roam like at home area' from 1 January 2026, allowing their citizens to make calls to, from and within the European Union and the European Economic Area and use mobile data without additional charges.
- The Western Balkans partners achieving the same goal in 2026. The Council invites the Commission to accelerate work towards this end.
- The significantly lower costs of bank transactions in Euro for both citizens and businesses, as a result of Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, North Macedonia and Moldova joining the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), with other partners expected to join soon.

11. The Council remains committed to providing candidates a clear and predictable path to EU membership, including through streamlining within the framework of the established methodology. It stresses in this respect the value of organising political intergovernmental conferences.



Seventh Round of the European Union-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue on 21 November 2025

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), Kaja Kallas, and Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Senator Ishaq Dar, co-chaired the 7 Round of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue held in Brussels on 21 November 2025.

The meeting was an occasion to discuss EU-Pakistan bilateral relations, with special regard to reviewing cooperation in the framework of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan from 2019. Both sides agreed to further deepen cooperation in all areas covered under the SEP with the objective of aligning overall strategic outlook.

Both sides welcomed the timely convening of dialogue mechanisms and reaffirmed the importance of sustained cooperation across trade, migration, human rights, political, economic and development areas, including under the EU's Global Gateway strategy. They agreed to further deepen knowledge partnerships through Erasmus Mundus and Horizon Europe and to work together on emerging challenges related to food and energy security and climate change.

The EU and Pakistan reiterated the importance of continued collaboration to promote sustainable growth and trade development. In this regard, the leaders expressed a strong political commitment towards the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) which remains one of the key elements of EU-Pakistan relations. The HR/VP informed about the ongoing process leading to the adoption of a new Generalised Scheme of Preferences. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continue working closely towards universal promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with their international obligations.

The discussion was focused on the commitment of both Pakistan and the European Union to multilateralism, principles of the UN Charter, the rules-based international order, peace, stability and prosperity, grounded in shared values and common interests. Both High Representative and Deputy

Prime Minister highlighted the importance of close collaboration on regional and global security.

Both sides stressed the need to find peaceful solutions to conflicts, in full respect of the principles of international law and the UN Charter. The EU side briefed on Russia's war in Ukraine. The Pakistan side briefed on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. They discussed the situation in the Middle East and welcomed the agreement reached on the first phase of the Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict put forward by President Trump. They reiterated the importance of ensuring that all parties adhere to the ceasefire, implement all phases, and refrain from any actions that jeopardise the agreement and recalled the importance of Gaza's stabilisation, transitional governance, recovery and reconstruction, as well as unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza. They also underscored their support for concrete steps towards the two-state solution in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

The ministers discussed Pakistan-Afghanistan relations amid October 2025 cross-border tensions, reaffirming their commitment to regional peace, stability, prosperity and resolving issues through dialogue between neighbours. The two sides called on Afghanistan's de facto Authorities to play a constructive role in achieving the shared objective of rooting out terrorism from Afghan soil.

Expressing concern over Afghanistan's deteriorating socio-economic conditions, they supported a peaceful, stable and self-reliant Afghanistan contributing to regional stability, advocating for a credible political process aligned with the UN-led "Doha process," and in line with the commitments made by the Taliban de facto Authorities to the international community. They appreciated Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghan nationals for over four decades. The EU side emphasised that any return must be safe, dignified and in line with international standards. Both sides called upon the Afghan authorities to ensure protection of human rights, especially for women, girls and vulnerable communities.

Both sides agreed to convene the 8th Round of the Strategic Dialogue in the future in Islamabad.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/seventh-round-european-union-pakistan-strategic-dialogue-21-november-2025_en.