

# EU ENLARGEMENT TALKS FORGE AHEAD

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Hungary has become the first EU candidate country to complete negotiations on justice and home affairs - an increasingly sensitive issue since September 11.

Hungary has set a precedent for other countries in imposing visas and strict controls for external borders well ahead of accession, said Frans van DAELE, Belgium's EU ambassador, who chaired the talks.

All applicant countries face an onerous bill for extra police, surveillance equipment, and training. With its external borders with Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, Poland is especially affected. But Hungary too has a continuing stream of refugees, including from Afghanistan.

The country has now closed negotiations on 23 of 30 chapters. Lithuania and Latvia have also moved quickly ahead. On 28/11, along with Estonia and Slovenia, they reached agreement on the key chapter on competition policy.

Although Poland is now making faster progress, with 19 chapters concluded, the big stumbling block remains agreement on the free movement of people and capital. Poland wants a transition period of up to 12 years for the sale of land to foreigners. The EU position is seven years.

*[Pictured above left: Viktor ORBAN, Hungarian Prime Minister]*