

**Question for written answer E-000524/2024  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)**

**Subject:** Accession of Serbia, Montenegro, Armenia and the UK to EFTA

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was set up in 1960 by European countries that did not want to become full members of what was then the EEC. EFTA's mission is to promote free trade and good/enhanced economic cooperation between its members. Meanwhile, the requirement to adopt EU legislation and participate in the single market make it mutually interesting for the EU and each of the association's member states. EFTA's member states are currently Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Serbia, Montenegro, Armenia and the UK are seeking improved cooperation with the EU either directly or indirectly and, of course, a stable institutional framework within which to boost trade, especially given that, in 2022, their share of trade with the EU grew to the following high or increasing levels:

- Serbia: 58.7%
- Montenegro: 41.9%
- UK: 40% (8% with Norway and Switzerland)
- Armenia: 15.9% (2% with Switzerland), but showing an 150% increase compared to 2021.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission not believe it could be interesting for these four countries to join EFTA as a potential preliminary step to joining the EU and, if so, how could it promote their accession to EFTA so that the necessary political processes take place within these countries?
2. Does it not believe that inviting the UK to join EFTA could bring mutual benefits that would reverse some of the mutually negative factors of Brexit?

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