

Presentation Text – Lesson B – EU Member States

1. The creation and development of the European Union

- a. The European Union (EU) currently consists of 27 member states.
- b. The idea of the EU was born after World War II to prevent wars and strengthen cooperation.
- c. The first step was the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 by France, Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany, Italy, and Luxembourg.
- d. Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister, proposed the integration of the coal and steel industries on May 9, 1950 (Europe Day).
- e. In 1958, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were established.

2. Enlargement of the European Union

- a. In 1973, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined (Norway rejected membership in a referendum).
- b. Greece became a member in 1981, after the fall of the junta and due to economic prospects.
- c. Spain and Portugal joined in 1986, after the end of their dictatorships.
- d. The fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989) led to the reunification of Germany in 1990.
- e. In 1995, Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined (Norway again rejected membership).
- f. The largest enlargement took place on May 1, 2004, with 10 new members: Cyprus, Malta, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Latvia.
- g. Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007, Croatia in 2013.
- h. The United Kingdom left (Brexit) in 2020, following a referendum in 2016 (52% in favour of leaving).

3. Accession criteria and institutional requirements

- a. In 1993, the Copenhagen Criteria were established: democracy, rule of law, human rights, functioning economy, ability to implement European legislation.
- b. Countries must meet the criteria to join the EU.
- c. The European Commission assesses the progress of candidate countries with annual packages and a "traffic light" system (green, yellow, red).

4. Candidate and potential candidate countries

- a. Candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova.
- b. Potential candidate country: Kosovo (has not been granted official status due to non-recognition by 5 Member States).
- c. Candidate countries receive financial, administrative, and technical support during their preparation.

5. Accession process and progress of candidate countries

- a. Three stages of accession: potential candidate, candidate, negotiating country.

- b. Montenegro: frontrunner, aiming for accession by 2026.
- c. Albania: significant progress in justice, aiming for accession in 2027.
- d. Ukraine and Moldova: aiming for accession in 2028, under pressure due to war and Russia.
- e. Serbia: stagnation due to concerns about democracy.
- f. North Macedonia: blocked due to non-recognition of the Bulgarian minority.
- g. Bosnia: internal political disputes hinder progress.
- h. Kosovo: delay due to non-recognition by five Member States.
- i. Georgia: significant decline in freedoms, stagnation.
- j. Turkey: negotiations frozen since 2018 due to a lack of democracy.

6. Information and educational material on the EU

- a. There is an educational series on Instagram about EU enlargement, with 6 episodes of 2 minutes each.
- b. The series explains the stages of accession and the progress made by each country.
- c. The European Commission publishes annual assessment packages for each candidate country.

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