

Non Paper

Nordic Trade Unions perspective on EU Enlargement

In the current geopolitical climate EU enlargement has gained a renewed momentum.

As Nordic Trade Unions we acknowledge the geopolitical necessity to enlarge the EU.

A larger Union can help secure stability, foster growth and support competitiveness while protecting and expanding European democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.

According to the European Commission's Enlargement Package most candidate countries still lack efficient social partnership, stable labour market institutions and in general, work and living conditions are still not at an EU-27 standard.

EU enlargement has geopolitical benefits, but it also comes with potential risks that must be addressed.

Previous rounds of enlargement have shown that, without adequate safeguards, the differences in working and living standards may lead to unintended consequences such as social dumping, brain drain and growing inequalities between workers across the Union.

To ensure that a larger EU is also a strong and socially fair Union, Nordic Trade Unions calls for future Member States to

- Safeguard and ensure that stable institutions for upholding the rule of law and social rights are in place
- Respect trade union rights, such as the right to organise, bargain collectively and strike.

And EU and its Member States to

- Adopt a mobility package addressing the challenges for securing equal treatment of mobile workers, including third country nationals
- Ensure accession process remains merit-based, upholds the Copenhagen criteria, and does not grant shortcuts due to geopolitical considerations
- Ensure that the accession process actively support the formation and strengthening of labour market institutions, social dialogue, collective bargaining and equal treatment
- Prepare to integrate new Member States into already existing programs and advisory set-ups like the Social Dialogue Committee.

We must ensure that enlargement do not lead to the erosion of workers' rights or undermine the European social model. A model built on fair wages, social protection, equality, collective bargaining, democracy and the rule of law. Therefor we must all work together for a strong European Union built on a solid social foundation, equality, the right to collective bargaining and with full respect of social rights as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU Treaties.