

On May 1, 2004, the EU underwent its largest expansion, adding ten countries: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Cyprus. This increased the EU's population to 455 million people



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Since the enlargement, 26 million jobs have been created across the EU, with 6 million in the 2004 entrant countries. This contributed significantly to the economic stability of the region

Trade between older and newer EU members flourished, with countries like Spain doubling their exports to new member states. Italian exports to these countries increased by 77%



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**Agricultural output in the new member states
tripled in value, reaching over €68 billion,
enriching the EU's agricultural diversity and food
security**



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The EU invested heavily in infrastructure, including roads and public transport, in the new member states. Highway lengths in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia have since tripled

Higher education attainment among people aged 25–34 in the new EU countries increased by 20% since 2004, improving workforce skills and opportunities



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The rate of children at risk of poverty in new member states dropped significantly from 41% to 17% since joining the EU

Countries like Estonia emerged as digital leaders, pioneering e-government and digital infrastructure. Additionally, expanded access to high-speed internet and 5G has bolstered connectivity across the EU



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The EU's integrated energy policies helped reduce energy intensity in industries across the new member states by 40%, promoting sustainable practices



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**The EU currently has over 446 million residents,
making it the third largest economy globally with
a combined GDP exceeding €14 trillion**



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By the first half of 2024, renewable sources generated 50% of the EU's electricity, with wind energy becoming the second-largest power source, overtaking natural gas

The EU has significantly cut its reliance on Russian gas, which dropped from 45% of imports in 2021 to just 18% by mid-2024. Imports from Norway and the U.S. have risen to fill this gap



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EU exports support over 30 million jobs across member states, with 1 in 7 jobs directly linked to trade activities. This emphasizes the critical role of trade in the EU's economic framework



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In 2022, the EU's energy dependency rate was 63%, though countries like Estonia achieved high self-sufficiency, meeting 94% of their energy needs domestically



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