

**Priority question for written answer P-002759/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: A multi-speed EU – an anti-European project

On 19 September 2023, the Franco-German Expert Group on EU institutional reform in the perspective of enlargement published a set of recommendations, which were promptly welcomed by the French and German Governments.

The basic idea is a noble one: preparing the Union to operate with over thirty Member States by 2030. However, the report is compromised by its arguing for differentiated integration – thereby putting the idea of a multi-speed Europe back on the table.

The authors detail the four distinct tiers of integration: the euro area and the Schengen area would be in the first tier, then the remaining the Member States, followed by associate members and, in the last tier, other countries participating in the European Political Community.

The wrongful and unjustified blocking of Romania's accession to the Schengen area by Austria – when all the EU institutions and the other Member States support that accession – is a prime example of the absurdity of the discriminatory view adopted in the report, which is nothing short of a formalisation of the division of the EU into frontrunner and second-rate countries.

The cynicism of such an approach is outrageous and runs counter to the principles of equality and solidarity set out in the European Treaties.

What is the Commission's position on the proposal made by the expert group on differentiated levels of integration?

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