



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Jean Monnet  
Center of Excellence  
University of Florida

## 4.2. EU Enlargement as a Tool for Democratization

---

Guest Lecture: Dr. Amie Kreppel

Online presentation for students within the Project “Learning and living EU”  
Center for European Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32601

November 8th, 2022

# EU ENLARGEMENT AS A TOOL OF DEMOCRATIZATION

**EUS 4932**

EU in Practice:  
*EU Enlargement*

# OUTLINE

- Motivations for enlargement
- Democratic Peace Theory
- (Re)thinking past enlargements
- Enlargement in East Central Europe
- Evolution of conditionality & conditionality in context
- Thinking about future enlargement
- Discussion

# MOTIVATIONS FOR ENLARGEMENT

## Economic

- Expansion of market (exports and imports)
- Investment resources (FDI)
- Outsourcing opportunities (inexpensive labor)

## Political

- Increased international weight (counter weight to 'super powers')
- Shifting regional role/relevance (ECE and Turkey)
- Demonstration of support (Ukraine)

## Security

- Stabilize precarious states (Greece, Spain)
- Increase security capacity (EFTA)
- Promote democratization – democratic peace theory (esp. ECE)

# DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY

*Democratic peace is a theory that **democratic states rarely if ever go to war with one another**. The empirical findings convey that Democracy-Democracy dyads have low probability of war with each other.*

## Constraints of democracy

- Electoral constraint (public support for war)
- Media constraint (costs of war visible to the public)
- Economic constraint (wars are expensive)

## Incentives of democracy

- Open societies can benefit from mutual exchange (trade)
- Alliance structures are more reliable in democratic systems
- Enhanced international stature and role benefits democratic leaders

# (RE)THINKING PAST ENLARGEMENTS

## CHALLENGES, GOALS AND BENEFITS

### First Enlargement(1973) & EFTA (1995)

- No security concerns – increased strategic capacity
- Established free market democracies
- Benefits: strategic significance and economic growth

### Mediterranean (1987)

- History of authoritarianism and weak democratic institutions
- Concerns about political instability
- Poorer countries with weaker economies (but free market based)
- Benefits: promote democracy and potential economic growth

### East Central Europe (2004, 2007 & 2013)

- History of Communism and weak democratic legacy/institutions
- Centralized economies, massive restructuring required
- Benefits: stability, democratic buffer and potential economic growth

### Cyprus (2004)

- Greece-Turkey frozen conflict
- Failed mitigation

1973



1<sup>ST</sup>  
ENLARGEMENT

1986

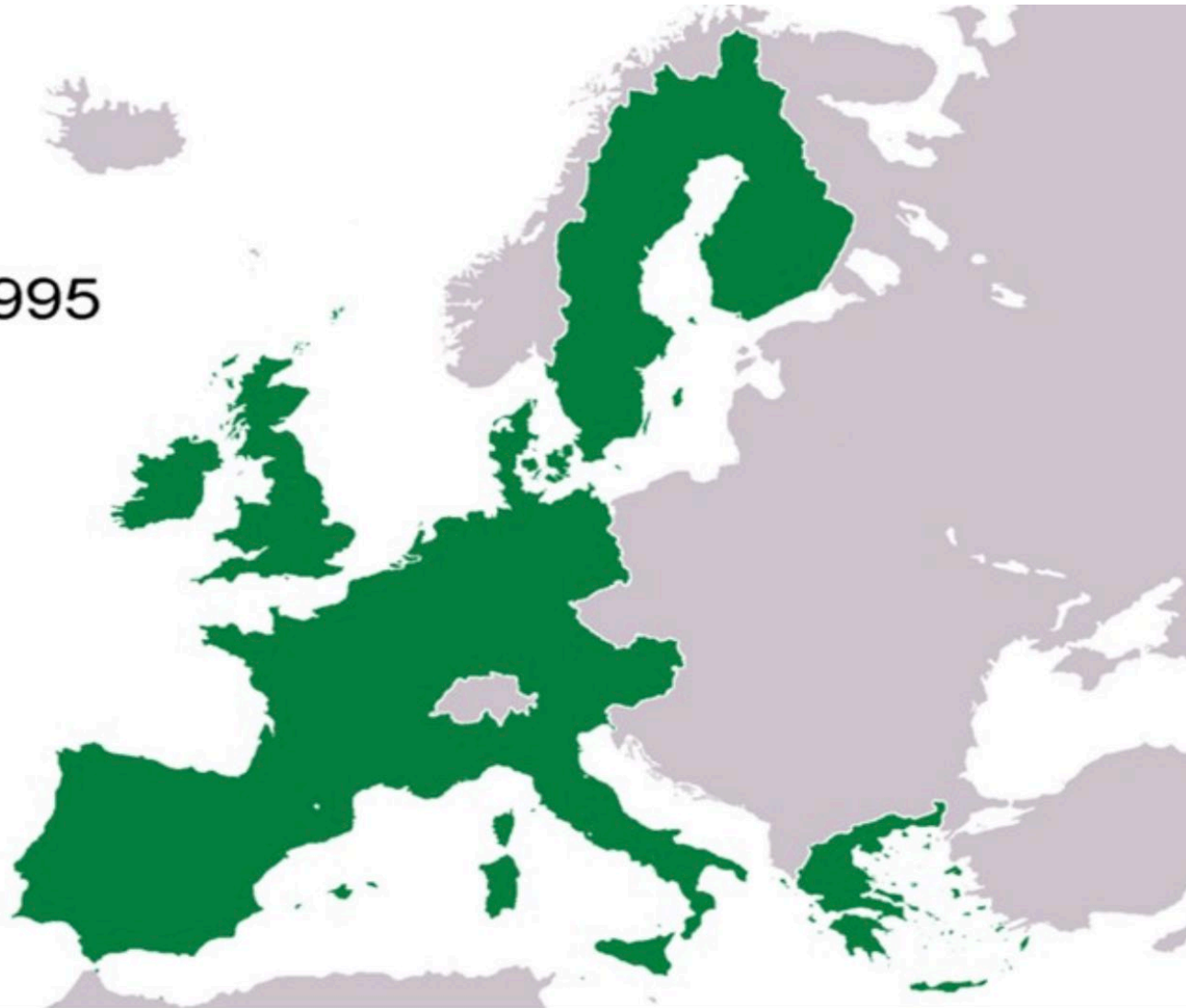
MEDI-  
TERRANEAN  
COUNTRIES



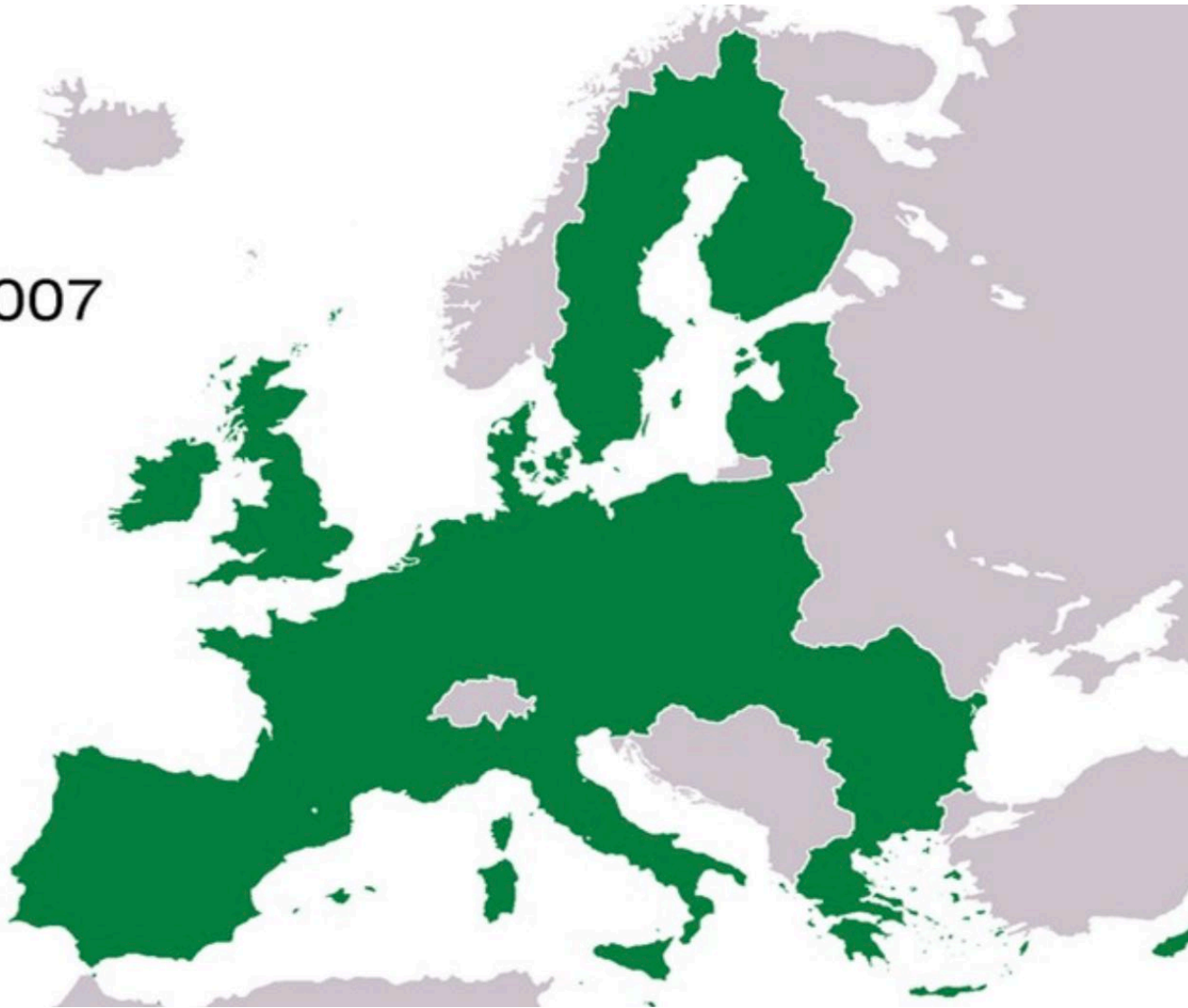


1995

EFTA  
COUNTRIES



2007



**EAST  
CENTRAL  
EUROPE**  
(EXCEPT CROATIA)

# EVOLUTIONAL OF CONDITIONALITY IN THE EU

## Original Criteria

- European identity (1958)

## Initial Constraints

- Representative democracy & human rights (1978)
  - Directed at Greece, Portugal and Spain
  - First effort to use enlargement conditionality (democratization)

## Facing the Big Bang

- Copenhagen criteria
  - Institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights
  - Accepts the obligations and intent of the European Union
  - A functioning market economy (post Communist countries)

## Reverse Conditionality

- EU Absorption capacity
- Enlargement fatigue (political capacity)

## Copenhagen criteria

- To join the EU a country must meet the Copenhagen criteria, defined at the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. These require:
  - a stable democracy that respects human rights and the rule of law
  - a functioning market economy capable of competition within the EU
  - the acceptance of the obligations of membership, including EU law



# CONDITIONALITY IN CONTEXT

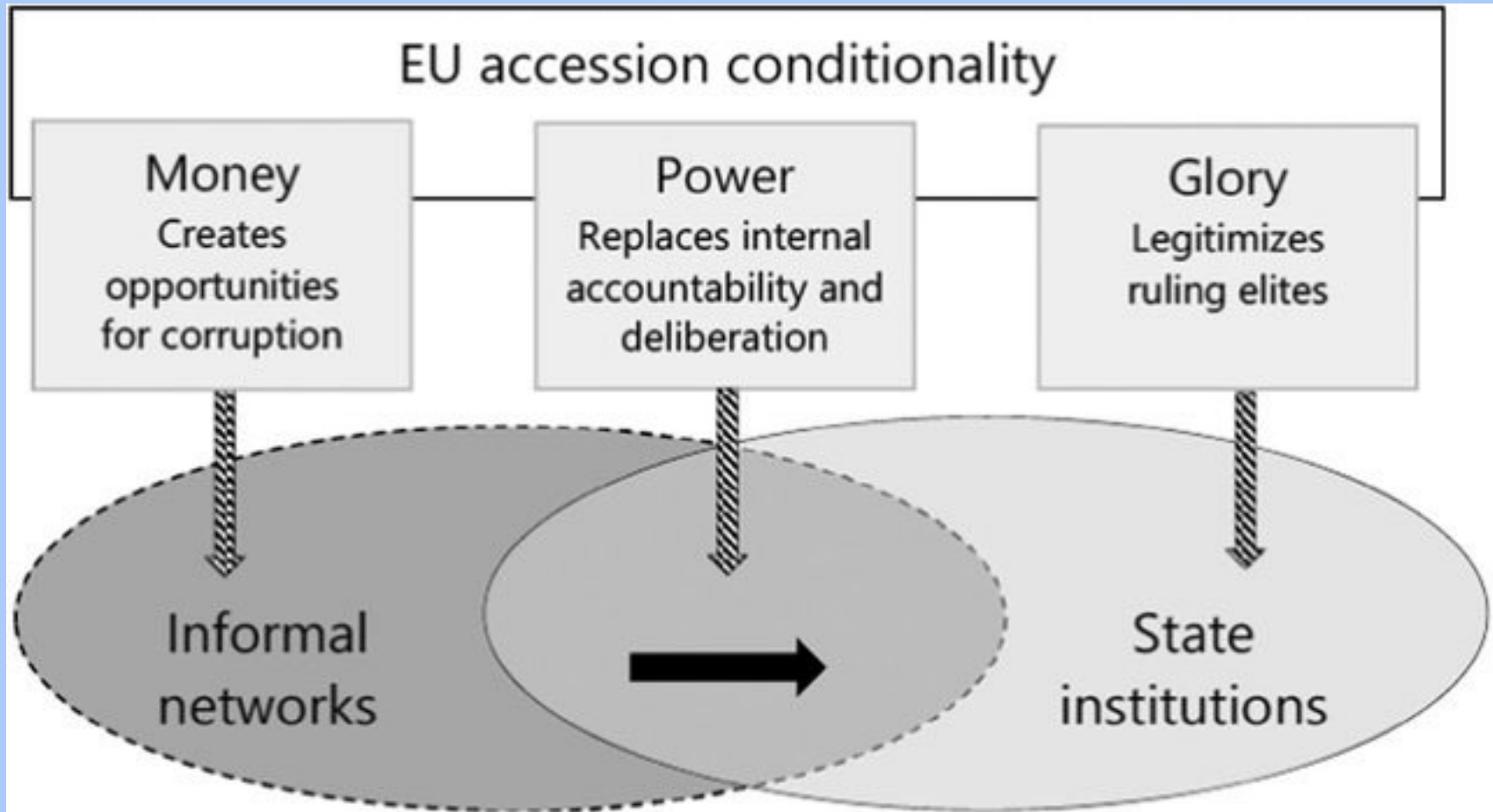
## Why Conditionality?

- Promote durable institutional reform
- Establish strong baseline for rule of law practices
- Incentivize unpopular domestic reforms
  - Political & economic
- Ensure compliance with EU law (*acquis*)
- Minimize costs of enlargement to current member states

## Effectiveness of Conditionality

- Variation across waves (democratic stability vs backsliding)
- Moral hazard concerns caused by backsliding in “old” member states
- Few tools to force continued compliance *after* accession (Art. 7)
- Goodness of fit & EU capacity questions when looking toward future

# CONCERNS ABOUT IMPACT OF CONDITIONALITY



Source: "[Money, power, glory: the linkages between EU conditionality and state capture in the Western Balkans](#)" 2019  
by Natasha Wunsch



# THINKING ABOUT FUTURE ENLARGEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

## Balkans

- Variation between states (Montenegro vs Serbia, Kosovo & others)
- Frozen conflicts – accession might stabilize/democratize (might not)

## Ukraine

- EU customs union agreement (2014) – one source of tensions w/Russia – what membership cause?
- Candidacy granted as a political statement, not because of readiness

## Turkey (?)

- Current non-democratic regime
- Part of customs union, but weak economic performance (& large)

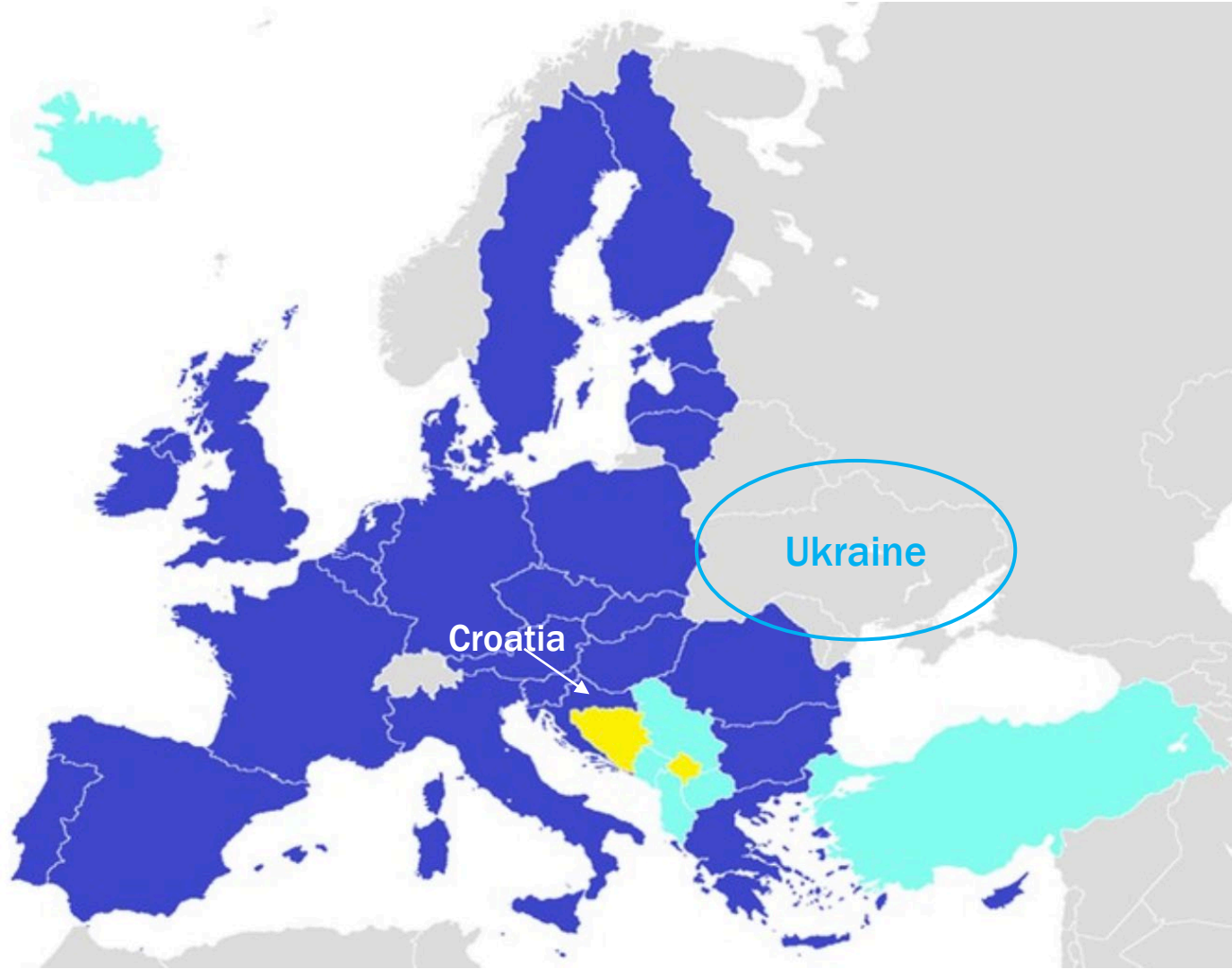
## Others (?)

- Iceland – if they want to unfreeze (relatively easy)
- Norway – maybe 3<sup>rd</sup> time is the charm? (relatively easy)



## BALKAN ENLARGEMENT





**CROATIA  
(2013)  
& FUTURE  
CANDIDATES**

# ENLARGEMENT AREA WITH BALKAN REGION



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How have the **motivations** for enlargement changed over time?
  - What is the balance between economic and political motivations?
  - Which goal/motivation makes more sense for the EU? Why?
- Is conditionality a **level playing field**?
  - What about current member states that do not meet the criteria?
- Is conditionality an **effective** tool to promote change?
- Is enlargement an **effective** tool of democracy promotion?
- Should the EU enlarge further?