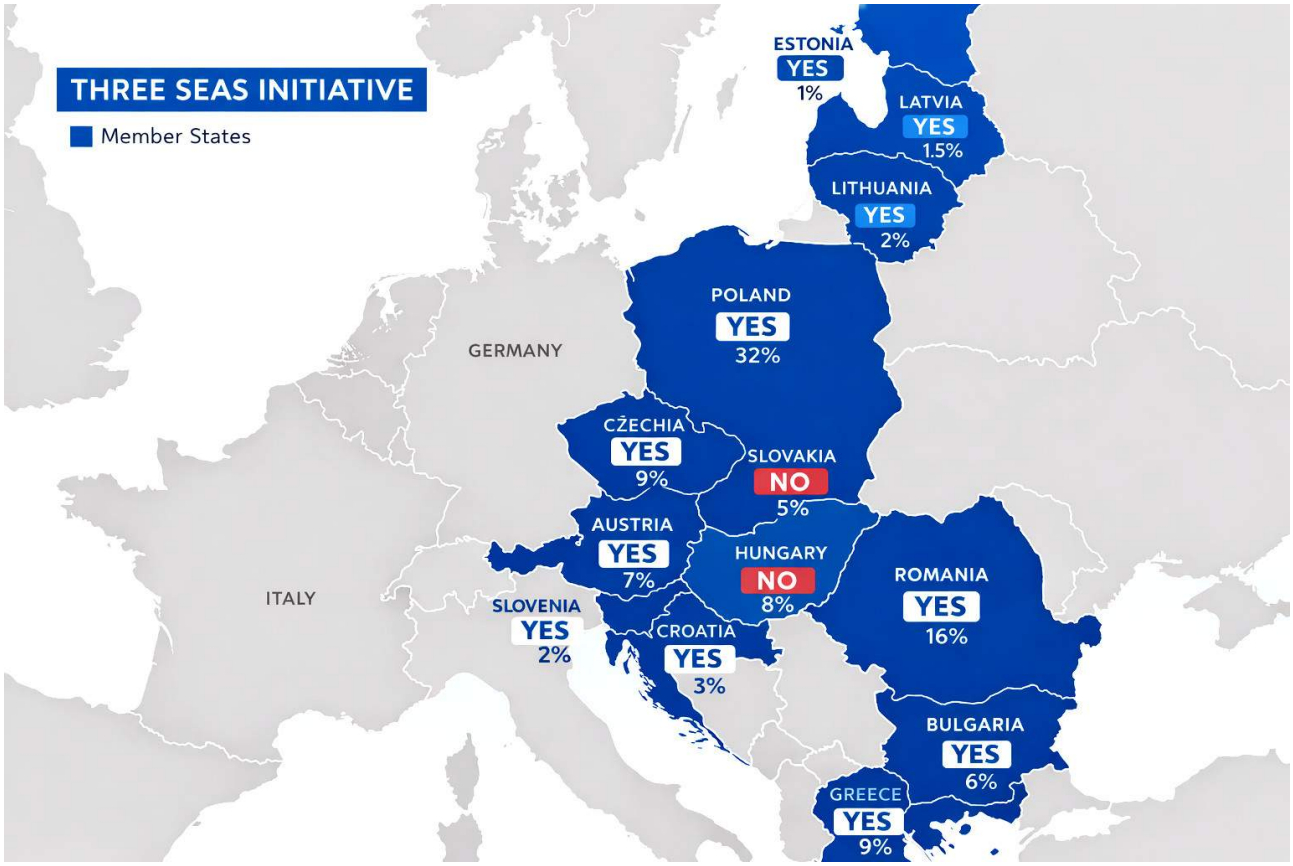
# Opt-out with consequences

### Concept of a Population-Weighted Decision System for the Three Seas Initiative




# Decision-Making Concept for the Three Seas Initiative

## 1. Core Principle

The decision-making system is based on three principles:

1. **Population-based democratic legitimacy**
2. **Voluntary participation of states**
3. **Consequences for non-participation where necessary to prevent rule circumvention**

A proposal is adopted if it receives support from member states representing **at least 80% of the total population** of the Three Seas region.

States that vote against the proposal have the right to **opt out**, but must respect the protective measures adopted by participating states.

# 2. Voting Weight

Each member state's vote is weighted according to its **population size**.

Example states in the Three Seas region include Approximate population shares:

- Poland — **≈32%**
- Romania — **≈16%**
- Czech Republic — **≈9%**
- Hungary — **≈8%**
- Austria — **≈7%**
- Bulgaria — **≈6%**
- Slovakia — **≈5%**
- Lithuania — **≈2%**
- Slovenia — **≈2%**
- Latvia — **≈1.5%**
- Estonia — **≈1%**
- Croatia — **≈3%**
- Greece — **≈9%**

The combined population of the Three Seas region is roughly **120 million people**.

A proposal therefore requires support representing **at least 80% of the population** to be adopted.

# 3. Voting Procedure

### Step 1 – Proposal Submission

A proposal may be submitted by:

- a member state
- the governing council of the initiative
- a group of at least three member states.

### Step 2 – State Voting

Each member state votes:

- **YES** – joins and implements the project
- **NO** – does not participate

### Step 3 – Population Calculation

The population of all states voting **YES** is summed.

If the total reaches **80% of the Three Seas population**, the proposal is adopted.

# 4. Territorial Sovereignty Rule

Infrastructure, construction, or physical projects **cannot be imposed on the territory of a state that voted NO**.

Key principles:

- No state can be forced to host infrastructure or projects it rejected.
- Construction of pipelines, transport corridors, bases, or other installations requires **explicit approval of the host state**.
- States that opt out simply **do not participate territorially** in the project.

Projects may proceed **only within the territory of participating states**.

# 5. Opt-Out Mechanism

States voting **NO** have the right to:

- remain outside the project
- avoid financial contributions
- retain full sovereignty over their territory and infrastructure.

However, they:

- cannot benefit from the project
- must respect safeguards adopted by participating states to prevent circumvention.

# 6. Consequence Mechanism (Anti-Circumvention)

If a non-participating state engages in activities that undermine the adopted policy, participating states may introduce **sector-specific restrictions**.

Examples:

## Energy

If participating states adopt an energy embargo:

- a non-participating state may still import the restricted energy source
- however, **all energy products derived from that source may be restricted from entering the participating market**.

## Strategic Infrastructure

States outside the project:

- cannot access funding
- cannot access the shared infrastructure network.

## Security Cooperation

States outside the initiative’s security framework:

- do not participate in defense coordination or related mechanisms.

# 7. Protection of Smaller States

To prevent dominance by large states, a **dual threshold** is required:

1. Support from states representing **at least 80% of the total population**, and
2. Support from **at least half of the member states**.

Both conditions must be satisfied for adoption.

# 8. Policy Areas Covered

This decision system may apply primarily to:

- energy security
- infrastructure development
- strategic investments
- regional security cooperation
- sanctions or economic measures.

# 9. Advantages

- eliminates single-state veto power
- maintains national sovereignty
- enables faster strategic decision-making
- prevents circumvention of collective policies
- allows flexible participation.

# 10. Potential Challenges

- administrative complexity in enforcing sectoral restrictions
- potential political tensions between participating and non-participating states
- need for transparent monitoring mechanisms.

# Summary

The model replaces traditional veto power with a system based on:

- **population-weighted democratic legitimacy**
- **voluntary participation**
- **targeted consequences preventing policy circumvention**

This structure allows the Three Seas Initiative to remain **flexible, sovereign, and operationally effective**, while respecting the territorial independence of each participating state.

States that vote **NO** maintain sovereignty over their territory and may opt out, **but if they attempt to undermine or bypass collective decisions, they themselves are subject to sanctions in the affected areas**.