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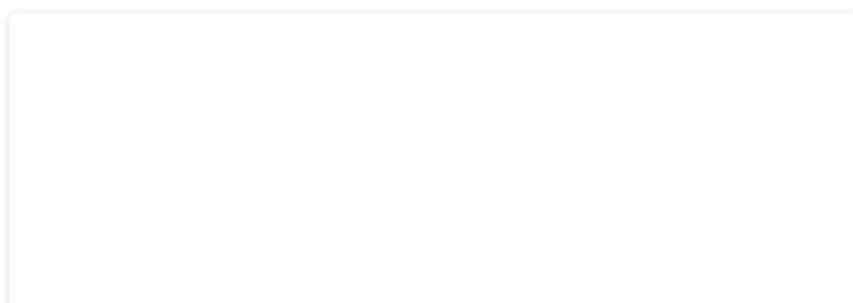
EU should open all six accession clusters next month, Ukraine's deputy PM says

Story by Sasha Vakulina • 8h



L Taras Kachka. Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration in Euronews studio, 26 May, 2026
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In a renewed effort to speed up its EU accession process, Kyiv is calling on Brussels to open all of Ukraine's negotiation clusters in June, ahead of the previously indicated July timeline.



"We believe that all six clusters can be open already in June," Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Taras Kachka told Euronews in an exclusive interview. "Our timeline is that we are already behind the deadline."

Kachka's remarks come after European Commissioner for Enlargement [Marta Kos said the first negotiation cluster could be opened in June](#) during Cyprus' rotating EU presidency, with the remaining five to follow by July once Ireland takes over the role.

Negotiation clusters are tied to key reform areas required to align with EU standards, ranging from the rule of law to judicial reform. Each set of benchmarks must be met by a candidate country, with final approval requiring unanimous agreement from all 27 EU member states.

Although Ukraine is technically ready to begin the process, progress has been stalled by Hungary's veto policy under former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Budapest and Kyiv have long been at odds over the sizeable Hungarian minority living in Ukraine's western Transcarpathia region, and resolving the issue will be key to opening the first chapter of Ukraine's EU accession talks.

With Hungary's new government saying it is [open to engaging](#) with Ukraine on its accession to the EU, Brussels hopes Budapest will adopt a more constructive stance and help accelerate Kyiv's path toward EU membership.

Kachka pointed out that Hungary's Foreign Minister Anita Orbán already said that Budapest "will not block anything".

Hungary and Ukraine have launched talks on minority rights, signalling a tentative step towards improving bilateral relations.

Kachka told Euronews that Kyiv's position on minority rights has not changed and "Ukraine treats the Hungarian community in Ukraine with full respect."

"What we offered as well to previous government and we continue to do so with current government is to fine-tune the legislation for everyone to be aware that this incredibly good atmosphere will not change

eventually."

Kachka said that three negotiation clusters were ready to open a year ago, before Hungary formally began blocking the process. Then in March [Brussels said it would open all six clusters, albeit informally](#), covering internal reforms, budget and justice.

Kyiv insists that Ukraine has already completed the necessary groundwork, meaning the formal opening of the accession clusters would not mark a fresh start for the country.

"So everything is already done, so that's why we're already behind the schedule," Kachka said.

circumstances of the country's start of its EU accession process.

"For Ukraine it started like 15 years ago, or even earlier, when we negotiated the association agreement already for many, many years," he said. "All the benchmarks that are already defined by the European Union are easily implemented in the forthcoming 12, eight months."

The minister also reiterated Kyiv's rejection of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's proposal to grant Ukraine "associate member" status in the EU without voting rights, describing the idea as "unacceptable".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had already [rejected the proposal](#), insisting that Ukraine is entitled to full EU membership.

"It is unacceptable if it is an alternative to full



membership, and this is a starting point for all

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Kachka said.



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