Three stages of accession

**Stage 1**: when certain conditions met, country becomes an official candidate for membership.

**Stage 2**: formal negotiations: adoptions of EU Law & implementation of judicial, administrative, economic & other reforms necessary to meet the conditions for joining, known as accession criteria.

**Stage 3**: completion of negotiations & accompanying reforms to the satisfaction of both sides.

Membership negotiations

*Unanimous decision by the EU council* on a framework for negotiations with the candidate country – before negotiations can start.

*Governmental conference*. Ministers and ambassadors of EU governments and the candidate country.

**Screening of potential candidate**

**Screening**

Commission & candidate country examine & determine how well the country is prepared

**Screening report**

Commission presents its findings for each chapter to the member states in the form of a screening report

**Negotiation**

*Prior to Negotiations*

Candidate country must submit its position & EU must adopt a common position with benchmarks which must be reached.

**Conditionally**

Ensure states prepared for membership, while reassuring existing member states that new states will not undermine EU.

**Concluding Negotiations**

*Unanimity*

No negotiations on any chapter closed until every EU government agrees.

**Closure**

Negotiations process is only concluded definitively once every chapter has been closed.