



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The European Union has been constantly expanding over the last few decades. From a group of six countries who set up the European Coal and Steel Community sixty years ago there has now grown a union of 27 nations. The European Union's most significant enlargement took place in 2004, with the simultaneous accession of ten new countries. The most recent members, Bulgaria and Romania, joined in 2007.

The assimilation of more countries, particularly from the former Yugoslavia, is a project for Europe's future which deserves our support. Croatia was the first country from this region to gain official candidate status back in 2004, but its entry was put on ice because Slovenia used its veto to block the opening of the final eleven negotiating chapters in 2009, due to unresolved border issues. A resolution to this conflict now seems to be in sight, and Croatia could soon take up their membership of the EU.

Last October the EU Foreign Ministers announced the next phase of the enlargement process. They unanimously assigned the EU Commission to respond to Serbia's application for EU membership. If the Commission's assessment is positive, then entry negotiations can begin. Serbia made this step possible last September, when Belgrade declared itself ready to hold talks with the government in Priština and announced that it would not seek new UN negotiations on the status of Kosovo. However, there are concerns about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina: tensions between the three ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats – have so far frustrated any significant progress in the reform process. Fifteen years on from the Dayton Agreement, EU membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina still remains a distant dream.

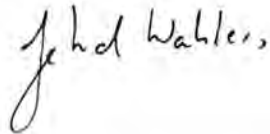
The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has maintained a presence in the countries of the former Yugoslavia since 1997. Resident representatives are engaged in cultivating political measures to help the countries' progress towards stability, democracy, and closer ties with the EU. Alongside its country programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the Foundation runs two complementary regional programs: the Rule of Law Program and the Media Program South East Europe. We specifically support the countries of the region in their journey towards EU membership. We are also accompanying the reform process in the new member states of Bulgaria and Romania, a process which has not made as much progress as hoped.

These latest developments have resulted in a climate of increased skepticism towards the enlargement process among the citizens and politicians of many EU member states. They feel they want to have their say, as is evidenced by the Treaty of Lisbon. This Treaty increased the influence of national parliaments on the decision process and extended their right of veto. This may have an effect on membership procedures in the future. Nevertheless, it should be welcomed, as it is a gain for democracy and fits in with the Christian-democrat idea of subsidiarity. It is now a matter of more effectively selling the integration process to the EU's citizens. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is involved in this effort both at home and abroad.

In the countries of South East Europe who are aspiring to EU membership, there is a need for greater peace and security, freedom and democracy, the rule of law and a social market economy. Particular attention needs to be paid to the areas of the rule of law, crime, a functioning judiciary and, for the West Balkan states, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former

Yugoslavia. These countries must decide of their own volition to follow this path in a resolute and determined way.

Recent experiences of the enlargement process have shown us that entry criteria need to be fulfilled before becoming a member. The next steps in the expansion of the EU will depend on the speed and effectiveness of ongoing reforms in the countries of South East Europe. Historically, these countries are part of Europe. The prospect of EU accession is key to their further development, but they will not achieve it unless they themselves dedicate their efforts to making significant and wide-ranging reforms.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary-General