

EESC Initiative to Integrate EU Candidate Countries



► What is the “Enlargement Candidate Members (ECMs)” initiative about?

In his political Manifesto, the **EESC President Oliver Röpke** committed to opening the doors of the EESC to the candidate countries. In September 2023, the **EESC took a landmark decision** to involve representatives from the EU candidate countries' civil society in its advisory work. The representatives, called “**Enlargement Candidate Members (ECMs)**”, were selected in February 2024 and will now work alongside the EESC Members on key EU policies throughout the year. The aim of the ECM initiative is to **foster closer ties** with candidate countries and **facilitate their gradual integration into the European Union**.

► Who are the ECMs?

The ECMs represent the civil society of EU candidate countries, including: employers, trade unionists and representatives of civil society organisations at large. Out of 567 applications received, 131 were added to the pool of ECMs.



► How will the ECM work with the EESC?

The Enlargement Candidate Members will:

- ✓ participate in the entire drafting process of selected EESC opinions
- ✓ participate in study groups and section meetings
- ✓ participate in selected EESC Plenary meetings

► What are the next steps?

April/May 2024	Start of ECMs work on selected opinions
September 2024	EESC Plenary on enlargement
December 2024	Assessment of the project

www.eesc.europa.eu