

- Committee: European Parliament - Committee on Foreign Affairs (EP-AFET)
- Delegate: Petra Temesfői
- Political Party: European People's Party Group

Agenda 1: Enlargement of the European Union—Yes, No, and How

Our country has been a part of the European Union for 30 years now. Since our 1995 accession, we have seen substantial growth both in economy and financial stability. Austria's real GDP has increased by 58%¹ since becoming an EU member state. This is one of the many examples that could serve as an incentive for other states to join our union. We believe that enlargement would provide mutual geopolitical and economic opportunities. Austria has been an intermediary during the Cold War between the East and West. Our historical neutrality should be taken as an example in order to strive towards a united and strong Europe.

The European People's Party has always worked to achieve a united and secure Europe. As the Austrian Representative of the EPP, we advocate for strategic and principled policies on the enlargement of the European Union. We believe that Western Balkan states such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia have a future in the EU; however, unity requires honesty and responsibility. Therefore, We are in favor of policies such as the Copenhagen criteria that ensure candidate states' commitment to the EU's principles and their readiness for EU membership. While we do recognize the flaws the current accession system inhabits and advocate for making valuable changes, moreover, there are beneficial policies that must be revised² in order to protect the interests of current beneficiary member states and ensure financial sustainability.

Our party champions proposals such as the application of the staged accession model³ that was developed by the European Policy Centre. However, before any radical change, such as the implementation of the new model, could take place, we must focus on solving our preexisting struggles to ensure an efficient future for the institution, where it will not collapse under the weight of over 30 member states. We hope to abolish unanimity and reform the composition of the European Commission to maintain and boost efficiency. Unanimity leaves

¹*Austria*. (n.d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/enlargement/30-years-together/austria_en

² Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik. (2025, August 7). *If the EU doesn't reform, enlargement will probably never take place (Interview – European Western Balkans)*. Österreichische Gesellschaft Für Europapolitik. <https://www.oegfe.at/stellungnahmen/if-the-eu-doesnt-reform-enlargement-will-probably-never-take-place-interview-european-western-balkans/>

³European Policy Centre. (2025, February 6). *The Initiative for a Staged accession to the EU - European Policy Centre*. <https://cep.org.rs/en/the-initiative-for-a-staged-accession-to-the-eu/>

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room for member states such as Hungary to selfishly veto any initiative under the guise of sovereignty; we must counteract this. Importantly, we have to address and reform policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy⁴ and the Cohesion Policy to ensure interests of current beneficiary member states will be protected and the economy will remain stable. Only with these internal reforms can we then effectively implement the staged accession model. This model addresses key challenges of enlargement by introducing a four-stage process that will provide positive momentum to the European project. The initiative would deliver more benefits to citizens and encourage numbers of political elites to pursue reforms.

Agenda 2: The Role of the European Union in the Governance of Antarctica

The Arctic has served three very important roles for the European Union. The Northern polar region is not only a place that allows us to promote a government based on peace and rules, rather than unilateralism, but it has also for countless years supported the climate of our continent, and it has also helped us make scientific discoveries that warn us about the future of global warming, among other changes. The same way we have considered the Arctic a vital aspect of our climate security and geopolitical strategy should also apply to the Antarctic.

As the European People's Party stands for a more coherent voice of our union, we believe that a topic as globally crucial as our influences on Antarctica should be discussed and initiatives should be pushed forward. The continent is important for all of us on this earth due to its direct impacts on our daily life through its role in climate and marine ecosystems, ultimately affecting seemingly unrelated things such as our tourism, which makes up 10% of the EU's GDP and offers around 23 million jobs⁵. Our country, among many other European ones, is involved in Antarctic climate and glaciology research, which is very important, since the melting of the ice sheet would directly affect our alpine glaciers and water sources, therefore agriculture too. The Antarctic ice sheet contains enough ice to raise global sea levels by approximately 58 meters, according to NASA research⁶. Programs such as Horizon Europe are the ones that are helping us move forward in the pursuit of knowledge. The European Union

⁴ *Common agricultural policy*. (2025, November 20). Agriculture and Rural Development.
https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en

⁵ *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Research (EIR)*. (n.d.). WTTC. <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>

⁶ *How Ice-Shelf loss drives sea level rise*. (2025b, April 15). *NASA Sea Level Change Portal*.
<https://sealevel.nasa.gov/news/266/how-ice-shelf-loss-drives-sea-level-rise/>

Position Paper
Austrian Member of the European
Parliament



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has invested over 215 million euros in Antarctic projects; this shows steady commitment, a commitment that we plan to uphold.

We advocate for an EU Antarctic Doctrine that would recognize the Antarctic as a global common dedicated to science and peace. Science, protection, and governance are the three core elements that the theory would build upon. The doctrine would outline our long ongoing commitment and wishes to uphold treaties regarding the region. In line with the statements of Austria's foreign minister, Alexander Schallenberg made about the Balkans, we should not let the growing competition turn Antarctica into a chessboard for political struggles either.

We wish to create unanimity inside the European Union to achieve a unified European voice in the Antarctic Treaty System, which would help us strengthen our role in initiatives surrounding the region. This is crucial for strategic sovereignty; a union divided by conflicts leaves room for weakness that prevents us from countering strategies of other major powers. We advocate for sustainable initiatives and research programs that would help us maintain Antarctica as we know it.