

## The fourth enlargement

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On 1 January 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden, all Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), became full members of the European Union, which thereby expanded from 12 to 15 Member States. This marked the conclusion of short negotiations that began on 1 February 1993 and ended in March 1994. Norway, which had submitted its application for accession on 25 November 2002 and had signed the Accession Treaty on 24 June 1994 in Corfu, rejected this prospect in the 28 November 1994 referendum, while Switzerland, officially a candidate since 20 May 1992, withdrew its application for accession to the European Communities following its rejection of membership of the European Economic Area (EEA) on 6 December 1992.

These ‘small States’ that attributed great importance to the policy of neutrality and non-alignment often imposed during the Cold War — except for Norway, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) since 1949 — particularly wanted to join the European Union so that they could contribute to the taking of Community decisions which they were often already obliged to implement as members of the EEA. Rich countries facing a rather Eurosceptic public opinion in the most northerly regions, Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden sought to vigorously defend their economic interests and the ‘Nordic model’. Although these countries had already accepted many of the existing Community rules under the EEA Agreement, the accession negotiations were particularly arduous in relation to agriculture, the amount of regional aid, budgetary matters and fishing quotas. In line with their democratic traditions, Finland, Norway and Sweden submitted the accession agreement to the popular vote. The results were roughly as forecast: a clear and massive ‘Yes’ in Finland and Austria, a small ‘Yes’ in Sweden, and another ‘No’ from the Norwegians.