

# Poland before and after EU accession: comparing trends with candidate countries

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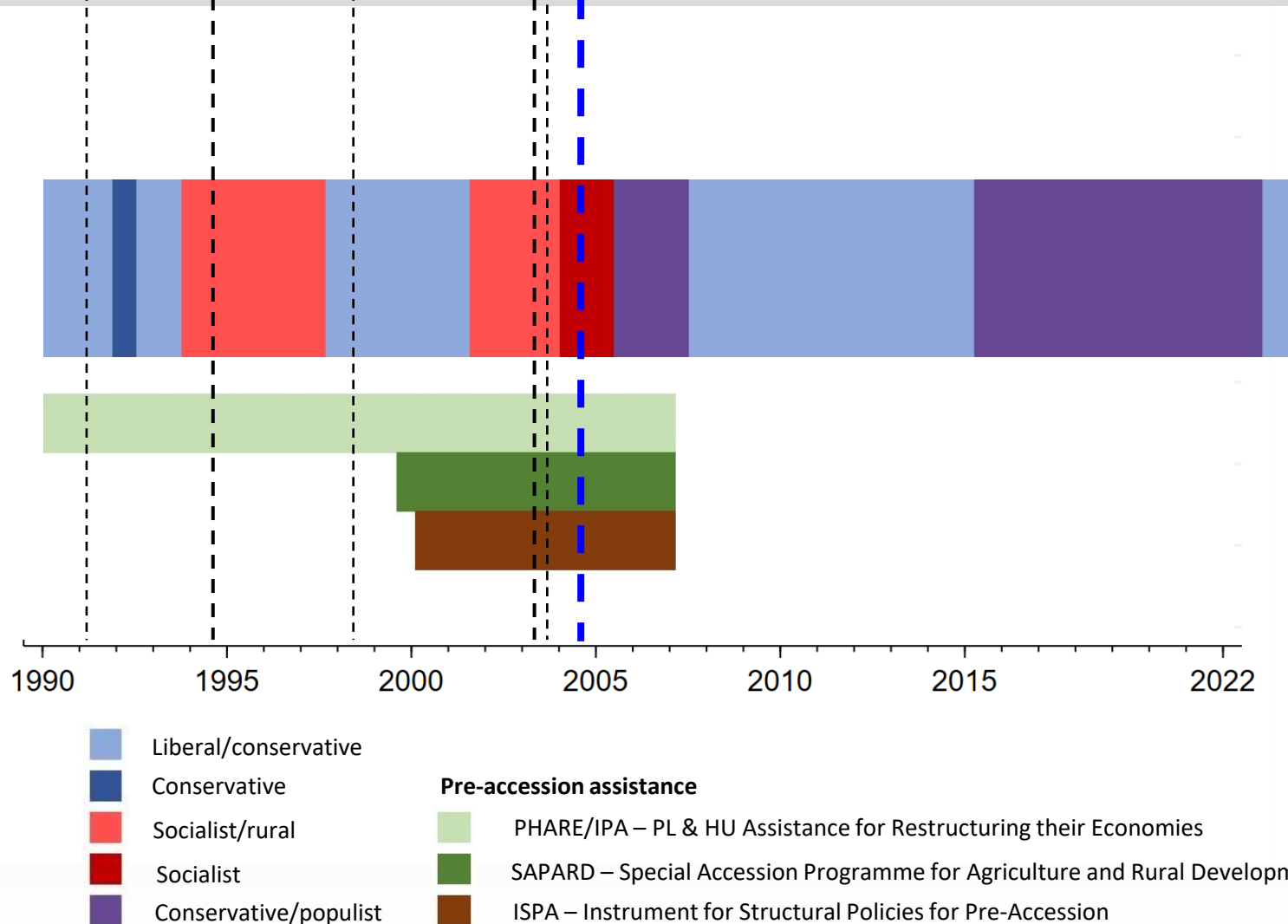
Association negotiations begin

Membership negotiations begin

REFERENDUM

Accession Treaty

Poland joins EU

## The path to accession:

- 02.1991 – association negotiations
- **04.1994 – membership application**
- 03.1998 – membership negotiations
- **04.2003 – Accession Treaty**
- 06.2003 – referendum
- **05.2004 – Poland joins the EU**

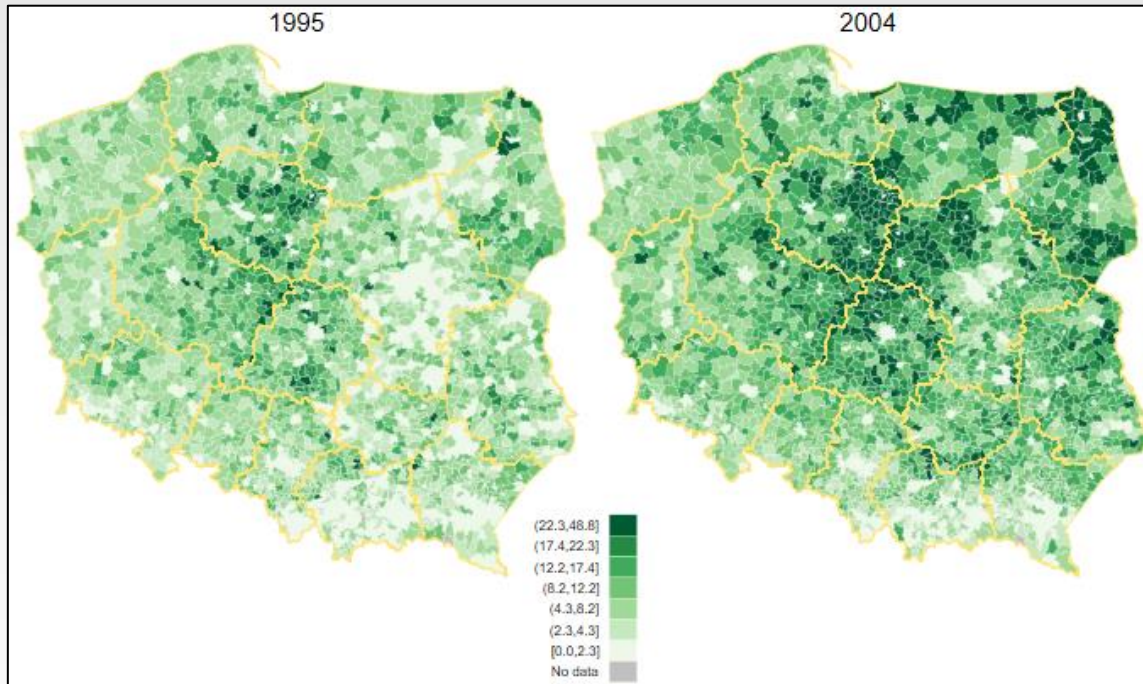
## World Bank (2017):

- Broad political support
- EU accession as anchor for institutions guiding reforms
- EU infrastructure funds used to connect markets and support participation in global value chains

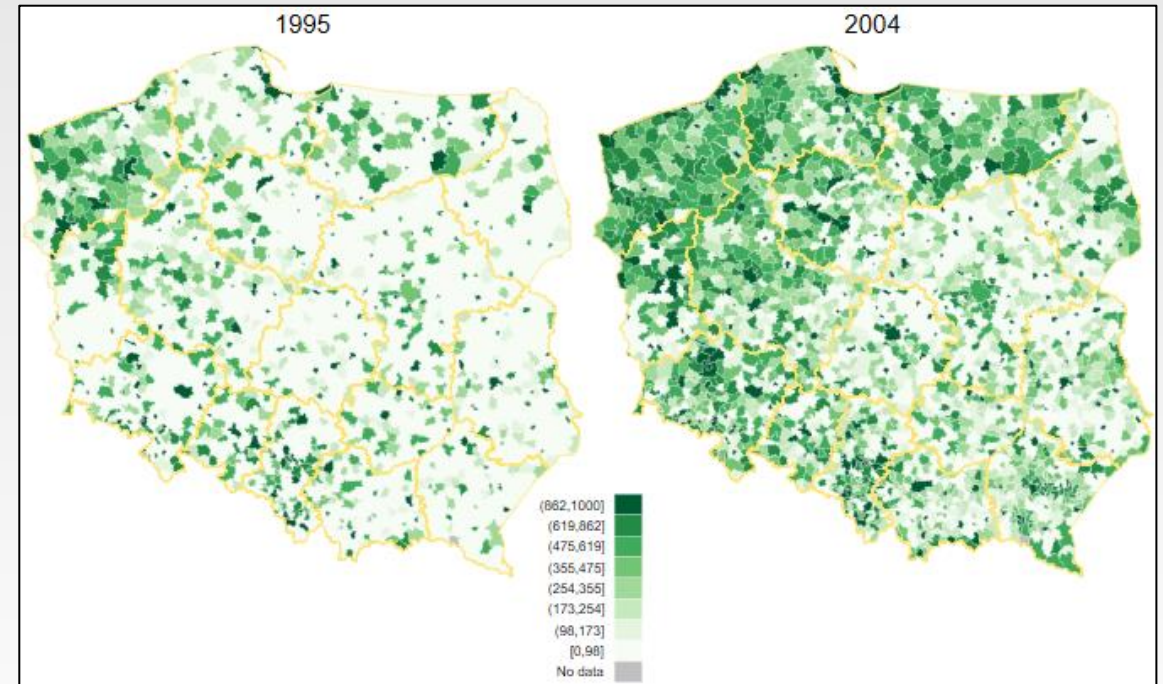


# Benefits of the EU accession process in Poland: Infrastructural changes before 2004

Length of the water pipe system: 1995 vs 2004  
(per 1000 inhabitants)



Sewage processing plants - connected users: 1995 vs 2004  
(per 1000 inhabitants)

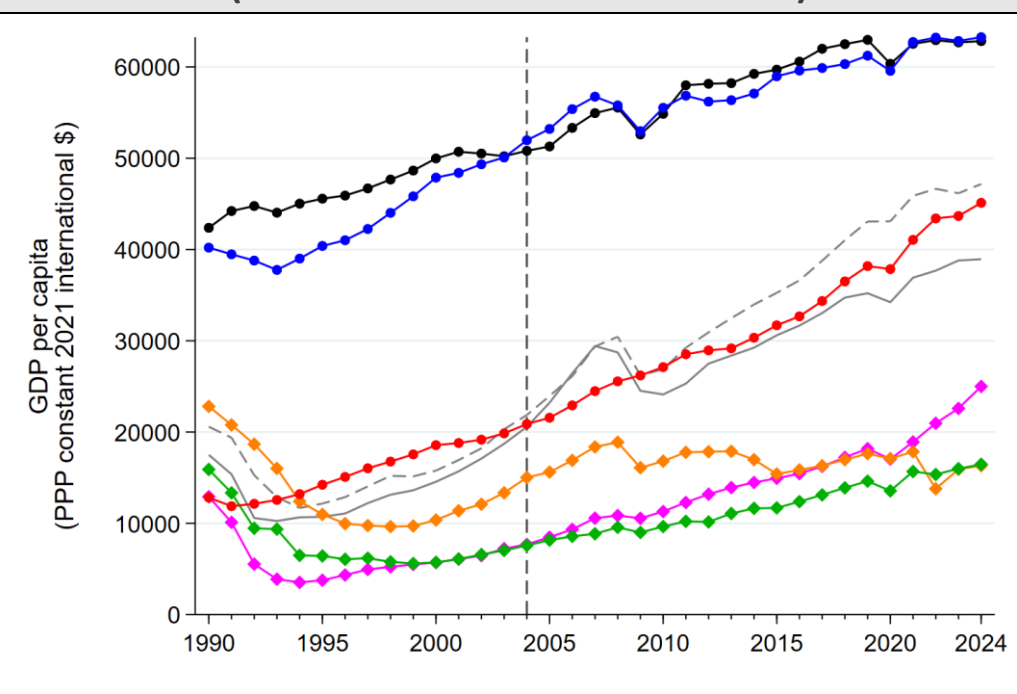


Notes: Number of users of a sewage treatment plant per 1000 inhabitants in Polish municipalities; Length of the water pipe system (in km) per 1000 inhabitants in Polish municipalities; Source: Oczkowska and Myck, 2025; based on BDL data.



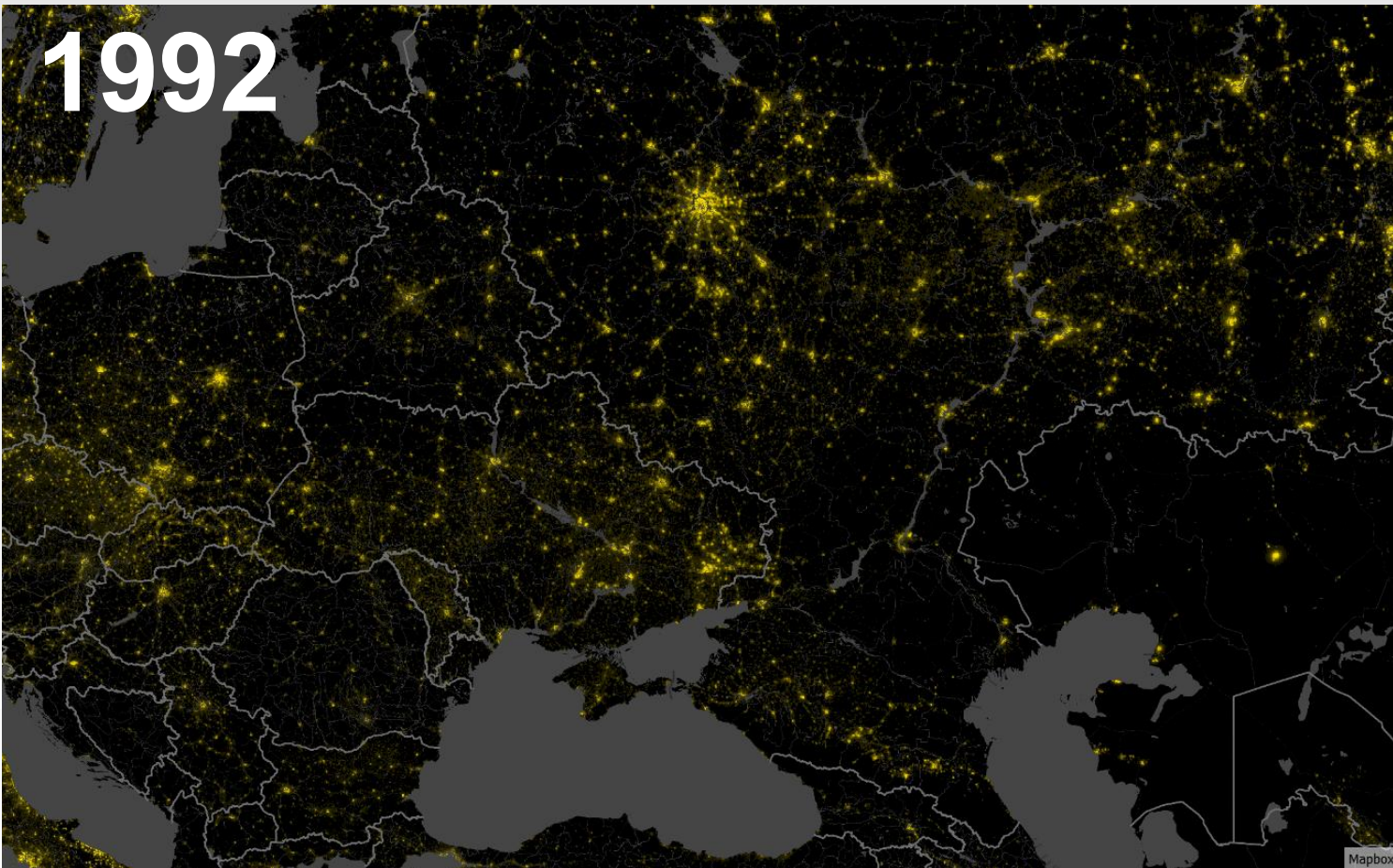
# Poland and candidate countries before and after 2004: Different dimensions of development

GDP per capita  
(PPP constant international USD)



Ukraine    Moldova    Poland    Sweden  
Georgia    Germany    Lithuania    Latvia

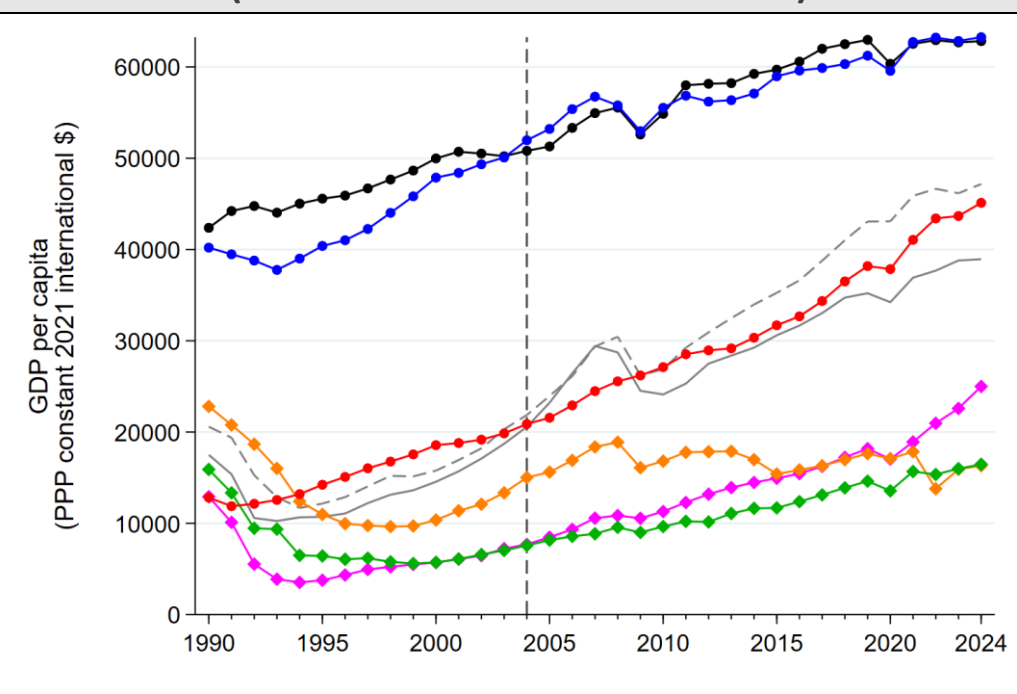
Night time light intensity (US NOAA data)





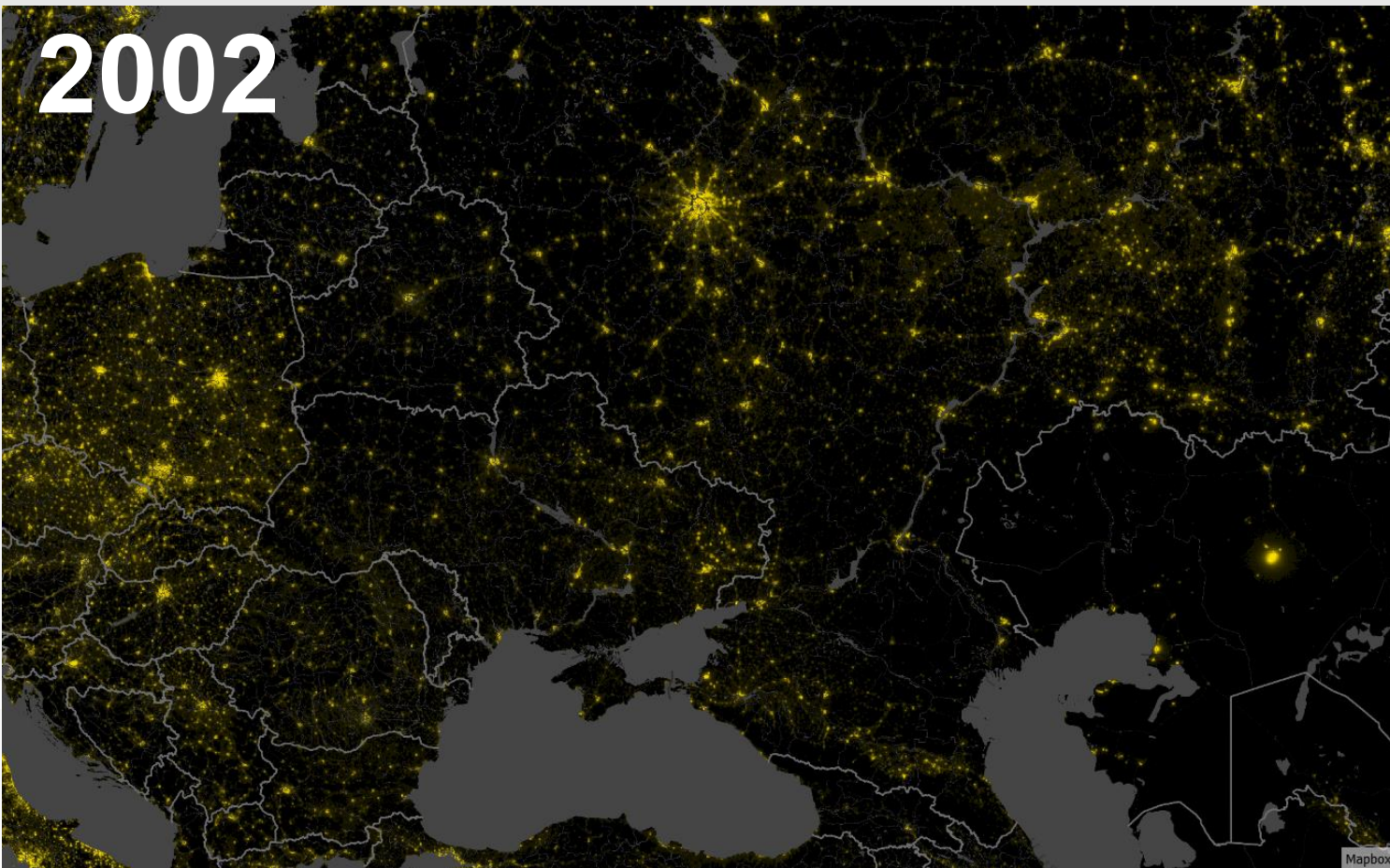
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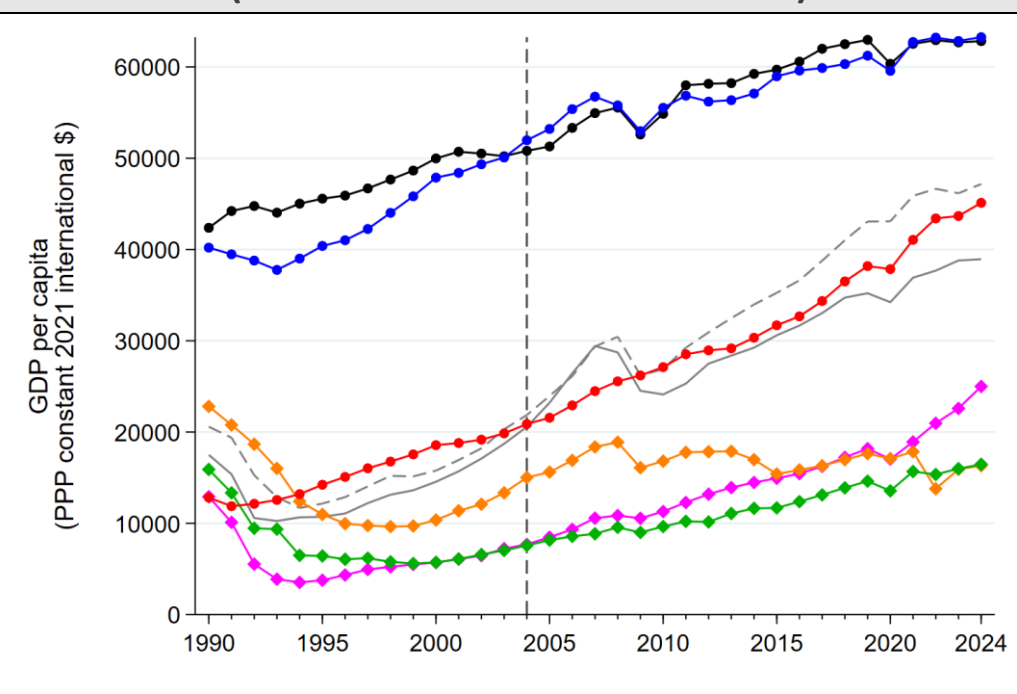
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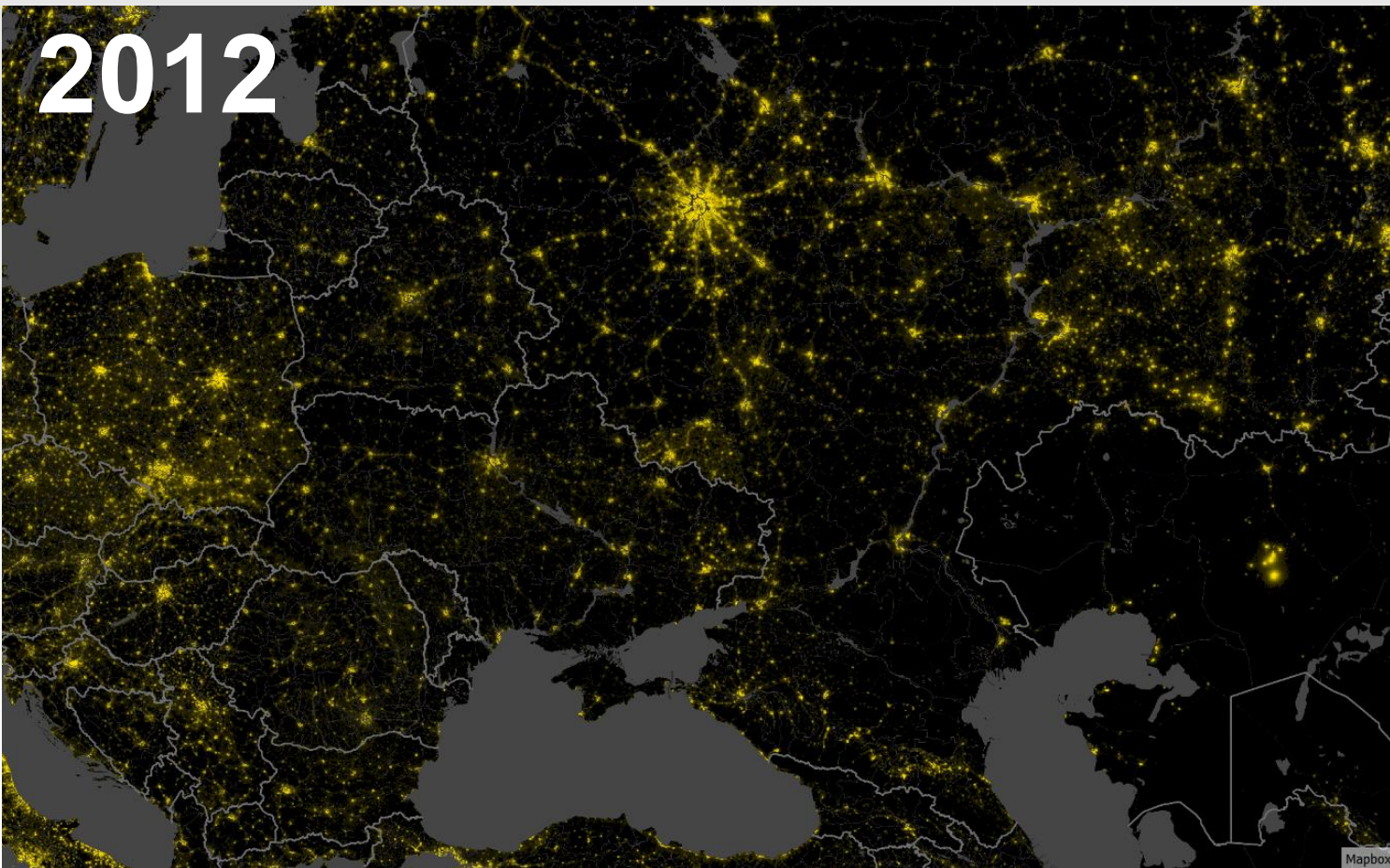
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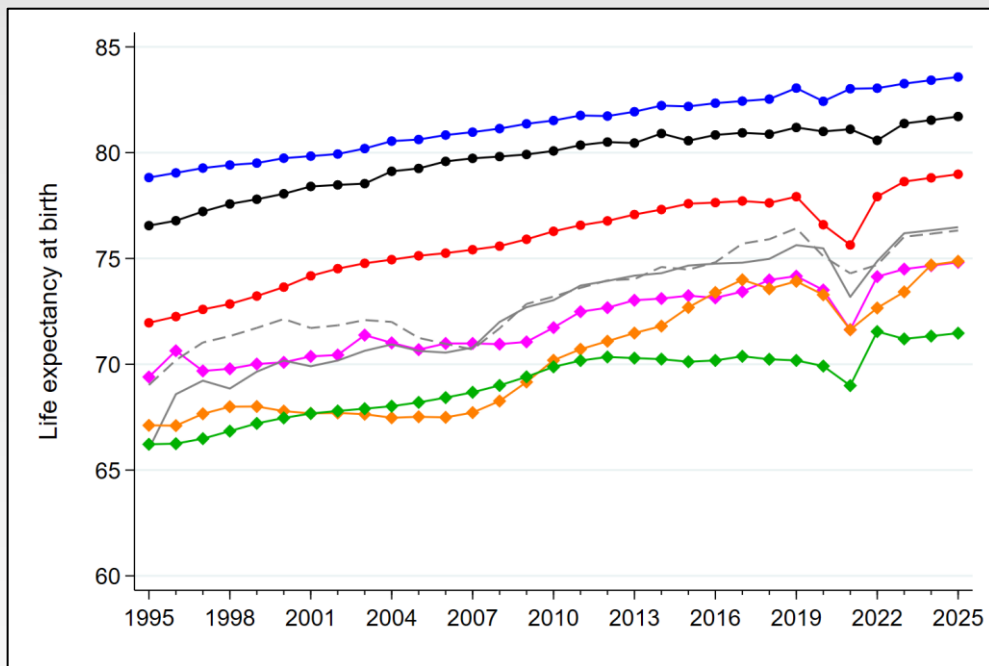
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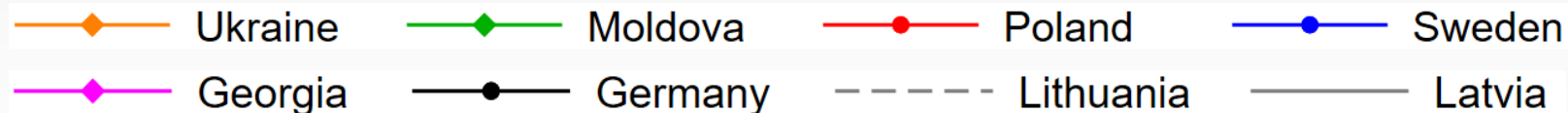
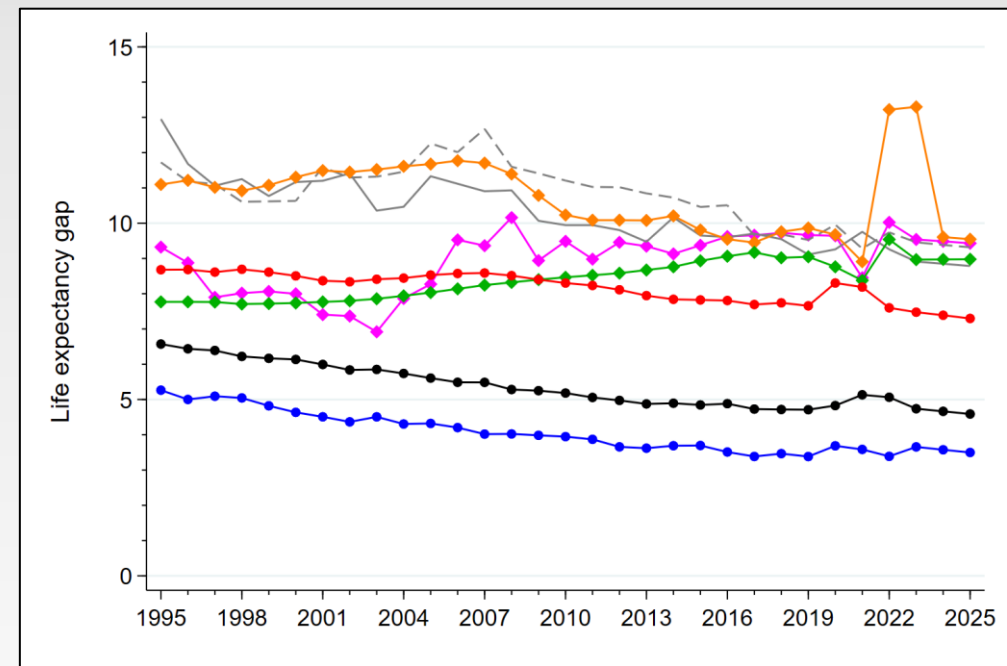


# Poland and candidate countries before and after 2004: Different dimensions of development

Life expectancy 2004-2025



Life expectancy gap (women - men) 2004-2025



# Poland and the EU:

## Poland's path towards „high income country” status

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- 2017 World Bank Report: Lessons from Poland, Insights for Poland



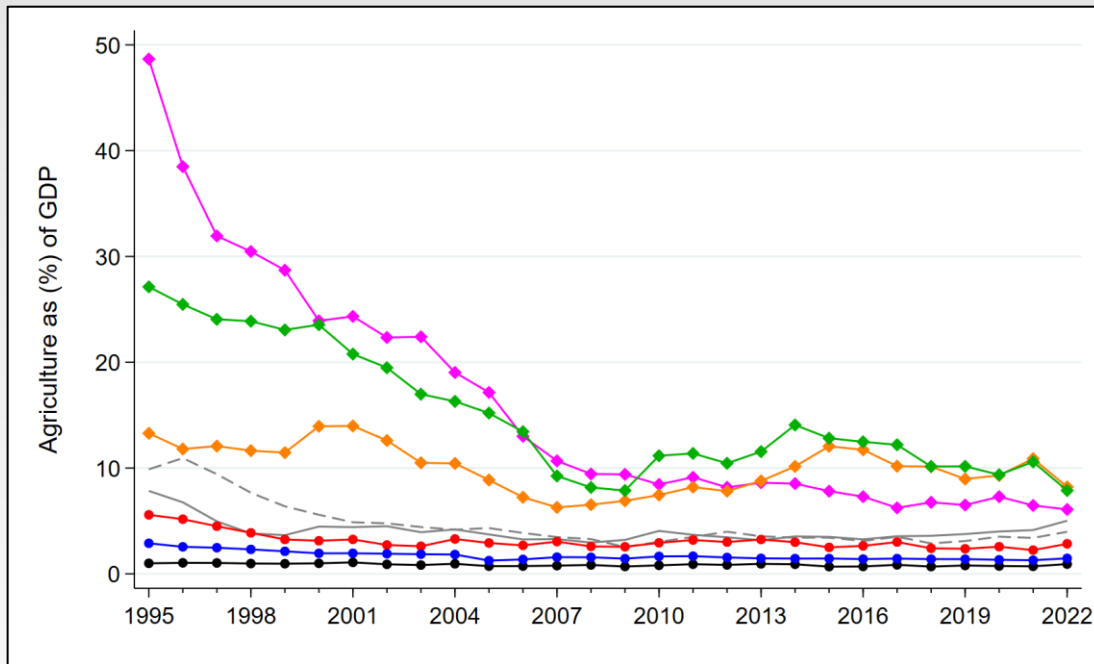
- **Governing:**
  - ⇒ Institutions and sequence of reforms: economic and political; reforms with shared vision
- **Sustaining:**
  - ⇒ Macroeconomic stability and reforms of the financial sector: limited deficit and debt, credible monetary policy; regulation and supervision of financial sector
- **Connecting:**
  - ⇒ Integration combined with EU infrastructure funds to connect markets
- **Growing:**
  - ⇒ Use of markets to reallocate resources (between and within sectors); investment in human capital
- **Including:**
  - ⇒ Broad access to quality education; competitive and open markets complemented with labor market regulations

⇒ EU accession as anchor for economic and institutional reforms

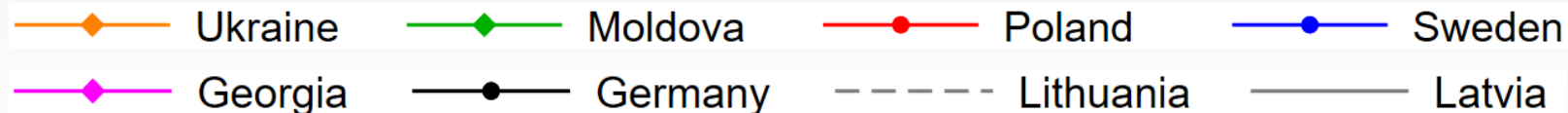
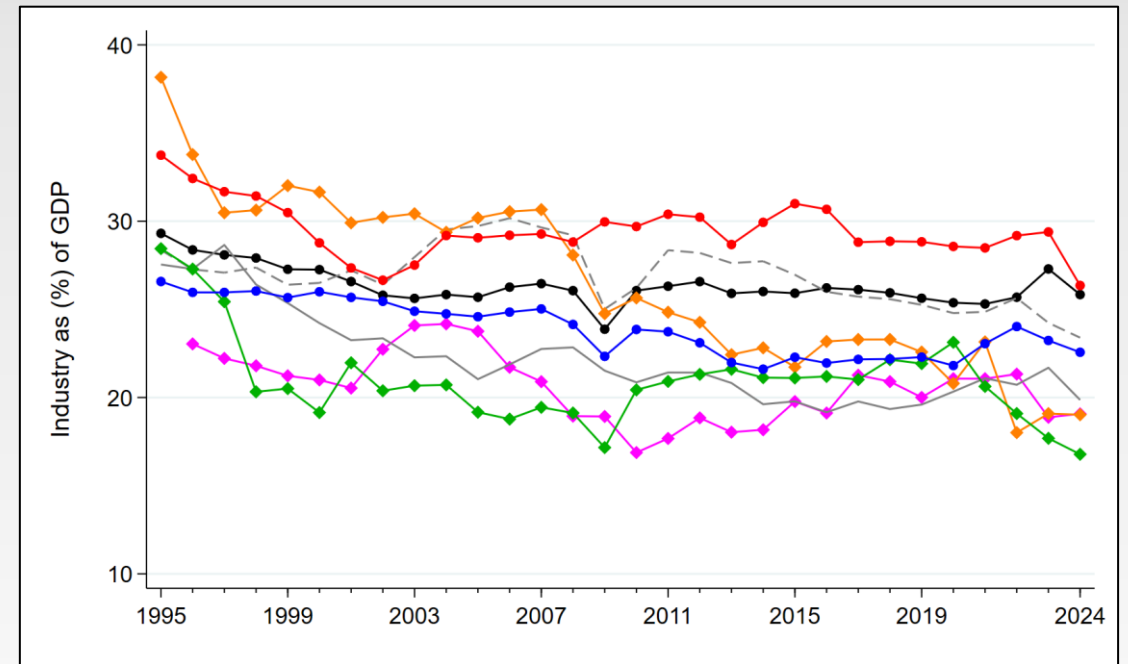


# Poland and candidate countries, challenges ahead: Basic structure of the economy: from 1995 to 2024

Agriculture as % of GDP

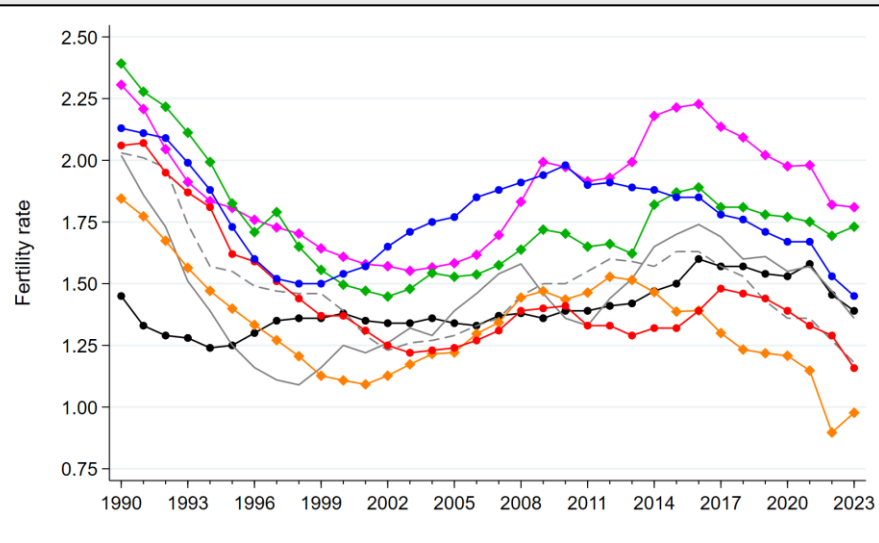


Industry as % of GDP

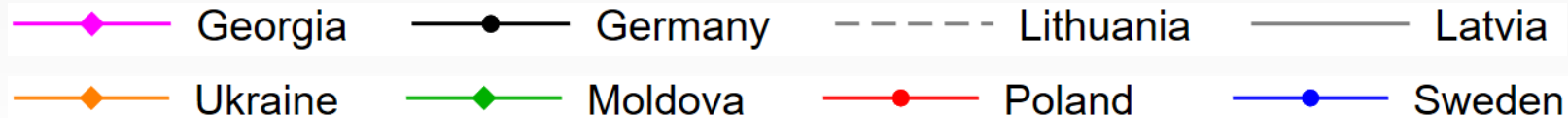
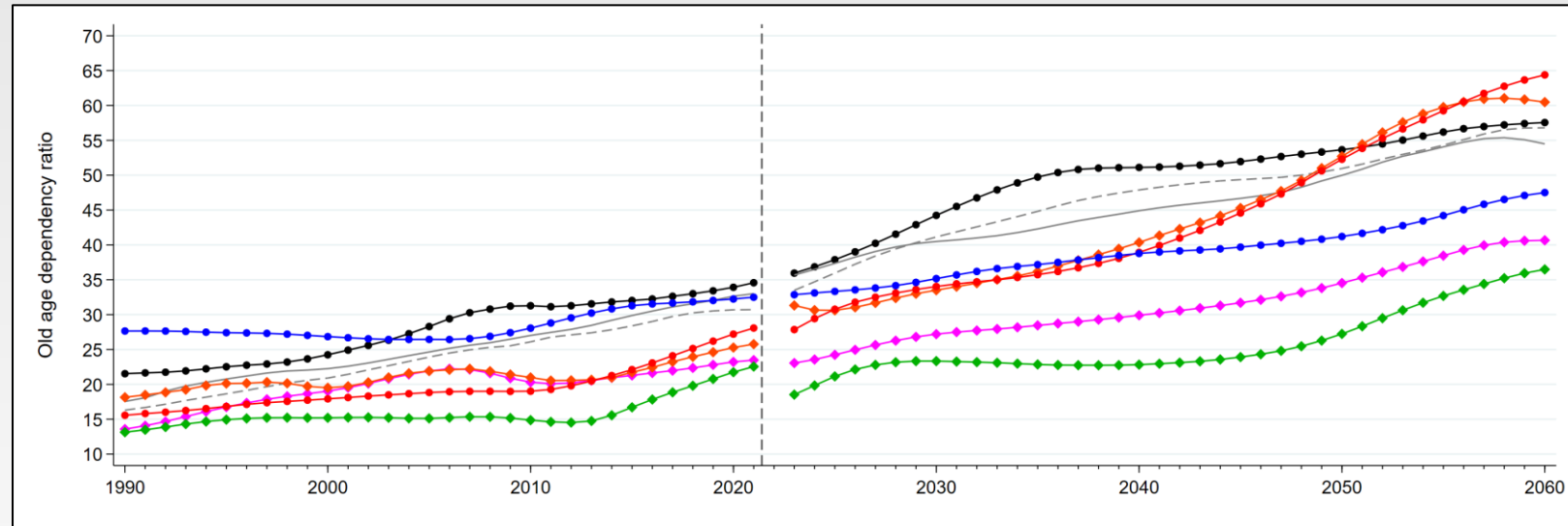


# Poland and candidate countries, challenges ahead: Demographics: fertility rates & old-age dependency ratios

Fertility rate 1990-2023

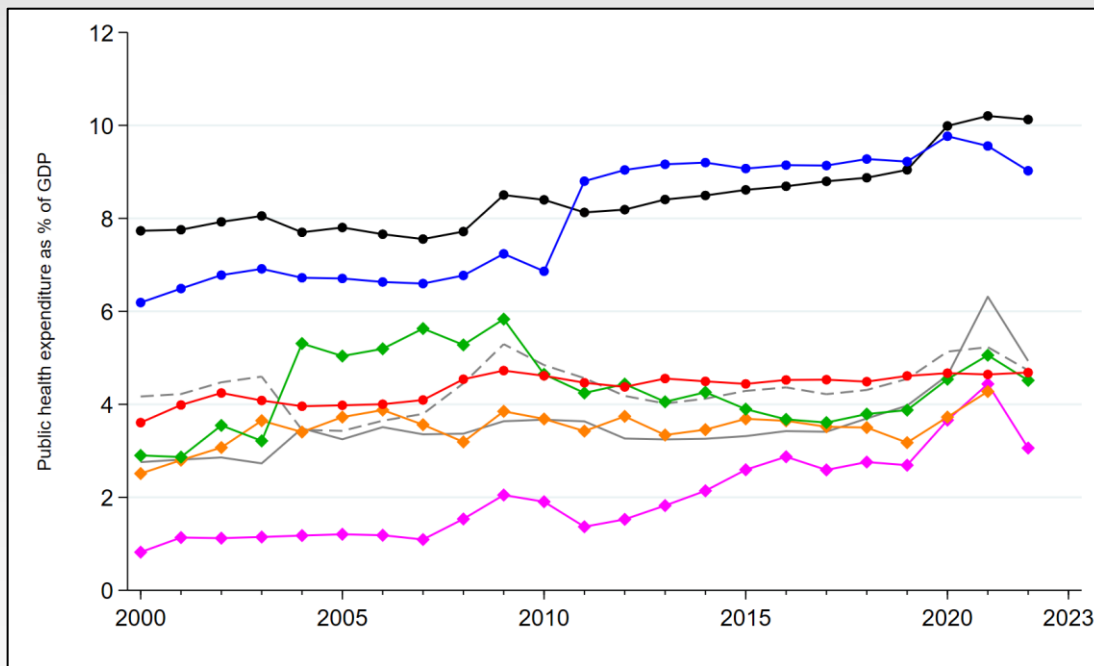


Old age dependency ratio 1990-2062

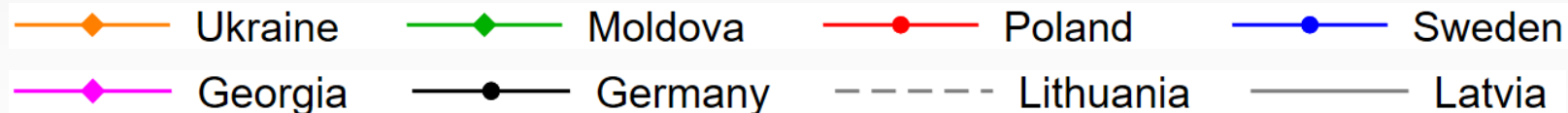
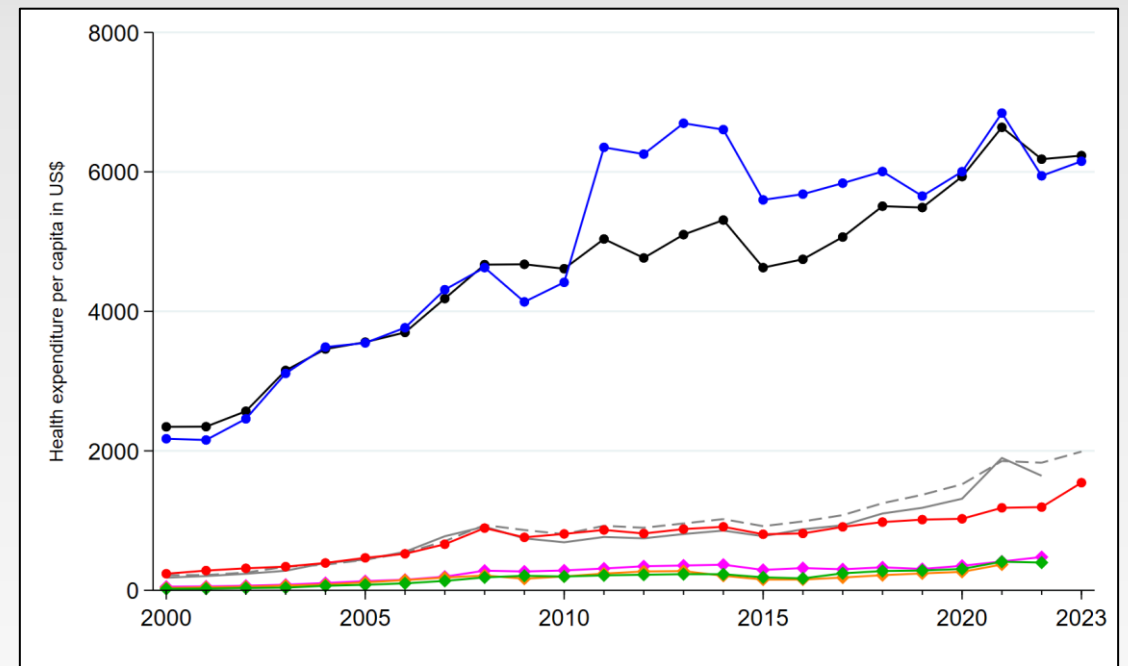


# Poland and candidate countries, challenges ahead: Public expenditure and fiscal stability

Public health expenditure as % GDP



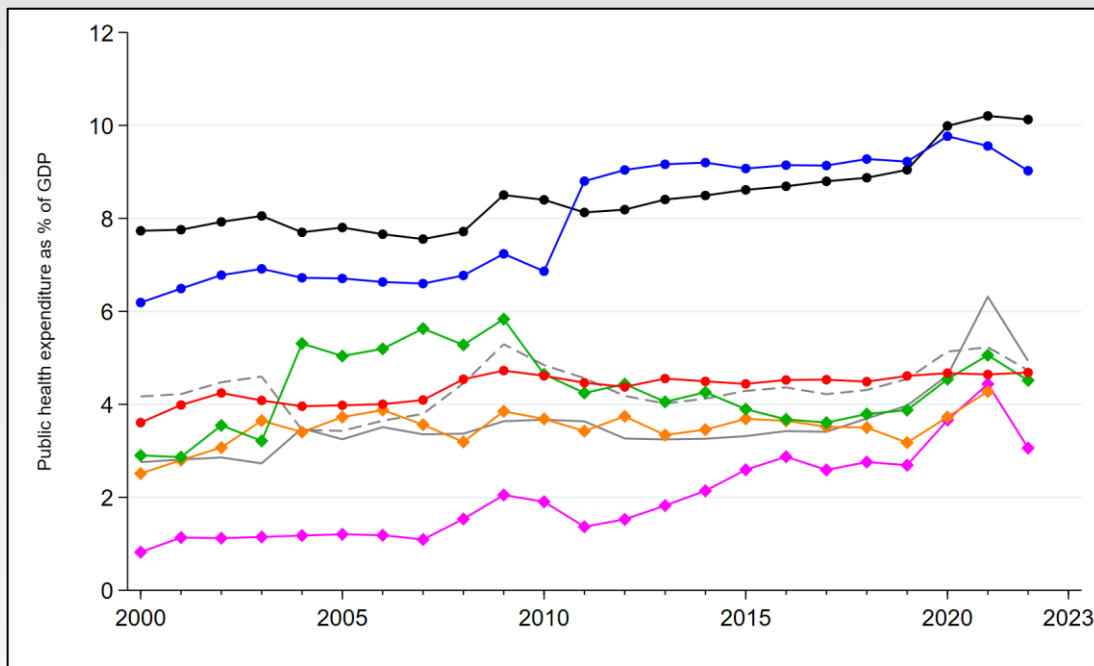
Health expenditure per capita in \$US



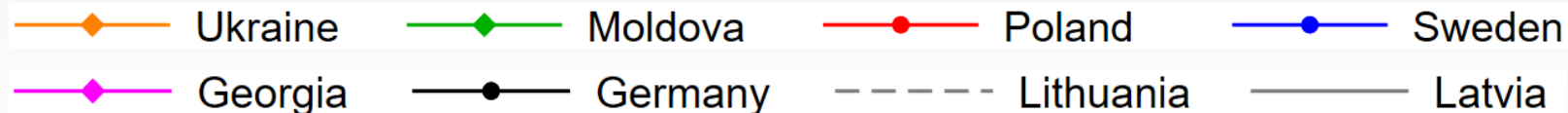
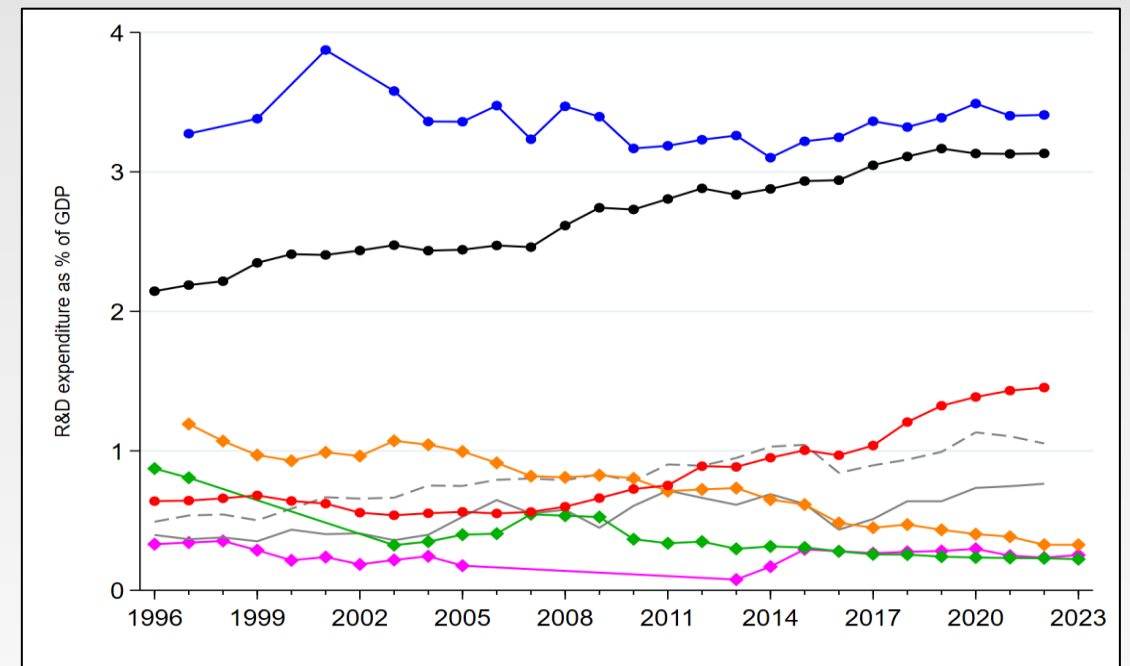


# Poland and candidate countries, challenges ahead: Public expenditure and fiscal stability

## Public health expenditure as % GDP



## Domestic expenditure on R&D as % GDP



# Challenges ahead of the candidate countries: Lessons from Poland's experience



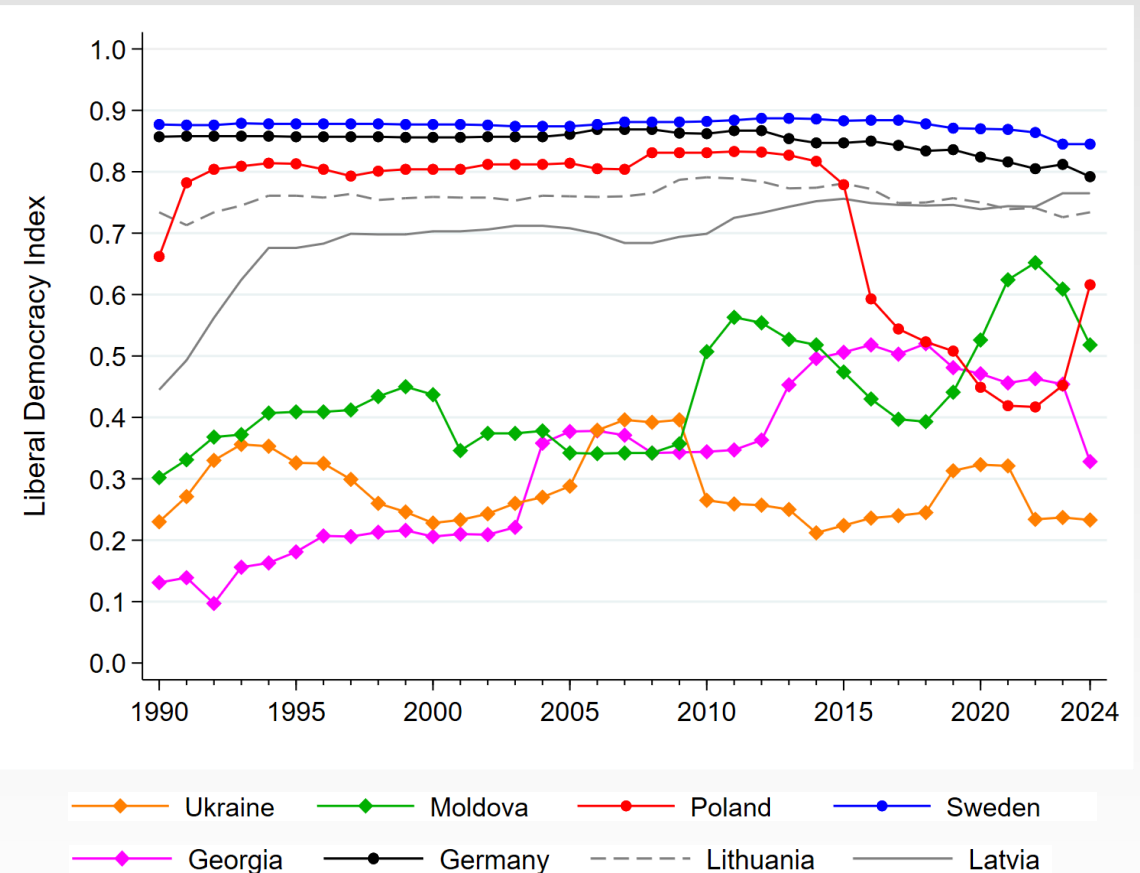
- **Governing:**
  - ⇒ Stability of institutions, clear rules governing the economic process
- **Sustaining:**
  - ⇒ Macroeconomic stability: ensuring a broad tax base to finance the process of reforms
- **Connecting:**
  - ⇒ Efficient and transparent use of EU infrastructure funds to improve quality of life and to connect markets
- **Growing:**
  - ⇒ Efficient reallocation of resources (spatial and economic); improvements in basic and further education
- **Including:**
  - ⇒ Broad access to high quality public services; fair and efficient fiscal system and redistribution through taxes and transfers; stable and adequate pensions system;
  - ⇒ Competitive and open markets with effective anti-corruption system

# Challenges ahead of the candidate countries: Lessons from Poland's experience

- **Governing:**

- ⇒ EU membership assumes a set of fundamental rules of the political process, but EU has limited means to enforce them
- ⇒ Popular support for membership is crucial to ensure the application of the rules within the internal political process
- ⇒ The Polish example from recent years: pressure from EU institutions combined with support for the EU were crucial in restoring the democratic government in October 2023

Liberal democracy index





# Challenges ahead of the candidate countries: Lessons from Poland's experience

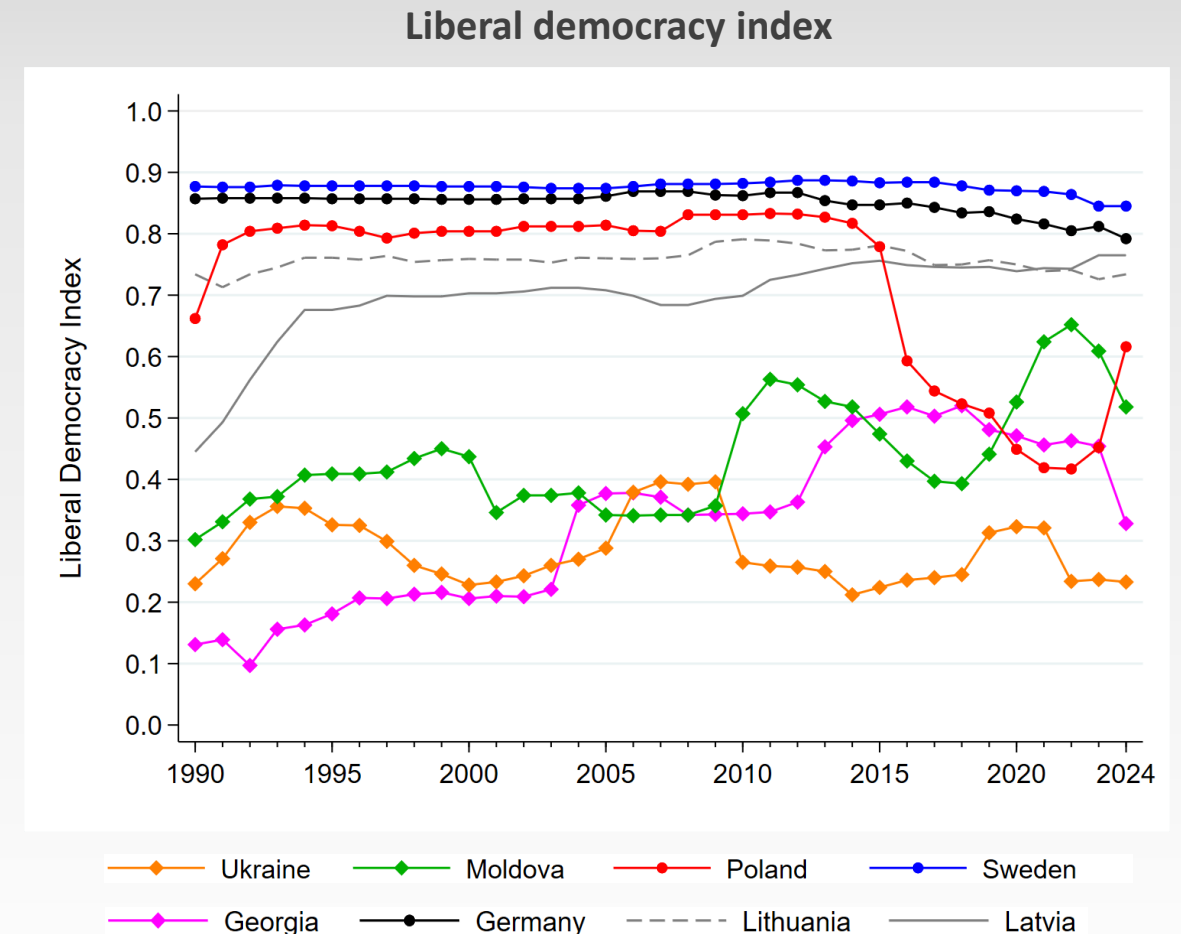
Thank you!

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Sources: V-Dem