

Think Visegrad Conference: 20 Years of Reuniting Europe's East and West

10 – 11 April 2024, Prague

PROGRAM

Wednesday, 10 April

VENUE	Institute of International Relations Prague, Nerudova 3, Prague
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch for TV coordinators and IVF leadership (at Pivovar Strahov)
14:00 – 14:10	Welcome words <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mats Braun, Director, IIR Prague• Martin Vokálek, Executive Director, EUROPEUM
14:10 – 15:20	Roundtable discussion: Perspectives on regional cooperation in Central Europe: V4 and beyond <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tomáš Strážay, Director, SFPA• Andrzej Sadecki, Head of Central European Department, OSW• Tomasz Zornaczuk, Coordinator of Central European Program, PISM• Daniel Šitera, Head of the Centre for Global Political Economy, IIR Prague• Agnes Vass, Research Director, HIIA <p>Moderation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asya Metodieva, Researcher, IIR Prague
15:20 – 16:15	Interactive chat: How citizens of Visegrad countries perceive EU Agenda ahead of the EP elections <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Klára Votavová, Research Fellow, EUROPEUM• Vít Havelka, Senior Research Fellow, EUROPEUM
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 18:30	Think Visegrad coordinators meeting
VENUE	Hotel Savoy Prague
19:30 – 20:30	Night-owl session: Strengthening the EU through enlargement: Perspectives from the CEE <p>Amid rising geopolitical tensions, security became a dominant driver in the discussions about enlargement towards the Eastern Europe and Western Balkans. While this is certainly an important impetus which consolidated support for candidate countries, it is crucial to balancing this approach with strong focus on the normative aspects of EU membership. How can we balance geopolitical necessities and the normative aspects of the accession process? What is the role of the transatlantic partnership in this regard? Is the EU capable to credibly compete with other global and regional actors in its neighbourhoods?</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Petr Mareš, Director, International Visegrad Fund• Aleksandra Palkova, Head of EU Programme, LIIA• Márton Schöberl, Chief Executive Officer, HIIA <p>Moderator: Žiga Faktor, Deputy Director & Head of Brussels Office, EUROPEUM</p>
20:30 – 22:00	Networking reception

PROGRAM

Thursday, 11 April

VENUE	CZERNIN PALACE, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LORETÁNSKÉ NÁM. 5, PRAGUE
8:30 – 10:00	BREAKFAST DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER MARTIN DVOŘÁK (UPON INVITATION; AT HOTEL SAVOY) <u>20 Years after 2004 Enlargement: What Have We Learned?</u> The upcoming 20th anniversary of the “big bang” 2004 EU enlargement represents an opportunity for a joint reflection on its impacts, both positive and negative, and draw lessons for the current enlargement process. Although celebrated as one of the most significant events reuniting Europe’s East and West after the fall of the Iron Curtain, two decades later the EU still has not overcome the mental divisions between “new” and “old” EU member states. However, despite the challenges the big Eastern enlargement brought, it also strengthened Europe’s position in the global arena and shaped the EU as we know it today. Has the labeling of EU member states as “old” and “new” still some relevance today? How did the 2004 enlargement change the acceding countries and the EU as a whole? What are the good practices and lessons learned from the process that apply to future enlargements? Moderator: Maja Wawrzyk , Deputy Executive Director, IVF
10:00 – 10:30	REGISTRATION AND COFFEE AT ČERNÍN PALACE
10:30 – 10:45	OPENING REMARKS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Martin Vokálek, Executive Director, EUROPEUM• Jana Juzová, Senior Research Fellow, EUROPEUM
10:45 – 11:15	KEYNOTE SPEECH AND FOLLOW-UP CHAT WITH EDUARD HULICIUS, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CZECHIA
11:15 – 12:15	INTEGRATING “WIDER EUROPE”: COMMUNITY OF VALUES OR PRAGMATIC ALLIANCES? The return of war to Europe stimulated an intensified discussion in the EU about the need for closer cooperation with neighbouring countries, beyond those aspiring for EU membership, resulting in the establishment of the European Political Community. Simultaneously, there seems to be a wide understanding that the EU enlargement process must regain speed and progress toward tangible results in a much shorter timeframe than was the case in the past two decades. How can European integration progress without compromising on the EU’s fundamental values? Is the EU heading toward an ever more differentiated integration with the perspective of full EU membership becoming less clear? And can a growing Union still remain a united and credible global political actor? Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hana Mottlová, Head of Department of EU Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czechia• Barbara Lippert, Director of Research, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik• Andre De Munter, Desk Officer, DG EXPO, European Parliament Moderation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wouter Zweers, Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute
12:15 – 14:00	BUFFET LUNCH AND COFFEE
12:15 – 14:00	WORKING LUNCH WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND EXPERTS FROM WESTERN BALKANS AND ASSOCIATED TRIO (UPON INVITATION ONLY)

14:00 – 15:15 Building a Stronger Europe through the Integration of Ukraine

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine created numerous challenges for Europe but also prompted the necessary discussions about the build-up of European defence capacities and joint budget, revision of the EU's approach to enlargement and neighbourhood policy or increased actionability of the Union through internal reform. While integration of Ukraine will be a difficult task for the EU, if done correctly, it will also significantly enhance the Union's role as a regional and global actor. What challenges will the EU have to overcome for a successful accession of Ukraine and how it can face them? What would be the impacts of Ukraine's membership on the Union in different areas? How does Ukraine's EU integration change the Union's role in its neighbourhoods?

Speakers:

- **Steven Blockmans**, Senior Research Fellow, CEPS
- **Maryna Yaroshevych**, European Integration Program Director, Ukrainian Prism
- **Mats Braun**, Director, IIR Prague
- **Tania Marocchi**, Director, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Moderation:

- **Laurynas Vaičiunas**, Chairman, Jan Nowak-Jezioranski College of Eastern Europe

14:00 – 15:15 Parallel working session: Why EU Enlargement Matters: Hidden Costs of Non-Enlargement (upon invitation only)

In the EU's capitals, the discussion about the future accession of more countries often revolves around the negative consequences of the previous enlargements and the risks future enlargements entail for the Union. However, the question of what Europe could look like without the EU accepting these risks is missing from the debates. What would a prolonged enlargement fatigue mean for the European continent and the EU? What other realistic options do candidates for EU membership have, should the process fail? What would be the economic, security and other costs of non-enlargement?

Kick-off speakers:

- **Jelena Dzankic** (EUI), **Isabelle Ioannides** (ELIAMEP), **Senada Selo Sabic** (IRMO), **Jovana Marovic** (BiEPAG)

Moderation:

- **Jana Juzová** (EUROPEUM)

15:15 – 15:45 Coffee break

15:45 – 17:00 Gradual Integration of the Western Balkans into the EU

In the discussion about the EU enlargement to South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, concerns exist regarding the Union's ability to integrate countries with weak economies, slowly consolidating democracies and the rule of law, and vulnerable to the influence of other global and regional actors. Think-tank community, EU institutions and Member States have put forward several proposals on how to approximate the candidates with the EU already in the pre-accession phase for their smoother accession. Are the existing instruments available to countries aspiring to membership sufficient for their adequate preparation for accession? What benefits and potential risks arise from the discussed proposals for gradual/phased/accelerated integration of the Western Balkans? And is a reform of the process enough to restore the credibility of the EU's enlargement policy?

Speakers:

- **Katalin Tünde Huber**, Head of Unit for EU Enlargement, Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, Austria
- **Ranka Miljenović**, Executive Director, European Policy Centre, Belgrade
- **Ardian Hackaj**, Research Director, Cooperation and Development Institute
- **Jana Juzová**, Senior Researcher, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Moderation:

- **Tomasz Żornaczuk**, Coordinator of Central European Program, PISM

15:45 – 17:00

Parallel working session: Closing the Pandora's Box – Dealing with Bilateral Disputes in the EU Accession Process (upon invitation only)

The agreement between Bulgaria and North Macedonia which allowed the latter to gradually start its EU accession negotiations also introduced the inclusion of bilateral and historical disputes into the process. In the region troubled by numerous unsolved bilateral issues, this sets a problematic precedence, potentially used by other EU Member States in the future to leverage their position on issues not related to the accession criteria. However, bilateral disputes and the use of veto in the enlargement process are not entirely new and in this regard, the EU can draw positive examples from the accession of CEE countries. What instruments does the EU have at its disposal to prevent the Bulgarian-Macedonian scenario in the future? Are there any examples of successful dealing with bilateral issues from the past? And can the discussed EU reform introduce new options in this regard?

Kick-off speakers:

- **Ivo Šlosarčík** (Charles University), **Zoran Nechev** (IDSCS), **Marcus Jorna** (DG NEAR, European Commission), **Engjellushe Morina** (ECFR)

Moderation:

- **Alejandro Esteso Pérez** (University of Graz)

17:00 – 17:15

Technical break

17:15 – 18:15

EU Enlargement as Part of the Strategic Agenda of the Next Commission

After a long period of stagnation, geopolitical necessity brought EU enlargement policy back to the top of the EU agenda. Granting the candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova created a positive momentum and revived the policy, viewed as the most effective instrument in promoting stability and democracy in Europe. To retain this momentum and ensure that the political attention towards candidate countries stays intact, it is crucial that EU leaders support enlargement as one of the priority topics of the next Strategic Agenda. What is the state of play regarding the adoption of the Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029? Can the support to EU enlargement remain high on the agenda also after the European elections? How can individual EU Presidencies further support EU candidates? And should there be any changes to the composition of European Commission departments or College portfolios?

Speakers:

- **Clotilde Warin**, Advisor for European Affairs, CAPS, Ministry for European and Foreign Affairs, France
- **Jean Louis De Brouwer**, Director of EU Programme, Egmont Institute
- **Simonida Kacarska**, Director, European Policy Institute
- **Jakob Štunf**, Head of EU Enlargement and Western Balkans Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Moderation:

- **Orsolya Ráczová**, Director for Policy and Programming, GLOBSEC

18:15 – 18:30

Closing remarks

Žiga Faktor, Deputy Director and Head of Brussels Office, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy



Main Partners



Co-funded by
the European Union



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

Institutional partners

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS PRAGUE

