

West Coast Model European Union 2027

Communication from the Presidency – Negotiation Topics

Prime Ministers/Heads of Government

1. EU Associate Membership – Establishment of an Intermediate Membership Status

Proposed: The European Union will establish a formal Associate Membership status as an intermediate level separate from candidate status and full EU membership. Associate Membership would provide qualifying states with substantially greater political, economic, and institutional integration into the Union while reserving full voting rights and certain other privileges for full EU members.

Countries granted Associate Membership would receive phased access to the Single Market, EU programs and funding, and selected elements of EU common policies. Associate members would be permitted to participate in relevant Council meetings and other EU institutions in a consultative capacity but would not possess voting rights, representation in the European Commission, European Parliament, or the full institutional privileges of EU membership. Participation in individual policy areas would be conditional on compliance with the corresponding portions of the EU acquis and applicable EU regulatory and judicial requirements.

Associate Membership would be merit-based and reversible, with continued participation dependent upon adherence to democratic governance, rule-of-law standards, fundamental rights, and agreed foreign-policy commitments. Associate status could serve either as a transitional stage toward full accession or as a durable alternative relationship for European countries that seek extensive integration with the EU but are unable or unwilling to pursue full membership. Policy guidance is needed regarding whether Associate members would be able to pursue full membership directly, or must pass through Candidate status separately, as well as whether non-European countries may apply, whether countries must spend a defined amount of time as Associate Members before changing status, and other sub-topics as determined in negotiation.

We propose a budget of €500 million annually for 2028–2034 for institutional integration, technical assistance, regulatory alignment, and administrative capacity-building for participating Associate Members. Associate Members will also make negotiated contributions to the EU budget based upon their level of participation in EU programs and the Single Market.

2. European Sovereign Technology Fund

Proposed: The European Union will establish a European Sovereign Technology Fund to increase European technological independence and develop globally competitive firms in strategically important industries. Europe possesses substantial scientific and engineering capabilities but has often struggled to convert research and early-stage innovation into large-scale European companies, while becoming increasingly dependent on non-European suppliers for critical technologies. The Fund will provide investment and financing for European companies and cross-border projects in strategic sectors

including artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum computing, advanced robotics, biotechnology, advanced materials, cloud and computing infrastructure, and other technologies designated by the European Commission as critical to European economic security.

Funding will prioritize projects capable of developing or manufacturing strategic technologies within the European Union. Investments may take the form of grants, loan guarantees, co-investment with private capital, or direct equity investment. Recipient companies accepting substantial Fund investment must maintain their principal strategic operations and resulting intellectual property within the European Union for a minimum period established by the Commission. The Fund will also be authorized to match significant investment incentives offered by non-EU governments when strategically important European companies are considering locating major research or manufacturing facilities outside the Union. We propose a budget of €20 billion annually for 2028–2034, with the objective of leveraging at least an additional €40 billion annually in private and member-state investment. As an entirely new program, this proposal will require a commensurate increase in EU annual contributions by all members.

Sector Ministers

1. EU Decision-Making Reform Before Further Enlargement

Proposed: The European Union will undertake institutional reforms intended to preserve effective decision-making before admitting additional member states. An enlarged Union of more than 30 countries would increase the political, economic, and geographic reach of the EU, but could also make agreement increasingly difficult in policy areas where each member state retains a veto. The Union will therefore expand qualified-majority voting to selected areas currently requiring unanimity, while establishing additional safeguards protecting vital national interests and the influence of smaller member states.

Qualified-majority voting will replace unanimity for most decisions concerning Common Foreign and Security Policy, including sanctions and common diplomatic positions, and for intermediate decisions within the EU enlargement process. Final approval of a new member state's accession treaty, treaty amendments, decisions concerning EU Own Resources, and the Multiannual Financial Framework will continue to require unanimous approval.

These reforms should be substantially agreed and implemented before further progress towards accession of additional member states, ensuring that enlargement strengthens the Union without significantly reducing its capacity to reach and implement collective decisions. We propose a budget with no significant new program expenditure. €100 million total for 2028–2030 will be authorized for institutional transition, administrative systems, and implementation of revised Council decision-making procedures.

2. EU Professional Qualifications Framework

Proposed: The European Union will establish a strengthened EU Professional Qualifications Framework providing automatic mutual recognition of professional qualifications in designated high-demand occupations throughout the Single Market. Although EU citizens possess broad rights to live and work throughout the Union, differing national licensing and qualification requirements continue to restrict

professional mobility and make it difficult for workers to respond to labor shortages across member states.

The Commission will establish common minimum education, training, competency, and certification requirements for designated professions experiencing significant EU-wide shortages. Initial eligible professions will include engineers, physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals, teachers, information-technology professionals, and selected skilled technical trades. A professional meeting the common EU standard and licensed to practice in one member state will be entitled to practice in all member states without completing duplicative professional training or examinations. Language skill level requirements will be wholly eliminated as a major source of functional barriers to employment.

Qualifications will be digitally verifiable throughout the Union, and recognition decisions for professions not covered by automatic recognition must normally be completed within 60 days. The Commission will review labor-market conditions every three years and may propose additional professions for inclusion in the automatic-recognition system. We propose a budget of €250 million annually for 2028–2034 to establish common qualification standards, digital credential infrastructure, national implementation assistance, and EU-level coordination.