



EU ministers' discussion at the informal ministerial in Stockholm

21-22 June 2023

Getting ready for the future – a discussion on policy orientation in view of a future enlargement

Dear colleagues,

In the last few years, the European Union has had to deal with one crisis after another – the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, rising energy costs, and a surge in inflation. Dealing with these crises has been a monumental challenge for the Union.

Still, the EU and the Member States have stood the test, utilising both EU instruments and the “Team Europe” spirit. The joint vaccine procurement and much of our effort to support Ukraine offer notable examples of the latter.

These experiences are a useful starting point for a discussion on how we can become even better equipped to deal with future challenges. Because in the coming years, the EU will have to adapt to a new geopolitical reality.

In a world of great power rivalry, we need to boost the competitiveness of our economies. We need to continue the green and energy transition. And we need to strengthen our security, a task that includes future EU enlargement.

To prepare the ground for a discussion on how we can tackle these issues, the Swedish Presidency has organised informal exchanges of views in Coreper. Recently, some of us also had a chance to touch upon this subject during an informal dinner hosted by our French and German colleagues.

For me, it is important that we continue this discussion in the same spirit as we have dealt with recent crises – together. I also believe that we must focus on the changes deemed strictly necessary for our Union to function effectively. That means identifying the must-haves, rather than the nice-to-haves, bearing in mind that even minor reforms will face obstacles.

While it is up to our leaders to decide on the direction and the format, I would like us to have a political discussion to provide policy orientation at the upcoming informal GAC. In particular, we will focus on the Union's general policy objectives, budgetary and financial issues, and the institutional set-up.

Importantly, to have a fruitful discussion on substance, the starting point should not be the issue of treaty reforms. Since initiating such a process at this point would be both divisive and cumbersome, it should be embarked upon only with a broadly shared view of what we need to change.

On June 22, I foresee an open discussion where we are divided into three smaller groups. At the working dinner on June 21, I have invited two distinguished guests to share their views and experiences: Nathalie Tocci and Alexander Stubb. I am very happy that both of them have been kind enough to accept my invitation.

In addition to the food for thought offered by our guest speakers, I suggest the following themes to guide the discussion:

- Focusing on the policy areas which are likely to be affected most by enlargement, are there specific changes that are necessary to meet our future challenges?
- Looking ten years ahead, what are the necessary implications for the distribution of the budget to make it fit to deal with our most important future challenges?
- Without entering into a debate on treaty change, are there institutional changes that must be undertaken for the Union to function and take decisions in an efficient way in a new geopolitical environment?

I hope our discussion will provide a valuable opportunity to gather and share our thoughts and ideas on this crucial topic. I very much look forward to welcoming you all to Stockholm on June 21.

Yours faithfully,



Jessika Roswall
Minister for EU Affairs