

Pivotal Moment for Europe:

Recommendations from CEE before Commissioner's Hearings

Recommendations for Commissioner-designate Marta Kos

Appointing a Commissioner to focus on enlargement from a country that is a strong supporter of the process is a solid step forward towards strengthening and moving the process along. Given the current geopolitical shifts and with enlargement being the most effective and powerful transformation tool at the Union's disposal, the work in the next politico-institutional cycle will be crucial. Therefore, the new Commissioner should prioritise (i) **building trust and ensuring credibility of the process**, (ii) **streamlining the accession process** and (iii) **avoid creating another institutional silo**.

The enlargement process has gained momentum, but this is not sufficient for a successful completion. It is imperative to **strengthen the credibility of the process and the trust** of governments and citizens in member states and candidate countries. **New communication strategy** is vital (internally and externally) to re-invigorate the trust of all concerned stakeholders. Moreover, the credibility of the enlargement process has suffered in the past, so the new Commissioner will have to **initiate and coordinate a clear action plan with promises met and requirements duly achieved**.

Part of strengthening the credibility of the process lays in the **streamlining of the accession process**.

This would require well-prepared proposal in leveraging the existing legal framework to **pivot towards using QMV in dealing with technical decisions**, as proposed by Slovene-German non-paper. Trusting the process internally will resonate positively in the candidate countries, motivating them for delivering on their part. Streamlining the process would also mean **institutionalising further gradual integration mechanisms**, welcomed by the Commission but also by the candidate countries. However, for their successful use, clear and achievable goals with tangible integration rewards will have to be developed.

While decoupling enlargement from neighbourhood policy is welcomed, the new Commissioner should be careful **not to create another institutional silo**. Instead, she should **interlink her work with the portfolios of other Commissioners** who will tackle parts towards internal reforms, foreign and security policy, and other horizontal sectors, such as the single market, climate and environment, green and digital transformation, budget, etc.