

► Road map to Europe: The Stabilisation and Association Process

For the first time, the Stabilisation and Association Process offers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia a prospect of EU integration, based on a progressive approach adapted to the situation of each country. This prospect is a historic turning point in the relations between the five countries and the European Union.

The Stabilisation and Association Process offers major incentives to these five countries, but also sets political and economic conditions. The need for regional co-operation is stressed particularly strongly.

In order to develop a closer relationship with the EU, these countries will have to gear their political, economic and institutional development to the values and models underpinning the European Union: democracy, respect for human rights and a market economy. The European Union will support and assist them in introducing the reforms necessary to progress in these areas.

So far the EU has opened negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and with Croatia. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia may also be invited, in the future, to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, provided that all the political and economic conditions will be met.

* Once it becomes democratic

The Stabilisation and Association Process in short

What is it?

- A tailor-made, progressive approach that takes into account the individual situation of each country. Some countries can progress faster than others.

What is in it?

The Stabilisation and Association process will include, as appropriate:

- Stabilisation and Association Agreements: a new kind of contractual relationship offered by the EU—in return for compliance with the relevant conditions—to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This represents a new dimension in the relations with these five countries, offering for the first time a clear prospect of integration into the EU's structures;
- asymmetric trade liberalisation;
- economic and financial assistance, budgetary assistance and balance of payment support;
- assistance for democratisation and civil society;
- humanitarian aid for refugees, returnees and other persons of concern;
- co-operation in justice and home affairs;
- development of a political dialogue.

What is the ultimate goal?

Bring peace, stability and economic development to the region and open the perspective of integration in the EU.

