

EU Enlargement Forum

Programme

December 1 2025, Prague



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Monday, December 1

VENUE

European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic

14:30-14:45

Welcoming remarks

14:45-16:00

Public event: The 2004 Playbook: Lessons for the Next Enlargement (in cooperation with the DG ENEST)

More than twenty years after the EU's historic "Big Bang" enlargement, the 2004 experience and the integration of ten member states offer a valuable perspective for understanding the challenges of future enlargement. At that moment in history, a shared vision, clear conditionality, and credible membership prospects created unprecedented momentum for reform and integration. Today, geopolitical urgency collides with a more fragmented EU, growing scepticism, and the lingering effects of unfinished transitions.

Which strategies helped countries like Czechia communicate the long-term benefits of accession, and which obstacles proved harder to overcome than expected? Which fears surrounding 2004 were unfounded, and which persist today? What lessons can inspire new tools and approaches to ensure that the next enlargement strengthens unity, fosters reform, and avoids deepening divisions within Europe?

Speakers:

- **Eli Gateva**, Lecturer, University of Oxford (confirmed)
- **Monika Ladmanová**, Head, European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic
- **Pavel Telička**, Chief negotiator for the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union
- **Harry Tzimitras**, Director, Peace Research Institute Oslo - PRIO Cyprus Centre

Moderator: Liljana Cvetanoska, Deputy Director & Head of Research, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Monday, December 1

16:05-17:05

Public event: Women in the EU Accession Process: Then and Now (in cooperation with Association for International Affairs – AMO)

During the 2004 enlargement, gender equality, women's participation in decision-making, and workplace non-discrimination were under scrutiny in accession countries such as Czechia. The struggle for gender equality and inclusive participation encountered deeply rooted socio-cultural barriers and conservative traditions, be it the heritage of the totalitarian system or entrenched patriarchal societal roles. While the accession process drove the new members to implement real improvements, some were rather 'surface level' formal and institutional changes, with the practical implementation lacking. Such barriers persist today, and without binding gender-related conditions, clear benchmarks, and consistent monitoring, progress is likely to stall.

This raises a key question for future accession processes: how do we move beyond 'compliance on paper' to genuine practical transformation that includes not only civil society, but all relevant stakeholders?

Speakers:

- **Iliriana Gjoni, Research Fellow**, Carnegie Europe
- **Marija Risteska**, Founder and Executive Directress, Center for Research and Policy Making, North Macedonia
- **Iwona Reichardt**, Deputy Editor and Lead Translator for New Eastern Europe

Moderator: Vendula Kazlauskas, Analyst, Association for International Affairs

Monday, December 1

17:05-17:55	Transport to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Vlašská 19, Malá Strana, Prague 1
VENUE	European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic
17:30 – 17:55	Registration
18:00-18:10	Welcoming remarks Representative of the German Embassy
18:10-19:15	Panel Discussion: Reconciliation through European Integration – Perspectives on the Past and the Future European integration has historically served as a driver of reconciliation in regions marked by various tensions and conflicts. In both the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries, the legacies of past conflicts, contested histories and deep-rooted mistrust continue to shape relations between communities. Reconciliation is, therefore, crucial for building lasting peace, and for promoting democratic governance, regional stability, and societal resilience. This session will look back at the experience of Germany and Slovenia and their strategies for dealing with bilateral conflicts during the accession process. It will examine possibilities for rebuilding trust between communities by addressing unresolved historical concerns, and by exploring the types of projects that can effectively support bilateral and multilateral rapprochement, promote regional cooperation and strengthen societal resilience. The discussion will also consider who the drivers of these reconciliation efforts should be, and how best practices from previous experiences can be adapted to ensure that current and potential candidate countries take the lead in shaping and owning reconciliation processes. Speakers: • Aleš Balut, Ambassador of Slovenia in the Czech Republic • Donika Emini, Director, CiviKos Platform • Andrea Gawrich, Professor of Political Science and International Integration, Justus Liebig University Giessen • Edita Hrdá, Special Envoy for the Balkans, MFA, negotiator of the Czech-German Declaration in 1997 Moderator: Martin Vokálek, Executive Director, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy
19:20-21:00	Reception

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