

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

deadline: 30 March 2026

ACADEMIC COORDINATOR: FRANK SCHIMMELFENNIG

INVIGORATEU ACADEMY
★ ON EU ENLARGEMENT

**COMPLETING
THE EUROPEAN
PROJECT**



trans-
european
policy
studies
association



Funded by
the European Union

HEADLINES

WHO?



Young professionals, MA and PhD students

WHAT?



A 4-day academy to deepen your understanding of EU enlargement policies in the current geopolitical context

WHEN?



1 - 4 June 2026

WHERE?



Brussels, Belgium; join us in the EU's capital!

WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY?



Gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within EU enlargement policy



Gain first-hand insights into the intricacies of EU policymaking



Develop practical skills in policy analysis and effective argumentation through interactive sessions



Connect with high-level professionals, peers, and policymakers, creating valuable relationships that can support your career development

BACKGROUND

Enlargement has long served as one of the European Union's most powerful tools for ensuring stability, prosperity, and democratic values beyond its borders, as well as within. Today, however, confronted with fundamental geopolitical shocks, the EU's resilience and the adaptability of its enlargement and neighbourhood policies are increasingly tested.

With the renewed momentum for enlargement since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, for the first time in over a decade, **the prospect of a bigger Union is within reach**. The advances made by the frontrunner candidates (Montenegro, Albania, Moldova and Ukraine) are now framed around tangible target-year goals. Enlargement now raises questions that go beyond **"are candidates ready?"** to also include **"is the EU ready?"**.

While these recent developments have demonstrated the EU's capacity to adapt, they have also exposed limitations in traditional mechanisms for regional engagement and fostering integration and stability through enlargement. This is especially evident in light of Russia's relentless destabilising actions in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood and in the widening gap in some candidate countries between people demanding a European future and uncooperative governments that centralise power and test the EU's red lines.

To discuss these changes and reflect on the necessary policy adjustments needed to make the EU enlargement a success, we invite you to apply and join us in Brussels!

WHO CAN APPLY



Young professionals including **young diplomats, early-stage researchers, think tankers, CSO representatives, junior civil servants**



MA and PhD students



From the EU, (potential) candidate countries and beyond, with an interest in EU enlargement.

FORMAT

Full participation in all elements of the programme is compulsory. You will receive a certificate of attendance on the final day.

Over the course of four days, participants will engage in expert lectures, meetings with practitioners, and visits to EU institutions.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Participation in the InvigoratEU Academy is **free of charge**. However, the selected applicants are required to pay a **€100 deposit to secure their seat, which will be fully refunded upon participation**. In case of non-participation, the deposit will not be refunded.

Participants in the InvigoratEU Academy will receive a reimbursement for their travel and accommodation costs up to € 750 upon presentation of the original receipts and tickets. They will also receive a **€ 15 per diem** for each day when lunch is not provided.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please send the following documents in a single PDF file to **Ilaria Giustacchini (ilaria.giustacchini@tepsa.eu)** with subject line 'Your Surname – Participant Application InvigoratEU Academy 2026' by **30 March, midnight**:



A brief CV (1-2 pages);



A motivation letter (1 page) explaining your interest in participating in the InvigoratEU Academy and how it will contribute to your work on EU enlargement.

Don't miss this chance to shape the future of EU enlargement policy. Apply now and join us in Brussels for an unforgettable experience!

Apply Now

About InvigoratEU



How can the EU invigorate its enlargement and neighbourhood policy to enhance Europe's resilience?

Funded by Horizon Europe and led by the University of Duisburg-Essen and the Institut für Europäische Politik, InvigoratEU is on a mission to redefine how the EU engages with its Eastern neighbours and the Western Balkans. Through cutting-edge research and actionable policy recommendations, we're crafting a resilient Europe ready to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Our mission is to analyse EU enlargement strategies; leverage forward-thinking research to anticipate and address future challenges; and make an impact by providing operational recommendations for policymakers that will drive real-world change.



[Learn more on
our website!](#)

About TEPSA



The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) was established in 1974 as the first transnational research network in the field of EU affairs. It comprises leading research institutes throughout Europe, with an office in Brussels. Its aim is to provide high-quality research on European integration to stimulate discussion on policies and political options for Europe.

This is achieved by the interaction between the European and national institutions as well as the academic and research community. TEPSA is active on a wide range of research topics, focusing on differentiated integration, the EU's external relations, democratic participation and citizens' engagement.