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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0504/2023**

8.12.2023

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on 30 years of Copenhagen criteria - giving further impetus to EU enlargement policy

(2023/2987(RSP))

**Andrius Kubilius, Michael Gahler, Vladimír Bilčík, Siegfried Mureşan, David Lega, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Traian Băsescu, Eugen Tomac, Gheorghe Falcă, Dan-Ştefan Motreanu, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Michaela Šojdrová, Aušra Maldeikienė, Liudas Mažylis**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**B9-0504/2023**

**European Parliament resolution on 30 years of Copenhagen criteria - giving further impetus to EU enlargement policy (2023/2987(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Copenhagen Criteria established in June 1993,
  - having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and in particular Article 49 thereof,
  - having regard to the EU-Western Balkans Summit Declaration of Thessaloniki of 21 June 2003 concerning the prospect of the Western Balkan countries joining the European Union,
  - having regard to its recommendation of 23 November 2022 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the new EU strategy for enlargement,
  - having regard to its recommendation of 19 June 2020 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Western Balkans, following the 2020 summit,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 23-24 June 2022, and 29-30 June 2023,
  - having regard to the Commission’s 2023 Enlargement Package of 8 November 2023,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas enlargement is one of the most effective EU foreign policy instruments and one of the EU’s most successful policies to date, and it remains a strategic, future-oriented geopolitical investment in stability and prosperity on the European continent;
- B. whereas in the light of the growing Russian threat to European peace and stability, an enhanced enlargement policy remains a very strong political tool at the EU’s disposal;
- C. whereas enlargement is a win-win process and has been a very effective and successful instrument for boosting the necessary reforms both within the EU and in applicant countries, helping to encourage democratic transformation;
- D. whereas accession to the EU should always be a merit-based procedure in which each applicant is assessed on its own merit in terms of fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, in particular those of ensuring full respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law; whereas the accession process is set out in Article 49 TEU; whereas the integration capacity of the EU also needs to be taken into account; whereas positive outcomes should be sought as quickly as possible;

- E. whereas in its 2023 Enlargement Package the Commission recommended starting accession negotiations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, as well as with Bosnia and Hercegovina once the relevant compliance with membership criteria has been achieved, and to grant candidate status to Georgia;
1. Commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Copenhagen criteria, appreciating their historic significance in providing a clear and effective framework for EU enlargement, and celebrating the achievements and progress made by various nations on their journey towards EU membership;
  2. Reaffirms the importance of the Copenhagen criteria in ensuring that candidate countries demonstrate a consistent and enduring commitment to democracy, human rights, and economic reforms, while also adapting to the EU's evolving needs and challenges;
  3. Believes that enlargement is of strategic importance for the EU, and all the more so in the face of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; stresses that an enhanced enlargement policy has become one of the strongest geopolitical tools at the EU's disposal and that there are no more grey zones in its neighbourhood; points out that enlargement is a strategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity, as well as a driver for democracy and European values across the continent;
  4. Highlights the geopolitical necessity of including the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the EU, emphasising their ongoing efforts and the importance of their integration for regional stability and security, and encouraging continued dialogue and cooperation to resolve existing conflicts and differences;
  5. Underlines that accession to the EU must take place in accordance with Article 49 TEU, based on respect for the relevant procedures and conditional upon the fulfilment of the established criteria, in particular the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, as well as taking into account the integration capacity of the EU; underlines that accession should always remain a merit-based process that requires the adoption and implementation of the relevant reforms by the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, in particular in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, the market economy and implementation of the EU acquis;
  6. Points out that alignment with the common foreign and security policy is also a way of showing full adherence to the EU's fundamental principles and an important indicator of sustainable future membership;
  7. Encourages consistent application of standards and rules to all candidate countries, advocating for transparency and integrity in the enlargement process, and ensuring that all decisions are made in a manner that is fair, unbiased and reflective of the core principles of the Union;
  8. Stresses that there is a need for stronger parliamentary oversight of the EU's enlargement policy; insists on strengthening the role of Parliament throughout the entire accession process, including allowing it to fully scrutinise the progress made by the candidate countries across policy fields;

9. Emphasises the need for internal EU reforms in parallel with the process of enlargement, to enhance the EU's capacity to integrate new members effectively and to ensure that the enlargement process contributes positively to the overall cohesion and stability of the EU;
10. In the light of the above, urges the 14-15 December 2023 European Council to endorse the Commission's recommendations presented in its 2023 Enlargement Package from 8 November 2023, and to decide on opening accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, and opening accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved, and granting candidate status to Georgia on the understanding that certain steps are taken; calls on the Council to also adopt the negotiating framework without delay once the relevant requirements for each of the candidate countries are fulfilled in order to start the accession negotiations swiftly;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the governments and parliaments of the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.