

Le Magazine

EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN EUROPE

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« Enlargement »

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#19 Summary



Foreword

On 13 December 2002 in Copenhagen, EU heads of state or government announced the successful conclusion of negotiations for the accession of 10 new Member States in May 2004. This historic agreement, uniting approximately 475 million Europeans, ushers in a new era of political, economic and social consolidation and cooperation. It is a unique opportunity to build on our firm economic foundations and, just as importantly, to nurture our social and cultural strengths to enhance the quality of the lives of all our citizens.

Cultural and linguistic diversity will increase with enlargement, thus requiring a redoubling of our efforts to understand, respect, and sustain the very contrasts that make the Europe of 25+ so rich and complex. Education and training, being at the heart of these endeavours, will become even more important to the enlarged European Union. In the broadest sense, education will have to respond to the needs of mutual understanding, but it will also need systems that reach beyond the confines of the traditional school and university classrooms to allow lifelong learning to become a reality. It is with this objective — the creation of a 'knowledge-based' EU — that the Commission is promoting an integrated strategy to encompass all the necessary aspects of education, training, research and innovation for tomorrow's Europe.

I shall be forging ahead with measures that will allow Europeans to have their diplomas and qualifications, wherever they have been acquired and at whatever stage in life, to be recognised throughout the Union. Furthermore, all of these strategies have implications beyond Europe's boundaries. In having so much to offer, Europe is uniquely placed to develop as a worldwide centre of excellence in the field of education and training.

On the wider cultural arena, Europe-wide media — television, film, music — already play a crucial cultural role in helping us cross national boundaries as armchair travellers, giving us a kaleidoscope of information, entertainment and insights that help foster mutual understanding. But it is equally our responsibility to promote the shared culture and historical heritage of the people of Europe. As with education and training, I want us to think beyond national boundaries to look at the role of culture in the development of a European identity. Collaboration ensures that these projects have a European dimension at all stages of their realisation.

At this crucial point in Europe's history, it is fitting that we should look back on the successful action programmes that have helped us achieve so much: Tempus, Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth in the field of education, training and youth, followed by the Culture 2000 programme and MEDIA Plus. These achievements have given us valuable experience on which to build. We know what we can do and this gives us confidence to be even more ambitious in the future. We have a set of agreed objectives to achieve by 2010 so that Europeans will have a world-class education system, accessible to all, and will be participants in a new genuinely European area for education and culture that both unites all of its nations and preserves its distinct and individual cultures.

Viviane Reding, *Member of the European Commission, responsible for Education and Culture.*



An outline

of the future EU Members

Thirteen countries have applied for EU membership. Ten of them are on track to become new Member States in 2004. Their social and economic profile is, in some ways, different from the present situation in EU Member States. The following overview of their basic indicators, centred on the economy and education, is based on data collected by Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities) and reflects, unless otherwise mentioned, the situation in 2000.



CYPRUS

CAPITAL CITY: Nicosia
SURFACE AREA: 9 251 km²
POPULATION: 0.757 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 19 400
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 27
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 32.3 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 5.7 %

CZECH REPUBLIC

CAPITAL CITY: Prague
SURFACE AREA: 78 866 km²
POPULATION: 10.3 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 13 200
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 41
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 14 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 4.4 %

ESTONIA

CAPITAL CITY: Tallinn
SURFACE AREA: 45 227 km²
POPULATION: 1.4 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 8 600
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 39
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 25.2 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 7.4 %

HUNGARY

CAPITAL CITY: Budapest
SURFACE AREA: 93 030 km²
POPULATION: 10 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 11 500
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 31
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 14.9 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 4.7 %

LATVIA

CAPITAL CITY: Riga
SURFACE AREA: 64 589 km²
POPULATION: 2.4 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 6 700
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 16
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 19.6 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 6.3 %

LITHUANIA

CAPITAL CITY: Vilnius
SURFACE AREA: 65 300 km²
POPULATION: 3.7 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 7 500
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 14
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 46.5 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 6.5 %

MALTA

CAPITAL CITY: Valletta
SURFACE AREA: 316 km²
POPULATION: 0.391 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 12 600
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 30
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: n.c.
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 4.7 %

POLAND

CAPITAL CITY: Warsaw
SURFACE AREA: 312 685 km²
POPULATION: 38.6 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 8 900
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 17
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 10.9 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 5 %

SLOVAKIA

CAPITAL CITY: Bratislava
SURFACE AREA: 49 035 km²
POPULATION: 5.4 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 10 800
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 21
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 10.8 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 4.3 %

SLOVENIA

CAPITAL CITY: Ljubljana
SURFACE AREA: 20 273 km²
POPULATION: 2 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 15 600
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 55
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 17.1 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 6 %

BULGARIA (accession planned for 2007)

CAPITAL CITY: Sofia
SURFACE AREA: 110 971 km²
POPULATION: 8.2 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 6 300
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 9
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 19.3 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: not available

ROMANIA (accession planned for 2007)

CAPITAL CITY: Bucharest
SURFACE AREA: 238 291 km²
POPULATION: 22.4 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 5 200
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 9
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: 8.9 %
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: 3.4 %

TURKEY (initiation of accession negotiations subject to the fulfilment of political criteria)

CAPITAL CITY: Ankara
SURFACE AREA: 769 604 km²
POPULATION: 65.3 million
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (per capita) ⁽¹⁾: 5 900
NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONES ⁽²⁾: 22
PROPORTION OF POPULATION AGED 30–34 WITH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: not available
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP ⁽³⁾: not available

(1) In purchasing power standards (PPS).
(2) Per 100 population. EU 15 = 41 (in 1999).
(3) Source: Eurostat, *European report on quality indicator of lifelong learning* (2002).
(4) Based on national sources (1998).



European Union



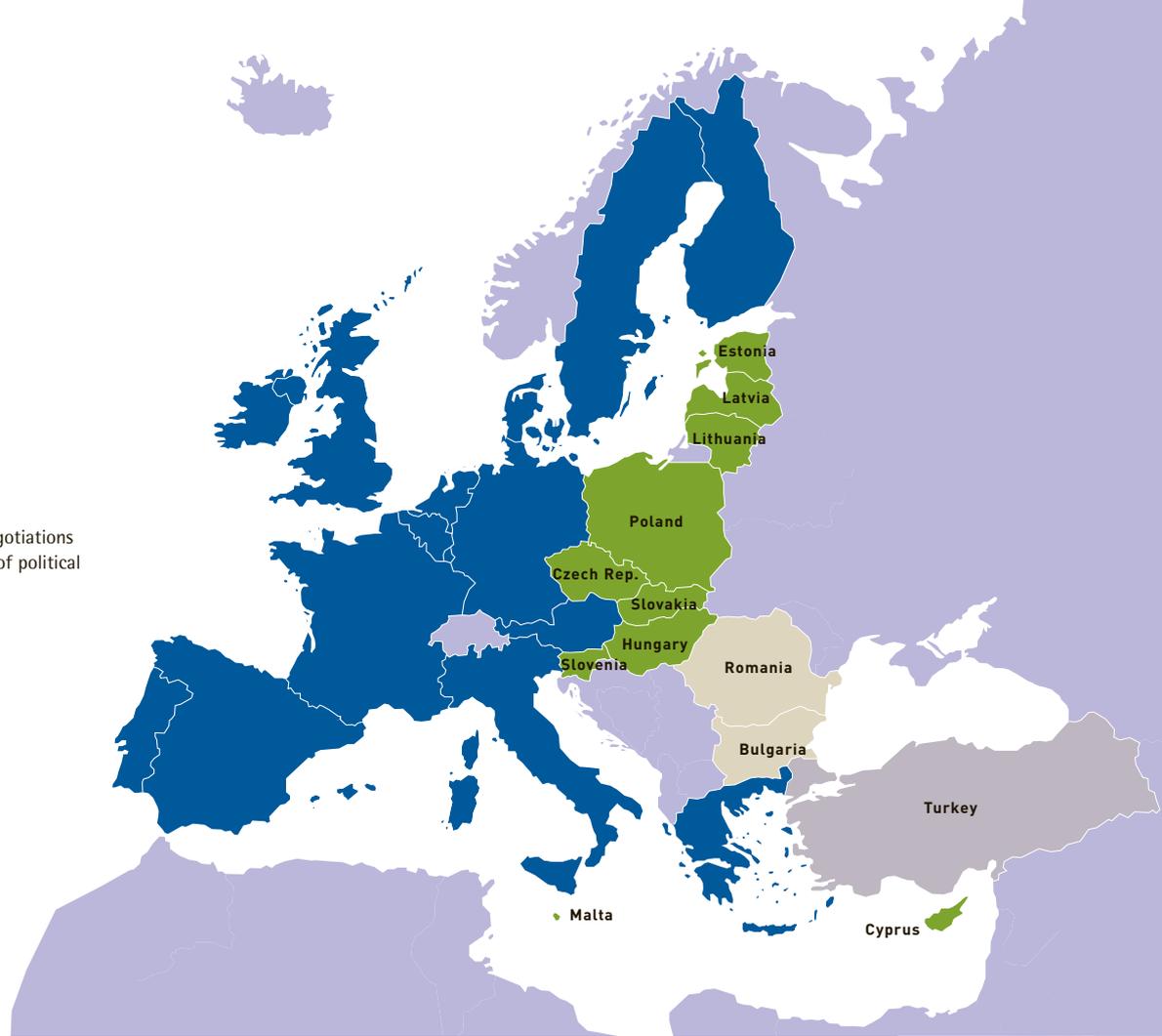
Accession planned for 2004



Accession planned for 2007



Initiation of accession negotiations subject to the fulfilment of political criteria



EU enlargement in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall



- 1989** Fall of the Berlin Wall.
The European Community creates the Phare programme to provide financial support to the reform process of central and eastern European countries.
- 1990** Cyprus and Malta apply for EC membership.
Launch of the Tempus programme, focused on the reform of the higher education sector in central and eastern European countries.
- 1993** The European Union (EU) replaces the European Community.
The European Council establishes the Copenhagen criteria, which all candidate countries must fulfil before becoming EU Member States. The criteria include having stable political institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and protection of minorities. Candidate countries must also have a functioning market economy and transpose all EU laws – known as the *acquis communautaire* – into national legislation.
- 1994** Hungary and Poland apply for EU membership.
- 1995** Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia apply for EU membership.
- 1996** The Czech Republic and Slovenia apply for EU membership.
- 1997** The Commission's Agenda 2000 examines the impact of enlargement on EU policies and recommends opening negotiations with the best-prepared candidates.
The Luxembourg European Council gives its green light for the beginning of the accession negotiations.
Opening of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes to the candidate countries (except Turkey, applicant country since 1987).
- 1998** Accession negotiations begin with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.
- 1999** The Helsinki European Council decides to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.
The Helsinki European Council confirms Turkey as a candidate country for EU membership.
- 2000** Accession negotiations begin with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.
The Nice European Council endorses the European Commission's enlargement strategy laying out the 'road map' for accession negotiations. The Nice Treaty provides for the reforms of the EU's institutions by setting down the number of votes in the European Council, the number of seats in the European Parliament, and the number of commissioners in the European Commission.
- 2002** 12–13 December: The Copenhagen Council confirms the successful conclusion of accession negotiations with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania continue their preparation for accession with 2007 as their target date for membership. For Turkey, the initiation of accession negotiations remains subject to the fulfilment of the political criteria.
- 2003** 16 April: Signature of the Accession Treaty by the current EU Member States and the 10 acceding countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) in Athens.
- 2004** 1 May: Candidate countries which have concluded accession negotiations and ratified their enlargement treaty are expected to join the European Union.
June: 25 Member States participate in the European Parliament elections.

Education and Culture: pioneers in EU enlargement

The European Union first offered the candidate countries access to its education and culture programmes in 1997, so ensuring their participation long before the conclusion of the negotiations on enlargement.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was still fresh in the minds of many when the EU took its first step towards developing cooperation with central and eastern Europe countries in the areas of education and culture. The Tempus programme, established in 1990 specifically to respond to the need to reform the higher education sector in these countries, encouraged cooperation between institutions of higher learning in EU Member States and those in participating countries.

Once accession criteria had been agreed (European Council, Copenhagen, 1993), it was decided to open EU programmes to the candidate countries in preparation for accession. Education programmes were the first to respond to this policy. By then, Tempus I

was drawing to a close, but the candidate countries were able to experience, from 1997, full participation in such important programmes as Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Youth for Europe (now known as Youth) and, later, Culture 2000 and the MEDIA programme (for the latter, see article below).

A similar scheme is now available to the 13th candidate country, Turkey, whose accession negotiations have not yet been opened. In December 2002, Turkey and the European Commission signed four agreements to prepare Turkey for participation in the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes as soon as 2004. These agreements are supported financially by EUR 4.7 million from the EU and another EUR 1.3 million from Turkey itself.

On the road to accession



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Before candidate countries can become Member States of the European Union they must go through a process of negotiating, chapter by chapter, how they will adopt, implement and enforce the entire set of EU legislation, known as the *acquis communautaire*.

The negotiations are a multi-step process that starts with the EU clearly spelling out what it expects from candidate countries and indicating the *acquis* they need to transpose into national law. The candidate countries then incorporate the required laws into their national legislation and present the revised legislation to the EU. At that stage, the EU and its Member States examine the national legislation thoroughly to see if it is in line with the *acquis*, and decide whether amendments to the legislation are necessary or whether the chapter under negotiation can be provisionally closed. The whole process may take from several months to several years.

Accession negotiations began in March 1998 with six countries (the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), and in 2000 with six others (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia). They concluded in December 2002 in Copenhagen for 10 of them, and now the accession treaty will have to be drafted and ratified by all Member States and the candidate countries concerned. This should then allow these 10 candidate countries to become Members in time for participation in the European Parliament elections of June 2004. For Bulgaria

and Romania, negotiations are continuing and 'road maps' have been approved to support them in their preparation for membership, which they intend to complete by 2007. While Turkey is a candidate country destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as the other candidate States, and benefiting also from a pre-accession strategy, accession negotiations with this country have not started yet. A decision on the opening of accession negotiations will be taken in December 2004 after an assessment of the reforms implemented in Turkey to fulfil the political criteria for membership.

Out of a total of 31 negotiation chapters, two of them focus on aspects of education and culture: Chapter 18 dealing specifically with education and training, and Chapter 20 covering culture and audiovisual policy. Since education and culture are areas that remain primarily the responsibility of Member States there is not a great deal of EU legislation to be transposed by candidate countries and therefore the negotiations process has been fairly straightforward. The main legislative work concerned the audiovisual policy involved in the television without frontiers directive.

Education and culture: focusing on cooperation

EU action in the fields of education and culture consists mainly of promoting the European dimension and encouraging cooperation, establishment of networks and exchange of good practice between the institutions of the Member States, in particular through different programmes (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth, Culture 2000). Since the pre-accession strategy allowed the candidate countries to participate in these programmes well before the conclusion of accession negotiations, it can be said that enlargement is already a reality in these fields.

Apart from the programmes, Chapter 18, on education and training, includes a directive⁽¹⁾ dealing with the access to free education for children of migrant workers, as well as the foundation of two bodies: the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the European Training Foundation (ETF). The candidate countries need also to ensure that, from the date of accession, citizens from the Member States will enjoy the same treatment as their own nationals; for example, students coming from other Member States will pay the same tuition fees as local students. The chapter was provisionally closed with all the candidate countries shortly after the beginning of negotiations: in 1998 for the first group, and 2000 for the second group.

Audiovisual policy: television without frontiers and MEDIA Plus

The negotiations on Chapter 20, on culture and audiovisual policy, were more complex. The provisional closure of the negotiations on audiovisual policy depended on the adequate transposition into the legislation of each candidate country – with effect at the latest by the time of accession – of the provisions of the television without frontiers directive. This directive sets the conditions for a common market in television broadcasting (freedom of reception, rules on advertising and teleshopping, on the protection of minors and public order, on the right of reply, on the

transmission of events of major importance) and encourages countries to promote European audiovisual works and European works produced by independent producers.

Chapter 20 was provisionally closed (after analysis of the level of transposition in each candidate country and discussions with each country's authorities) with the first of the candidates in 1998, with the last of the 10 leading candidates (Hungary) in July 2002, and with Romania in December 2002. Monitoring of the implementation of the new audiovisual legislation and of the development of an appropriate administrative capacity continues.

The MEDIA programme supports the audiovisual sector with a series of measures. Its opening to candidate countries is not directly linked with the negotiations on Chapter 20, but is conditional on the country having reached a significant level of legislative alignment at the time of its participation. As several countries have delayed the entry into force of important provisions of the directive until the time of their accession, only nine countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) will be able to participate in 2003.

(1) A directive is a piece of EU legislation which binds Member States as to the objectives to be achieved within a certain time limit, while leaving the national authorities the choice of form and means to be used.

Cedefop

'Cedefop' is the acronym derived from the French title of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (*Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle*). Located in Thessalonica (Greece), the agency helps the European Commission, the Member States and social partner organisations across Europe make informed choices about vocational training policy.

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The European Training Foundation

The foundation began its activities in January 1995. Based in Turin (Italy), its mission is to contribute to the process of vocational education and training reform currently taking place within its partner countries and territories.

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Spotlight on education and training: the challenges for the candidate countries

EU accession provides both opportunities and challenges for the countries of eastern and central Europe as they seek to become competitive, knowledge-based economies. Impressive results have been achieved in education and training but much remains to be done.

Candidate countries are implementing far-reaching reforms to their education and training systems to respond to the needs of a market economy and a democratic society. Over the last 10 years, impressive results have been achieved: participation in education has increased markedly, curricula for general education have been revised, schools have been given more autonomy. However, substantial challenges remain as they build the foundations of a knowledge society.

Human resources for the knowledge-based economy

With high rates of educational attainment, reputed strengths in mathematics and sciences, a solid tradition of scientific and technical research, and long-established university systems, these countries appear, at first glance, to have a firm basis for meeting the challenges of the knowledge-based economy.

However, the legacy of centralised government control, inflexible systems of research and higher education, as well as rigid distinctions between education and vocational training still pose

deep-rooted challenges. In spite of high educational attainment and enrolment rates, candidate countries overall need to upgrade the skills of the workforce, whose knowledge and competencies are often outdated and ill-suited to new challenges. In a knowledge-based society, individuals need to become lifelong learners, continually adapting to change and seizing new opportunities both at work and beyond.

To address these issues, priority should be given to improving outdated technical equipment, particularly for vocational education and training. Moreover, deteriorating conditions for teachers need to be improved as teachers are the key players in the field. New ways must also be found to increase the critically low level of private investment if efforts to develop lifelong learning across the board are not to be thwarted.



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1. PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP (1999)



Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, *European report on quality indicators of lifelong learning* (2002).

* National Sources, 1998.

NB: No available data for Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Portugal have been chosen as references because they belong to the so-called "cohesion countries" (i.e. their level of development is below the EU average).

2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION AGED 25–64 HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (2001)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2001.

*Data from national sources.

Filling the gap in public spending on education

The analysis of candidate countries' public spending on education shows two major trends. Firstly, public spending on education, expressed as a percentage of GDP, is generally lower in central Europe than the 5.2 % EU average, despite being higher in a few countries, such as the Baltic States (see Table 1). Secondly, private funding remains very low (with the exception of Cyprus and Malta).

Making the most of teaching resources

In many countries, the combination of the rapid opening of new schools in the early 1990s and the demographic changes leading to drops in student numbers in upper secondary education resulted in low student-to-teacher ratios.

Furthermore, the number of teachers as a proportion of the active population is often very high in some countries compared with EU countries. However, the situation of teachers is deteriorating. In general, teachers' salaries have not progressed in line with average salaries in the candidate countries. Their training needs to be improved and updated to deal with the require-

ments of the new curricula being developed and of the new pedagogical and methodological approaches, including the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and e-Learning.

A special focus on tertiary education

Candidate countries will also need to increase the proportion of tertiary graduates, especially in science and technology, which is, with the exception of Lithuania, substantially lower than in the EU. In upper secondary education the candidate countries achieve an impressive 77 % of take-up as against 64 % for EU members. However, while an average of 22 % have completed tertiary education in the EU, the candidate countries' average is only 14 % (see Tables 2 and 3).

Nevertheless, almost all candidate countries are making a strong effort to achieve the EU level for participation in tertiary education.

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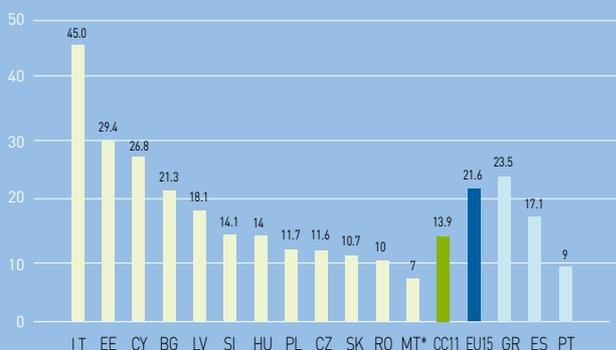
In the field

#19



3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION AGED 25–64 HAVING COMPLETED TERTIARY LEVEL

KEY



*Provided by National Sources.
Source: Labour Force Survey 2001, Eurostat.

BG : Bulgaria
CY : Cyprus
CZ : Czech Republic
EE : Estonia
HU : Hungary
LT : Lithuania
LV : Latvia
MT : Malta
PL : Poland
RO : Romania
SI : Slovenia
SK : Slovakia

ES : Spain
GR : Greece
PT : Portugal

CC11 : 11 candidate countries, average
EU15 : 15 Member States, average

Providing basic skills for all

Although participation in upper secondary education is very high in the candidate countries, with seven candidate countries coming above the EU average of 84.2 %, participation drops after the age of 17. Only Poland and Estonia have scores higher than the EU average of 48.9 % for participation at age 20, and for participation at age 24 only Slovenia and Poland are above the EU average.

However, active policies aimed at raising the educational attainment of the population and at increasing individual choices have resulted in a marked increase in participation in education at upper secondary level in recent years.

Drop-out rates, on the other hand, are increasing in candidate countries, although the rate is still lower than in the EU. Mainly as a result of social problems and difficulties faced by candidate countries in adapting their education and training systems, the number of early school leavers has substantially increased. However, the drop-out rate is still lower in candidate countries (12.9 %) than in the EU (19.3 %) (see Table 4).

As for basic ICT skills, technical equipment is often outdated and schools often fail to receive appropriate funding. However, money has been invested in equipping schools with computers and Internet access. As a result, the ratio of students per computer is comparable to EU countries and the number of schools connected to the Internet is growing quickly.

Promoting lifelong learning

The gap between candidate countries and EU countries in take-up of education and training for 25–64 year-olds is wide. The average for candidate countries is 3.6 %, against 8.4 % for the EU (see Table 5). Although initiatives have been taken in most countries, more needs to be done to develop the necessary building blocks and strengthen the overall coherence of their strategies, especially in order to reach out to the most disadvantaged groups and regions and to encourage partnerships at all levels (e.g. involvement with social partners in vocational education).

Continuing vocational training (CVT) in companies

Poor access to CVT can jeopardise the implementation of lifelong learning policies and, although spending on training by companies is increasing, it has not yet reached levels to offer enough employees training opportunities. According to Eurostat (CVTS2 – 2002), EU Member States have a higher percentage of companies offering training to their workforce than the candidate countries. In 1999, 40 % of companies in candidate countries conducted some form of training, placing them well below the EU average of 72 %.



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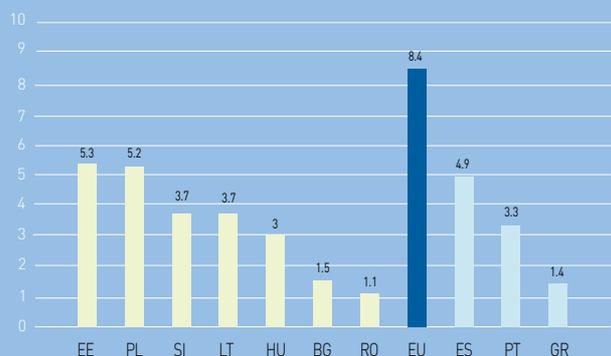
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4. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS (18–24 YEAR-OLDS)



Source: Labour Force Survey 2001, Eurostat, *European report on quality indicators on lifelong learning* (2002).
*National sources.

5. PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (POPULATION AGED 25–64)



Source: Labour Force Survey 2001, Eurostat, *European report on quality indicators on lifelong learning* (2002).



Preserving the identity of the candidate countries ^{and} promoting EU values

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As enlargement moves closer, the opportunities available in the field of education under the Socrates programme have a special relevance for the candidate countries. Socrates emphasises issues of cultural identity, equal opportunities and the enhancement of minority or lesser known languages. By facilitating a varied range of educational exchanges and partnerships it can offer obvious benefits to the candidate countries in these respects.

Jurga Sondeckiene of the Socrates programme agency in Lithuania explains how important it is to preserve Lithuanian cultural identity but, at the same time, to promote traditional European cultural values. 'The Socrates programme is a valuable tool in this endeavour', she says. 'Lithuania has participated in the Socrates programme since 1998. This year there are about 250 projects on school, higher and adult education issues in which Lithuanian institutions are involved. The Erasmus programme started in the 1999/2000 academic year and since then about 2000 students have had the opportunity to study in one of Europe's universities for three or six months.'

The great value placed on such opportunities by the candidate countries is clear from the supporting activities that have been set up in Lithuanian schools and colleges: 'Lithuanian students are well informed about EU education policy and programmes on cooperation in education. Each higher education school has an international relations office, where staff answer questions about how to study in European universities. Seminars and conferences are held for people involved in school or adult education, encouraging them to take part in European cooperation projects.'

Socrates

Overall objective:

- To contribute to the development of quality education and encourage lifelong learning.

Four specific objectives:

- Strengthening the European dimension of education at all levels.
- Improving knowledge of European languages.
- Promoting cooperation and mobility in all areas of education.
- Encouraging innovation in education.

Internet:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html>

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#19 In the field

myEUROPE schools network

Such programmes can also benefit learners across Europe even if they are unable to travel. With information and communication technologies (ICT) another main focus of Socrates, Internet-based activities are a crucial means of exchanging information while helping students become competent in ICT. The myEUROPE schools network, supported by the Socrates programme, is a group of more than 600 schools – from Member States and candidate countries and beyond – forming a unique community of teachers and pupils working to develop, on the one hand, a common European identity and, on the other, an understanding of the cultural diversity that makes the EU so rich. Schools can set up

their own web pages on the site and develop their own projects. A click of a mouse can take visitors inside schools, transport them to different countries and towns as well as reveal a wealth of information on the EU and its institutions. Brigitte Parry, pedagogical coordinator of Spring Day in Europe, a related Internet project beginning 21 March 2003, explains: 'This event has been organised to trigger a debate on the future of Europe to give schools across Europe an opportunity to join the discussion so that children and young people can have a real voice.'



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More than a million students have now spent part of their higher education studying abroad in Europe under the Erasmus programme, which has been progressively extended to 30 countries and will shortly also include Turkish universities. This milestone was marked by a week of events in October 2002, at the same time as a summit meeting of government leaders confirmed that 10 more countries were eligible to join the European Union in 2004.

The Erasmus Week, culminating with a ceremony in Brussels on 24 October, not only celebrated the success of the scheme since its launch in 1987 but also underlined its significance for future students in the enlarged EU. Of the 30 past and present Erasmus participants invited to represent the millionth student at the ceremony, 12 were from the candidate countries, where applications to take part in the programme have been rising fastest among teachers as well as students.

The 30 'Erasmus ambassadors' met Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, chairing the European Council, Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament, who gave them a personal eve-of-summit briefing, Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, and Commissioner Viviane Reding, responsible for education and culture, who awarded them commemorative medals to celebrate the 1 million milestone.

Mrs Reding also announced a target of reaching 3 million Erasmus students by 2010 and launched the Erasmus Student Charter, which each student will receive in future before going to study abroad. It outlines their basic entitlements, such as free tuition and full recognition of studies abroad, as well as the obligations of Erasmus students to both their home and host universities.



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Erasmus

In their own words...

Erasmus students from the applicant countries testify to the high value they place on this opportunity: learn, meet people from different backgrounds, improve their career prospects and develop their identity as Europeans.

Rosen (BULGARIA)

After a four-year painting block and sensual freeze, the amazing landscapes of Portugal unleashed my inspiration again. The raw perception of reality in a beautiful new location and my instinctive desire to sieve all through the filter of my senses melted the inner cataract of my vision almost overnight. Fourth place at the open air drawing contest organised by Braganca Municipality felt like a well-earned reward.

Dora (CYPRUS)

I think that by meeting people from different countries I will be able to increase my knowledge of other cultures and civilisations, and to show that people from different backgrounds can live together.

Tomas (CZECH REPUBLIC)

I don't see the time I spent in Ireland as just a past experience that contributed to my future career, but as an essential background of subsequent knowledge I gathered from the international environment as a whole.

Lasse (ESTONIA)

The design department of the Lund University had just got a new professor and I took a project with him. What started out as a school project to design a telephone for a German company evolved into an actual design process. The company was impressed with our work and wanted to develop the idea so that it could actually be produced. The result is that from the beginning of this autumn, the phone will be sold in stores all around Europe. That kind of possibility would never have occurred in my home country.

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#19 In the field

Adèl (HUNGARY)

The great difference between the educational systems in Finland and in Hungary helped me to develop practically and visually in different fields of media. In Hungary our educational approach places much emphasis on the theoretical, so I had to match my theoretical knowledge with the practical education offered to me in Finland. I had the opportunity to try different branches of the media.

Inesa (LATVIA)

At Coburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany it was very interesting for me not only to study economics, but also to study how to teach by comparing the teaching methods used in both countries.

Malgorzata (POLAND)

Thanks to an Erasmus scholarship, I spent five months at the Johannes-Gutenberg University at the FASK Department in Gernersheim. The academics I met offered me a chance to write my PhD in Gernersheim. They also mentioned the qualifying examinations for a post-graduate programme, European Masters in Conference Interpreting. I passed the exams successfully and spent a further nine months in Gernersheim enhancing my skills as an interpreter.

Milhaela (ROMANIA)

My life has been significantly affected by the Erasmus experience at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Genoa, Italy. I went there to understand architecture as a theoretical experience, but I found also a practical approach. In the office, I learned how they apply their knowledge after university graduation, as an architect or designer. When I get a permanent job as an architect, I will be able to use everything I learned there.

Dominic (SLOVENIA)

I am currently a student in the Theology Faculty of the University of Ljubljana where I have also studied Political Sciences. My Erasmus period at Leuven, Belgium, is scheduled for one year from September 2002. I am quite good at English since I have learnt it for many years, but I hardly have any opportunity to speak it.

Enlargement does not mean that only students from future Member States have the opportunity to take up a period of study in one of the existing Member States, but also that students from the Member States can go to candidate countries to find out about their culture and how their universities work.

expands its horizons

Tadas (LITHUANIA)

Fantastic picnics, dashing trips, staggering parties and books, books, books! Despite my initial worries about not being able to master the specifics of legal terminology in radically different law branches and subjects over such a short period of time, I felt fine at the end of the semester at the Faculty of Law of Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel. Even more, the results of the examinations surpassed my expectations.

Joseph (MALTA)

I will be studying at the Università degli Studi di Bologna in Italy for one semester. The Erasmus experience is both a stepping-stone for further objectives and an objective in itself. Erasmus is an instrument which begins to instil the concept of 'one single Europe' in young people.

Jana (SLOVAKIA)

I did my Erasmus placement at the National Telecommunications Institute in Evry, near Paris. When I arrived and saw the majestic Eiffel Tower through the bus window, my heart began to beat faster and my grip tightened on the piece of paper which stated that I was a student taking part in the European Erasmus programme. A year later I was given the chance to return to Paris, and this time it was a letter from Alcatel which informed me that 'your application for a placement submitted last year has been accepted and we would like to offer you the opportunity to do your final-year dissertation with our company'.

Elisabeth (FROM AUSTRIA TO HUNGARY)

Going to Hungary was the best thing for me to develop a feeling for the ex-communist countries and that we are all Europe!

Susan (FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC)

I undertook my Erasmus visit at the age of 55. I chose the Czech Republic, having enjoyed two previous field trips there when I was an undergraduate. I was the first UK student ever at the Lednice Campus of Mendel University, and was treated like visiting royalty.

Ploteus

comes to fruition



ploteus.net

The Commission has launched a revamp of the Euroguidance network, which provides public information on learning opportunities in Europe. The finishing touches are being put to the European portal, which will help anyone with Internet access to find the course abroad best suited to them.



The Internet link-up, Ploteus (the portal on learning opportunities throughout the European space), builds upon the already impressive achievements of the network set up in 1992

and which now includes more than 50 national resource centres in 30 European countries. In addition to the 15 EU Member States, the network has gradually been extended to cover Switzerland, Iceland and Norway (members of the European Free Trade Association). Twelve of the 13 EU candidate countries have been integrated into the project since 1994, and negotiations are under way to bring on board the last one not yet linked up, Turkey. Since the beginning, the candidate countries have been treated in the same way as the others, including being granted equal funding and access to information. The Euroguidance centres cater for a wide range of people, including school-leavers, whether employed or self-employed, and those wanting to do a traineeship or vocational training.

They describe courses and available job placements as well as the education and training systems in Europe, which vary widely. They also provide information about social security and employment regulations in each country.

National autonomy and Commission supervision

It is up to each national authority to organise its centre(s) as it wishes, so they are all structured differently. Some of them already existed when Euroguidance was set up, while others were created in response to the network. The Commission coordinates and supervises the network, holding about two meetings a year with representatives from each centres. It has been installing the computer software and hardware needed to create the Internet portal, while the centres are supplying it with the actual data contained in the portal.

The Euroguidance network is co-funded by the Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme and will run until at least 2006.

The global annual budget is some EUR 1.1 million, which covers about 50 % of the cost of the centres, helping to pay for staff, operating costs, conference organising and publications. Each participant country receives between EUR 60 000 and 80 000 in financial support.

When a baker discovers new confectionery products

To take one centre as an example, the pivotal figure of the network in Flanders for the past nine years has been Mr Jozef Vanraepenbusch. 'We answer about 5 000 questions each year, drawing on a staff of 25 or 30, some full-time, some part-time', he says. He believes the network is especially valuable for enabling people to acquire skills abroad that are not available in their own country, and which can give them an edge over competitors: 'A self-employed bricklayer went to France and learned about techniques used to colour the façades of buildings. One baker went to Cologne and Aachen in Germany, discovered new confectionery products and then extended his product range in Belgium when he came home'. He says the three most popular destinations for those who contact his centre are France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Asked whether the current funding level is sufficient, he says, it is never enough, but we are managing for now'.



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With Hungary's accession to the European Union looming ever closer, the Commission's Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme is giving young Hungarians a chance to see first-hand how public administration in the west really operates.

Hungarian students

learn how government works in the west



© By courtesy of Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration

'They work more efficiently than in Hungary', according to Kapalin Gabeli, a student in the Public Administration Faculty of Budapest's University of Economic Sciences. She has completed a three-month placement in the mayor's office in the city of Dettingen in Baden Wuertenberg, Germany, which she describes as 'very useful'.

This student mobility scheme is still in its infancy – this is only its second year. The university has so far dispatched about 20 of its finest to do work experience in local authorities, mostly in Germany, as it has close links with the University of Ludwigsburg. Two students have been sent to Rodeiro in Spain, while one has just returned from a three-month stint in Ireland, where her host university was the University of Limerick.

Ms Agatha Bobos, who helps to arrange these placements, is very keen to build upon the Irish link. 'Working in an English-language environment has been especially valuable. And this particular student was given real responsibility in the finance department of a local authority near Limerick', she says.

This pilot project receives funding from the long-running EU vocational training programme, Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo funding helps pay for travel expenses, insurance and daily allowances, but it comes nowhere near to covering all the costs. 'The student in Limerick had to get another part-time job, because the cost of living was so high', says Ms Bobos.

Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci is the action programme for implementing vocational training policy in the EU.

Three objectives:

- Improving the skills and competencies of people, especially young people, in initial vocational training.
- Improving the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the lifelong acquisition of skills and competencies.
- Reinforcing the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation in business.

Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo_en.html

A practical experience of the structure and working methods of public administration

The placements give the students practical experience of the structure and working methods of public administration in the EU.

They also provide an excellent opportunity for improving language skills and learning about different cultures more generally. Kapalin says she spoke German throughout her placement, and was moved into a different department every two weeks, ranging from personnel, finance, taxation, to social and cultural administration.

The students were also able to take part in board meetings in the municipalities. Apart from their daily work, they attended lectures on public administration held by their host institution. In addition, they went on professional excursions, including to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and to different State and governmental bodies in Berlin. This variety of experiences helped the students greatly in writing their theses when they arrived back in Hungary.

One of the long-term aims of the project is to increase their opportunities to work in public administration in an EU country. Of course, with accession in view, the need for such projects will become even more pressing.



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Young at heart



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(in Estonian and Russian)

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The EU's Youth programme reaches out to candidate countries

With 75 million people in the 15—25 age group, an enlarged Europe must ensure that its young people have opportunities to express their views, contribute to society and fulfil their potential. The EU White Paper, *A new impetus for European youth*, has set out ways in which cooperation across Europe can be strengthened both to benefit young people and fully involve them. Its approach and strategy are being extended to the candidate countries, where the population is younger on average than in the European Union (see box below).

What kind of Europe do young people want?

Reet Kost, Head of the Youth Estonian National Agency, explained just how valuable the White Paper is in encouraging the youth of her country to take a pro-active role in developing the Europe of the future in ways that can meet their needs. The process began with meetings, including the Estonian Youth Forum II on 31 October that attracted some 200 young people and youth workers. As well as panel presentations of the priorities described in the White Paper and of how various national youth policies were realising its aims, a workshop for those directly involved in youth work and policy-making was organ-

ised. 'This', she says, 'highlighted the importance of making the White Paper widely available and translating it into Estonian', a plan that will reach fruition in 2003 in cooperation with the non-governmental organisation European Movement in Estonia, the Ministry of Education and her own agency.

The Youth programme, she believes, can help identify the problems that concern young people and find new solutions that bring better opportunities and greater accessibility to all young people, especially the disadvantaged. Non-formal learning

schemes involving greater mobility and voluntary work are new to Estonia and her agency will make it a priority to implement projects that involve non-formal learning methods. She stresses, too, how important it is that candidate countries should be fully consulted and involved. 'Given the fact the EU will become much larger in the near future, the candidate countries should not play less of a role. All the aspects of the White Paper are equally important for young people in Estonia as elsewhere in Europe.'

Objectives of the Youth programme

Overall objective:

- Allowing young people to acquire knowledge and skills and to exercise responsible citizenship.

Three specific objectives:

- Inducing a greater sense of solidarity.
- Involving young people in the European ideal.
- Encouraging a spirit of initiative, enterprise and creativity.

Internet:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html>

In the candidate countries, the population is younger on average

People aged 0—14 years
as % of the total population

Bulgaria	15.9
Cyprus	23.2
Czech Republic	16.6
Estonia	18.3
Hungary	17.1
Latvia	17.8
Lithuania	19.8
Malta	20.4
Poland	19.6
Romania	18.5
Slovakia	19.8
Slovenia	16.1
Turkey	29.7
EU-15	16.9

Source:

The data from the national statistical offices of the candidate countries and assembled by Eurostat reflect the situation in 2000.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/pdf/eurostatjune2002.pdf>

Figures for Bulgaria, Malta and EU-15 are from 1999.

Figures for Cyprus are from 1998—99.

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#19 In the field

Voyage of *discovery*



Aboard the lugger, Lovis, young people share responsibility, study the environment and learn about other cultures as part of the EU Youth programme.

National agencies, youth groups and organisations in the candidate countries as well as in Member States are devising joint schemes in which young people can meet other nationalities and participate in activities that help tackle social and environmental problems. Such schemes are being implemented as part of the EU Youth programme.

Baltic Youth Cooperation is sponsoring an imaginative project in cooperation with a German association, Bildung, Ökologie, Erleben (BÖE e.V.) that takes place aboard the lugger, Lovis. The project draws together participants from Scandinavia, Poland and the Baltic republics and provides an educational tour of the Baltic Sea.

With its unique natural features, the Baltic makes an ideal setting for young people to find out about the challenges to fragile ecologies and what is being done in nature reserves and conservation plans to protect them. The traditional 100-foot sailing ship has been rebuilt and equipped with an engine and bunk accommodation. It can take up to 30 young people in the 15–27 age group, but particularly targets school groups. Although BÖE e. V. provides seminar leaders, the groups themselves organise the journey and choose the theme.

All aboard

Organisers of groups who have participated in a Lovis trip explain how young people benefit from this unique experience. In the confined space of a ship, where the group has responsibility for arranging the itinerary, cooperation is essential. Young people learn a lot about working together and understanding each other, even when there are language problems to overcome. On board, English is the language used but not all the participants are equally proficient; this means they have to be creative in finding ways of communicating effectively. But misunderstandings can occur as a result of cultural differences as well linguistic obstacles. Signe Christensen-Dalsgaard of Nature and Youth, Denmark, accompanied 12 young people on the Harbour Tour in 2000 and noted: 'Even within a relatively small area like the Baltic Sea there are very different ways of thinking, behaving and reacting. At some points this causes frustrations but these misunderstandings were discussed so they wouldn't cause major problems.'

Moreover, the participants had the chance to really involve themselves with environmental protection in different countries. Ester Kokkota of Estonian Youth Nature

Protection, who helped coordinate the Harbour 2000 project in Estonia, appreciated this opportunity as well the original nature of the experience: 'It seemed to me different from others, unique and definitely not typical. It was fun, educative and the purpose was good. It attracted a lot of press attention and in Estonia we were shown on TV and we wrote an article for the local newspaper.' Indeed, several organisers noted the importance of press coverage, because that not only encouraged the participants but also highlighted the environmental issues.

Once in a lifetime

People who have taken part in a Lovis trip stress that it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience life on board a traditional sailing ship, to exchange ideas with people from widely differing backgrounds and to be involved in positive steps to protect a precious environment.



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Promoting a common cultural area

Cultural cooperation is a cornerstone of European integration, building upon east–west solidarity through mutual appreciation and understanding. Integration is already a reality in the Culture 2000 programme as cultural interchanges are building bridges with candidate countries.



© Ethel G.

The Culture 2000 programme

Culture is the fabric that holds a society together. Because Europeans share both cultural diversity and a common heritage, the aim of the five-year Culture 2000 programme is to promote a 'common cultural area' by cooperative projects in all artistic and cultural sectors, including performing arts, visual and plastic arts, literature, heritage, and cultural history.

Since 2001, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia have participated in projects under the Culture 2000 programme. In 2002, these countries were joined by Slovenia. In 2003, Cyprus and Malta will participate in this programme.

In order to facilitate the participation of cultural operators from future Member States in the Culture 2000 programme, cultural contact points have been established in each of these countries. In 2001, a total of 143 cultural operators from candidate countries were involved in annual and multi-annual projects. In 2002, participation increased to a total of 251.

Activities supported under the programme include festivals, co-productions, master

classes, exhibitions, artistic creations, tours, and conferences. They address artists and cultural operators as well as a broader audience, including young people and socially and economically underprivileged groups.

Many literary translation projects are also cofinanced by the Culture 2000 programme, involving poetry and novels being translated from the languages of candidate countries into the languages of EU countries and vice versa. For example, a selection of works by German poet, Erich Fried, is being translated into Slovenian and anthologies of Slovenian poets, Fruili and Kärnten are being translated into German and Italian. Greek novels and poetry are being translated into Bulgarian; many Polish and Croat books are being translated into Italian. Other exchanges are taking place between Poland and Spain as well as between Hungary and Norway.

Apart from Culture 2000, a dialogue on the issues raised by enlargement is also taking place at European level through conferences, seminars and workshops thanks to the help given by the EU to organisations of European cultural interest such as EFAH (European Forum for the Arts and Heritage) and IETM (Informal European Theatre Meetings).

Culture 2000 is the first EU framework programme in the area of culture. It is a five-year programme (2000–2004), implemented through three types of actions:

- specific innovative and/or experimental actions;
- integrated actions covered by structured, multiannual, transnational cultural cooperation agreements;
- special cultural events with a European or international dimension.

Internet:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/index_en.htm

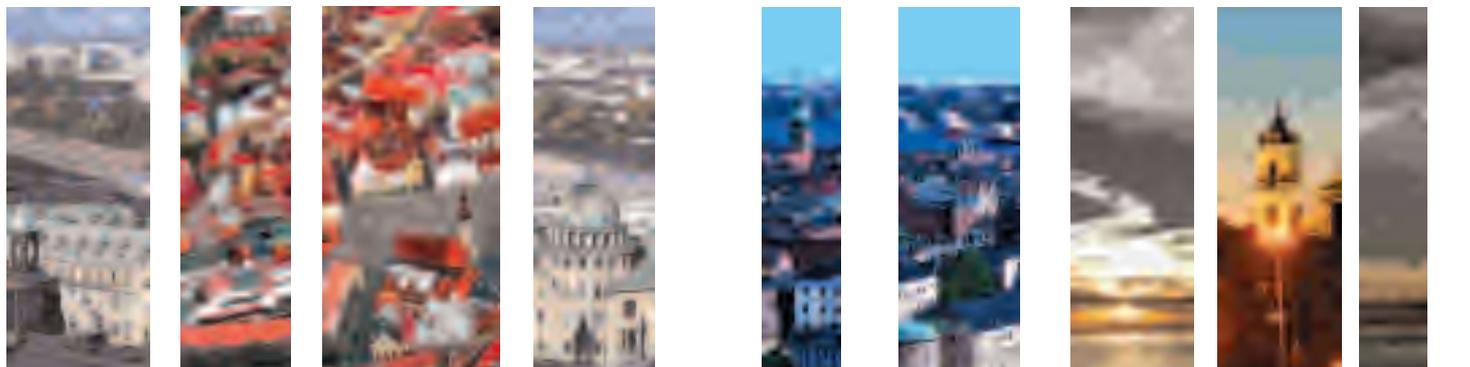


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Getting to know **the neighbours**

With the help of the Culture 2000 programme, EU Member States and candidate countries of the Baltic region are drawing up a comprehensive guide to the cultural similarities and differences of the various countries in the region.



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#19 In the field

Compiling a cultural overview of the history of the diverse Baltic region is no easy task. The encyclopaedic reference work, *Guide to Baltic Sea States' Affairs* includes scientists' analyses and explanations of the differences in outlook of the region's culture and environment. It will be made available on CD-ROM in seven languages: Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Swedish, Finnish, English and Russian.

This publication is of 'paramount importance' according to project leader Jüri Martin, because neighbouring countries know very little about each other. The English language edition is particularly valuable as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania prepare to join the EU. The Russian language edition is badly needed because the Russian authorities stick to an alternative approach to the interpretation of events, past and present. 'We want to help the Russians eliminate their misperceptions or lack of knowledge, which, as in the Soviet period, they call "blank spots" in history', says Martin.

While the final product will include information on general topics, project researchers are also digging up scores of little-known

cases and events in the region. 'We believe that not only big wars, conflicts or international achievements make history. Quite often it's the small events, institutions or actions that serve better to characterise this or that nation.'

The project is also expected to create a base for finding better opportunities to advance cultural integration, to develop a cross-cultural dialogue and stimulate the study of the history and culture of European nations.

With an EU grant of EUR 576 666, the three-year project brings together the Estonian Euroinfo Society – Eurouniversity (Tallinn), the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University (Lithuania), the Riga Institute of Humanities at Latvia University, the Baltic Business School of Kalmar University (Sweden) and the Arctic Centre of Rovaniemi University in Finland.

Teamwork — finding a common denominator

A list of keywords to be included in the final product has been compiled and refer-

enced articles are being written. A Tallinn graduate student maintains daily electronic contact with participants and does the coordination work.

'One of the most important things is to build teamwork, which often becomes very complicated with so many participating countries', explains Martin. 'Each partner has his or her own views and of course different languages, which does not make it easy to find a common denominator.'

These types of challenges continue today as authors work together to collaborate on other tough issues. However, Martin is enthusiastic about the outcome, as all contributors bring a rich knowledge and unique perspective to the project.



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A fragile renaissance of the movie industry



© Photos
Chronos Film
2001

In 2004, 10 countries from eastern Europe and the Baltic area will join an enlarged European Union, followed by two others three years later. Some have rich cinema traditions and have nurtured a well-known — if not flourishing — film industry, with such acclaimed creators as Polish directors, Andrzej Wajda and Roman Polanski. On the eve of European reunification, how is the audiovisual industry faring in the candidate countries?

© Photo Chronos Film 2001

The transition of east and central European economies from communism to capitalism dealt a heavy blow to their audiovisual sector. Short of funds, the nearly ruined audiovisual industry feared a total invasion of US products through the powerful American distribution machine. However, starting in the mid-1990s, the film industry in eastern Europe experienced a sort of renaissance sparked by scores of local hits and a multiplex development(!) frenzy.

The professionalism of the local industry has long been recognised. A number of Hollywood studios have regularly taken advantage of the region's low labour costs to shoot such films as *Blade 2*, *Bad Company (aka Black Sheep)* and *Hart's War* in the Czech capital's renowned Barrandov and Prague Studios.

In Poland, the film industry has seen a metamorphosis from a small, State-backed sector of art-houses into an industry backed by private investors. Polish Television (TVP) and Canal Plus Polska are the main backers of the 20–25 projects produced annually. Polish distributors are investing in home-grown films, which have proved to be a more lucrative business than western European imported films. The same is true in the Czech Republic, where audiences have rediscovered their local creators after the huge success of Jan Sverak's films *Kolya* (1996) and *Dark Blue World* (2000), and Jan Hřebejk's black comedy *Divided We Fall* (2001).

The European Audiovisual Observatory points out that in general 2001 was a

good film-production year in central and south-eastern Europe, the most significant increases being in Poland⁽²⁾, Romania and Cyprus. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Slovakia also saw increases in the volume of production. A Czech film, Jan Sverak's war drama *Dark Blue World*, topped the box office in the Czech Republic, while in Poland the year's three top spots were all national productions (historical drama, *Quo Vadis* by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Gavin Hood's *In Desert and Wilderness* and Filip Bajon's *Spring to Come*). The market share of locally produced films even reached 41.6% that year. In Hungary, the most successful local film was Gabor Koltai's *Sacra Corona*, while two local comedies, *Vizontele* by Yilmaz Erdogan, and *Komser Sekspir* by Sinan Setin, headed the top 10 in Turkey.

As far as viewing audiences are concerned, a number of central and south-eastern European countries reported significant growth in 2001, a 7.8 % increase in Slovakia, 18.8 % in the Czech Republic, 20 % in Estonia, 13.7 % in Hungary, and an impressive 40 % rise in Poland.

The market share of western European films in these countries is generally less than in EU Member States. Owing to their vulnerable economic situation, the candidate countries are not in a position to resist the massive influx of American films, which acquired between 60 and 85% of the market. Much of the western European market remains relatively closed to productions from candidate countries: between 1996 and 2001, only 42 films from central and eastern Europe were distributed commercially in at least one EU

Member State for a total of 2.2 million viewers and a market share of just 0.054 %.

Since membership negotiations began in 1998, the audiovisual landscape in the candidate countries has evolved substantially as regards public policies and the regulatory framework. In most of these countries, the broadcasting sector has been liberalised and new legislation has been adopted to put them in line with the EU *acquis* in the area of audiovisual policy (the television without frontiers directive). They are now a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Transfrontier Television and its amending protocol. In some cases, further legislative fine-tuning in the definition of European audiovisual works and the promotion of European and independent projects is required. Efforts are also needed to reinforce the capacity of the administrative bodies created to monitor the implementation and control of the new rules.

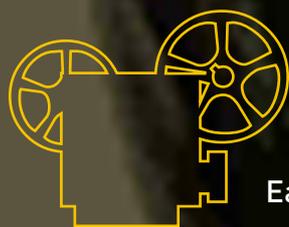


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European Audiovisual Observatory
Internet: <http://www.obs.coe.int/>

(1) The number of screens has been declining since the late 1980s with the closure of small theatres in several countries (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic). Between 1993 and 2000 the number of screens in central Europe decreased from 3 639 to 2 835.

(2) A total of 29 films were produced in comparison to an overall total of 22 films in 2000.



Eastern Europeans now ready to play in the MEDIA club

Plus

Film and TV professionals from several candidate countries will not have to wait until the official date of enlargement, May 2004, before they can receive EU financial support to develop, distribute and promote their works. The doors are also open for those who wish to participate in all training initiatives developed within the European Union to increase their skills and their competitiveness in the international market.

Creators, producers and distributors from five candidate countries (Poland, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria) are already participating in the MEDIA programme, following the memorandum of understanding they signed with the European Commission last summer. Their colleagues from Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia will now join them in 2003, as their governments have already taken steps to participate in the programme.

Projects from these new participating countries are now fully eligible to receive financial support from the MEDIA programme, for example, to distribute EU films in their home country. Likewise, EU distributors can also receive EU financial support for distributing and promoting films and audiovisual works within the EU originating from the newly participating countries.

Each new country participating in MEDIA will make a financial contribution to the programme, partly through its national budget and the rest via the Phare programme. The procedure for participating in the MEDIA programme is the same for film producers and industrialists in the audiovisual sector of the applicant countries as in the current EU Member States.



The **MEDIA programme** aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry with a series of support measures.

MEDIA brings support both before and after production. It co-finances training initiatives for audiovisual industry professionals and the development of production projects (feature films, television drama, documentaries, animation and new media), as well as the distribution and promotion of European audiovisual works.

Internet:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/index_en.htm



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According to two recent surveys of language skills, nearly half the people in the 13 European Union pre-accession countries can hold a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue. This finding shows the candidate countries on a par with the 15 existing Member States.



Foreign language skills in the candidate countries



One reason so many people in the candidate countries are almost bilingual is that six of them use closely related Slavic languages and so intercommunicate with relative ease. Another factor is that the large ethnic minorities in many of these countries often speak the mother tongue of their country of residence as a second rather than as a first language.

Russian spoken most widely

Russian, not English, tops the league as the most widely spoken foreign language in six of these countries, although the percentages of people able to converse vary widely from just 2-3 % in Hungary, Slovenia and Romania to as high as 83 % in Lithuania. English fares best as a second language in Malta (84 %), where it has been one of the official languages for some time. After Malta come Cyprus (57 %) and Slovenia (46 %). At the other end of the spectrum, only 14 % of people in Hungary speak English, 13 % in Bulgaria and 10 % in Turkey, which has the lowest percentage among the candidate countries.

German is the next most widely used second language with 38 % of Slovenians, 27 % of Czechs and 20 % of Slovaks able to hold a conversation. French, however, is not used as much in the candidate countries as in current Member States. Romanians have the highest percentage

of French speakers (13 %), next come Malta with 9 % and Cyprus with 6 %. In Estonia and Latvia, only 1 % of people can converse in French.

The larger picture

When raw information about the candidate countries is integrated with statistics on foreign language skills in the Member States, six of the candidate countries move easily into the top half of the rankings, outshining many of the existing Members in numbers of their bilingual and multilingual citizens:

- Slovenia falls into second place after Luxembourg;
- Malta ranks fifth out of the 28 countries;
- Slovakia is seventh;
- the Czech Republic 10th;
- Latvia 12th;
- Estonia 14th.

The United Kingdom is bottom of this league, just behind Hungary.

However, if the similarities between Slavic languages, which make them less distinctly foreign tongues, are taken into account and the figures are adjusted accordingly, then Malta ranks second after Luxembourg, Slovenia occupies sixth place, Latvia 10th and Slovakia 12th. Even so, large Member States such as France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and the UK still perform worse than seven of the candidate coun-

tries, and the UK still lags behind them all. An enlarged Europe would present a different foreign languages profile from the Europe of 15, where 40 % of Europeans can hold a conversation in English, 18 % speak German, 16 % French but no significant percentage can speak Russian. In an enlarged Union, those figures would change to:

- 35 % for English;
- 16 % for German;
- 11 % for Russian;
- 10 % for French.

Whether European citizens learn a second language for travelling, studying or doing business, these new findings provide a useful basis for making an informed choice about the language that will be most suited to their needs.



Information

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LOKI

fosters integration

through language and culture

Focusing on four central and eastern European countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania – the LOKI project helps overcome linguistic and cultural hurdles with a multimedia learning package combining language acquisition with social and cultural awareness.



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Even before the formal enlargement of the EU, greater opportunities for travel, business and study have been opening up throughout the candidate countries, but many people find that linguistic and cultural hurdles make those opportunities difficult to grasp. The languages of east European countries, for example, are not systematically taught in Member States' schools and traditional commercial or public sector courses for adults seldom cover them. Add to that the fact that many EU citizens are unfamiliar with these countries' cultural and social norms and it is clear that a considerable information gap exists.

Help is on hand, however, with a multimedia learning package that combines language acquisition with social and cultural awareness. Focusing on four central and eastern European countries: Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and Hungary, the courses are being produced by a consortium coordinated by the University of Antwerp's Centre for Language and Speech within the framework of the Socrates Lingua action. The package, entitled LOKI: Integration through language and culture, complements the existing successful distance language-learning system of LINC: An interactive approach to language and culture. This suite of materials is based firmly on the tenet that language does not exist in a vacuum but is intimately bound up with the social and cultural identity of

the society in which it is used. Whether on business or as a tourist, the traveller can thus be forearmed with valuable information about the way of life and customs of the destination country as a framework in which to place the language being learnt.

The materials used for LOKI range through current affairs, social issues, the environment, poverty, healthcare – subjects of topical interest all with a European bias. 'Their cultural authenticity is guaranteed by the fact that they are being selected and developed in partnership with universities and private training groups within the four countries themselves. Learners will thus be able to absorb the cultural information relevant to each country as they learn the formal language elements such as vocabulary and grammatical structure', says Sven Van Elst, one of the project coordinators. LOKI is available at three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced in all four languages.

Targeted at a wide spectrum of language learners, LOKI provides general training in active language skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading). For those pursuing educational objectives, the course covers key activities such as outlining, summarising, criticising and discussing. Business skills are also covered, with sections dealing with areas such as negotiating, presentations and auditing. The materials can be used in formal

teaching situations but are especially adapted to autonomous learning by individuals.

Learner support

Besides the video clips, reading material and exercises provided on the interactive CD-ROM, learners can access a dedicated website providing additional information and obtain feedback from a virtual classroom. Those learners who lack the self-discipline and motivation to work entirely alone will find this backup invaluable. By combining new technologies in this way, LOKI provides a flexible package that learners can access in their own time and at their own pace. Following its test phase, LOKI should be available early in 2003.



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The Commission and the enlargement process

The Directorate-General for Enlargement has a dedicated website with information on the enlargement process, the negotiations and background data on each candidate country. An agenda of official visits and meetings is also available. The website currently only exists in English.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/events/index.htm>



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