ACCELERATED ACCESSION AND SAFEGUARDS FOR A RESILIENT EU

The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA), in cooperation with Carnegie Europe, will co-organise the sixth meeting of the **Expert Hub on EU Enlargement**.

Date: *Wednesday, 4 November*
Time: *10:00-12:00 (networking coffee as of 9:30)*
Location: *Carnegie Europe - Rue du Congrès 15, 1000 Bruxelles*

The meeting will be held under the Chatham House Rule

ABOUT THE EXPERT HUB ON EU ENLARGEMENT

The InvigoratEU Expert Hub gathers an exclusive group of distinguished EU and national policymakers and civil servants from the European Commission, EEAS, European Parliament, Council Secretariat, Permanent Representations and current/upcoming Presidencies of the Council of the EU, who work on EU enlargement and related issues.

It is created in the framework of the Horizon Europe project **InvigoratEU – "Invigorating Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy for A Resilient Europe"**, which sets out to explore how the EU can invigorate its enlargement and neighbourhood policy to enhance Europe's resilience.

Between 2024 to 2026, TEPSA has organised a series of five closed-door discussions to bring together Expert Hub members and researchers from the InvigoratEU project. These meetings provide a forum for a structured dialogue about key research findings and policy advice on EU enlargement. Selected members of the Expert Hub are invited to each meeting based on their specific expertise and its relevance to the topics discussed and can provide feedback and insights into the research process.

FORMAT AND LOGISTICS

The sixth Expert Hub meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 4 November 2026**. The event will start at **9:30** with a networking coffee, followed by a roundtable discussion from 10:00 to 12:00. The meeting is hosted at Carnegie Europe, located at Rue du Congrès 15, 1000 Brussels.

As a distinguished member of the Expert Hub on EU Enlargement, we believe your knowledge will greatly enrich the discussion and provide our experts with valuable input into their research. The meeting will take the form of a roundtable discussion, featuring concise and focused insights from our consortium's researchers, followed by an open group discussion. Such a format will allow for transparent exchanges to address long-standing challenges with fresh perspectives. We are looking for active and policy-oriented discussions based on evidence-based research. The meeting is strictly upon invitation and will take place under the Chatham House Rule.

CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES

The political timetable of the EU Enlargement and the institutional timetable of the EU have fallen out of sync. Ukraine's wartime accession bid has made the cost of delay more immediate, whereas the Western Balkans have spent years moving through a process in which progress can still be halted by an individual Member State. This has intensified debate over **how the accession can be accelerated without Treaty change**, **and whether Member States are willing to make effective use of the tools already available.** The meeting looks at the findings and policy recommendations of InvigoratEU and goes beyond them to engage with the current policy debate on enlargement reform without Treaty change.

The meeting is structured in two parts, corresponding to the two ends of this debate: **the pace at which countries can be brought in, and the safeguards that determine how the risks of accelerated accession are managed.**

In the first part of the meeting, **Prof Dr Giselle Bosse** (Full Professor and Jean Monnet Chair, Maastricht University and TEPSA Board Member) will examine how accession can be sped up within the current Treaties reflecting on InvigoratEU findings and presenting her proposal for a Council Loyalty Code grounded in the duty of sincere cooperation. During the second part of the discussion, **Prof Dr Funda Tekin** (Director, Institut für Europäische Politik and Scientific Lead of InvigoratEU) will draw on the project's findings and her extensive expertise to explore the emerging debate on safeguard clauses and transitional provisions in future accession treaties.

Richard Youngs (Senior Fellow, Carnegie Europe and TEPSA Board Member) will chair the meeting and act as a discussant throughout both parts, relating the two strands of discussion to the pathways identified through the InvigoratEU backcasting exercise for achieving the project's preferred vision of a resilient and enlarged Union in 2035.

Central to both parts of the discussion are the following two questions:

How can the EU accelerate and make accession more credible by limiting political blockages and giving candidate countries access to some EU benefits before membership? What safeguards could protect the EU's capacity to act without leaving new members with fewer rights or applying different standards across the Union?

The meeting will invite Expert Hub members to stress-test these proposals and bring their own read of the topic. The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- If qualified majority voting were introduced at intermediary stages of accession, where might political blockage reappear, and how could the EU prevent the veto power from simply moving elsewhere in the process?
- What would keep gradual integration on a clear path towards full membership?
- What conditions should activate and terminate safeguard clauses, and who should take those decisions?
- Which decisions need to be taken now to make a resilient and enlarged EU possible?