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Enlargement Weekly

22 April 2002

Welcome to Enlargement Weekly. This weekly bulletin provides an overview of whe European Union enlargement has got to, who's doing what in the EU, in the institutions ar candidate countries, and how the main challenges are being met. [Previous issues]

Articles this week

CZECHS AND SLOVAKS CAN NOW MANAGE SAPARD

The Czech Republic and Slovakia have been given the go-ahead to start operating the EU pre-accession farm aid programme, Sapard. The decision comes after a careful scrutiny by tl European Commission of the national management arrangements these two candidates ha put into place. And the result is that both countries will now have immediate access to the fir tranche of funding under the programme - which could be as much as € 11 million for tl Czech Republic, and € 9 million for Slovakia.

For the Czech Republic, the scheme means it will receive € 22.4 million per year, and f Slovakia, it means € 18.6 million per year. The Czech Republic will be able to make a immediate start on seven of the strands in its Sapard programme: investments in agricultur holdings; improving the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery product improving the structures for quality controls of foodstuffs and for consumer protection; lar improvement and re-parcelling; renovation and development of villages and rur infrastructure; development and diversification of economic activities providing for multip activities and alternative income; and technical assistance. And Slovakia can commence fiv of the strands to its Sapard programme: investments in agricultural enterprises, improving th processing and marketing of agricultural and fish products, diversification in rural area forestry, and land consolidation.

Franz Fischler, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisherie welcomed the decisions. "This is good news", he said. He spoke appreciatively of these tw candidates' "considerable efforts to prepare for this", and looked forward to seeing Sapa help them "tackle priority problems in the field of agriculture and rural development".

To benefit from Sapard, candidate countries must have their Sapard agency accredited. A soon as Slovakia concluded its own national accreditation work - with an Act of Accreditatic issued by the Slovak authorities - the Commission was notified, and conducted its ow examination and audit, which resulted in an approval after supplementary information ar clarifications were obtained. This rigorous approach is necessary because the Sapard schem allows for project selection, tendering and contracting to be undertaken by the applica countries without prior approval by the Commission - unusually for EU funding programmes non-EU countries. The logic behind this approach is that by decentralising management to th candidate country, Sapard gives future members an opportunity to gain experience in applyir the mechanisms for EU funds, as well as obtaining the benefits of a rural developme programme. The Sapard agencies in the candidate countries will also build skills that will b readily transferable to the management of other EU funds.

The Special Pre-Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (to give Sapa its full name) was established in 1999 to support the central and eastern European candidate as they prepare for their participation in the Common Agricultural Policy and the Single Marke It has two major objectives: to implement the EU acquis; and to solve priority problems in th field of agriculture and rural development. So far, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovenia, Lithuania hav also received EU authorisation for management of Sapard funds.
See http:/europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/index_en.htm

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SLOVENIA WINS PRAISE AT COOPERATION COUNCIL, BUT STILL "DIFFICULTIES T DEAL WITH"

"We have been successful compared to other candidates, and we now have 26 negotiatir chapters closed. We have been commended. But we have also been criticised - especially c backlogs in our courts, on administrative capacity, and on other delays", said Dimitrij Rupe Slovenia's minister for foreign affairs, emerging from the EU-Slovenia Association Council Luxembourg on 15 April.

The formal statement issued after the meeting listed many areas of EU satisfaction: continue macro-economic stability and economic growth, low unemployment, the reduction in th current account deficit, "significant progress" in aligning its legislation to the acqu communautaire (and "most of the institutions necessary for the implementation of the acqu are now in place"). In particular, it welcomed Slovenia's implementation of legislation phasin out the duty-free element in all land-border shops - a longstanding area of tension during th negotiations. It also welcomed the progress made by Slovenia in the functioning of its judiciar

But it encouraged Slovenia to further reduce the number of pending court cases, and stresse the importance of an effective and independent public administration. It also encourage adoption of "the remaining framework legislation to reform it", and said the denationalisatic process needed further speeding up so it could be finalised before the end of 2002. Th statement urged Slovenia to take further measures to ensure long-term budget sustainabilit to tackle inflation, to increase labour market flexibility, and to pursue the privatisation proces and to increase competition in some key sectors of the economy. It said the emphasis shou now be put on the implementation of adopted legislation, and transposition of the rest.

For the European Commission, director general for enlargement Eneko Landaburu said it ha been "a successful meeting", and since last year's meeting there had been "much progress the Copenhagen criteria and in negotiations". But, he continued, there are still "difficulties t deal with, and improvements needed before the end of the year - in public administrativ reform, faster denationalisation process, and privatisation to create fully competitive economy He said there was nothing alarming about this: some of the gaps in Slovenia's state preparedness were to be expected. For instance, implementing EU regional policy - a ne challenge for Slovenia, as it is for all the candidates - will be a problem without new efforts preparing the structures and procedures and training the staff to carry it out. But Landabu was optimistic that the Commission's special assistance to the candidates on boostir administrative capacity, which has been coming on-stream since the Laeken summit December 2001, was having its effect: "There should be some results to report at the Sevil Council", he said.

ACHIEVING MACRO-ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THE CANDIDATES

The European Commission is urging the candidate countries to take macroeconomic ar financial sector stability challenges more seriously. "It is vital that candidate countries app permanent vigilance", it says in a new report from the Directorate General for Economic ar Financial Affairs . "It is crucial that they develop their own capacity for implementir permanent and continuous system-wide risk monitoring as their economies dynamical expand", says the report. And to ensure that none of this is left to chance, the report sets o for each candidate what is doing right and what wrong - as part of the process of dialogue wi accession countries that the November 2000 Ecofin Council established. The key observatior on each candidate's macroeconomic situation are as follows:

Bulgaria

Bulgaria has good potential to continue achieving further high growth rates over the comir years, although unlikely as high as the 5.8% of the year 2000. The high unemployment ra and low domestic investment are key problems for the Bulgarian economy as is the larc public debt which necessitates that public finances be kept close to balance. Because of th currency board arrangement, major negative shocks to economies that Bulgaria has clos links to will rapidly affect the domestic business cycle.

Cyprus

The macroeconomic challenges for Cyprus originate mostly from the external sid Deteriorating export conditions, notably in tourism, could lead to a growth slowdown and widening current account deficit. Capital liberalisation on the outflow side has been lagging. too many restrictions remain to be lifted until very soon before accession, destabilisir speculation could ensue. The objective of the fiscal consolidation programme to reac budgetary balance by 2004 will help to keep the current account deficit sustainable and maintain macroeconomic stability, while providing increased flexibility in fiscal policy option Further liberalisation of the economy and resulting efficiency gains will contribute toward decreased vulnerability of the economy to tourist demand fluctuations by helping to mak sectors other than the tourist sector more competitive as well.

Czech Republic

Now the economy has emerged from prolonged recession, domestic economic conditions general bode well for growth. High investment, to a large extent induced by strong foreic capital inflows, upgrades the economy's production capacities and its competitiveness, b also contributes to a large current account deficit. The present slowdown of the Europea economy is showing its first impacts on Czech export performance, which is also sufferir from the strong appreciation of the Czech koruna against the euro. If privatisation is complete by the end of 2003, foreign capital inflows might shift away from FDI and develop mo erratically and expose the exchange rate to fluctuations that could challenge monetary polic At present, the Czech economy's main challenge is to pursue consistent fiscal consolidatio

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As fiscal policy is an important tool to successfully manage external shocks and to lim contagion effects on the financial sector, it is vital that the authorities pursue fisc consolidation.

Estonia

Estonia can be expected to realise moderate to high growth rates over the coming year Sound public finances and an open and flexible economy have proved to offer furth opportunities for sustained growth. The high unemployment is an obvious problem for th Estonian economy. The openness of Estonia's economy exposes the country to the € are business cycle, and the effects are rapidly transmitted into its domestic economy. The degre of openness in general, as well as the concentration of exports on certain countries ar product groups, might carry the potential for continued volatility of macroeconom development.

Hungary

Hungary's main macroeconomic challenge will be to maintain external competitiveness durir a period of slowing external demand and rapidly rising wages. While an anti-cyclical fisc expansion temporarily provides some compensation on the domestic side for the slowdown external demand, it could put additional pressure on the budget as well as on inflation in th medium term. The main growth risks are a further significant deterioration of external demand together with the present strains on external competitiveness, on the basis of strong re appreciation of the currency and real wage increases that exceed productivity gains. Eve beyond privatisation, the inflow of growth-stimulating foreign direct investment and inte company loans is expected to continue to finance an important part of the current account. Th government's announced intention to resume fiscal consolidation will be key to containing risk both to the external and the internal equilibrium, allowing the economy to return to sustainable dynamic growth path.

Latvia

The Latvian economy has stabilised over the recent past. Inflation and budget deficit hav declined, whereas exports and investments have grown significantly. However, the curre account deficit, which decreased for a couple of years, began to increase again in 2001. Som indicators point to a continuing strong growth and an accelerating domestic demand. Th strong growth has so far taken place without any increase in employment, but any furth expansion of the economy is expected to gradually raise demand for employment. If the labo market, which suffers from very low geographical mobility, cannot adapt to this increase demand, it might have a negative impact on both inflation and the current account. So whi growth in itself does not seem to be a challenge, an eye should be kept on the resultir current account deficit in the coming years.

Lithuania

Lithuania has successfully reduced its current account deficit, as well as the budget deficit ar inflation. Growth has stabilised and the fundamentals are in place for further stable growth the coming years. Still, substantial risks for the macroeconomic development persist. So fa growth has to a large extent been driven by external demand, while domestic demand ha been suppressed - largely contributing to the positive development in Lithuania. The slowdow in the US and the EU, combined with strengthening of domestic demand, could endang continuous improvement of the main economic indicators. The situation on the labour mark remains unbalanced; the unemployment rate has increased steadily during several years, ar worsening of unemployment is a problem for growth and for public finances. Taking in account forthcoming investment needs, the financing of the pension reform, and the saving restitution, the goal of achieving a balanced budget will remain a challenge in the future.

Malta

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Malta's macroeconomic challenges stem primarily from the maintenance of its extern competitiveness and the reduction of the government deficit to sustainable levels. A potenti decline in exports could lead to lower growth and persisting high current account imbalance Although the high level of the current account deficit experienced in 2000 is seen a temporary, the savings-investment balance could deteriorate in comparison with the recei trend and might increase vulnerability if non-debt-creating inflows are insufficient to large finance the deficits. The ongoing capital movements liberalisation increases the potential fi higher volatility of capital flows and international reserves. Maintaining extern competitiveness will be crucial for the coming years to reduce potential risks. In this regard, will be fundamental to maintain wage growth moderation and to continue with structur reforms to increase the competitiveness of the Maltese economy. At the same time, fisc policy needs to progress towards further consolidation.

Poland

The main macroeconomic challenge for Poland in the run-up to EU accession will be to ensui that the economy can expand at a rate of growth of above 5% and thereby ensure re catching up, while maintaining a sustainable current account deficit and curbing the rapid ris in unemployment. Given the domestic savings and investment imbalance, further fisc consolidation is needed to alleviate current account pressures in the medium term. Or potential spillover from macroeconomic developments in the financial system could come fro the nature of the financing of the current account deficit, and Poland's vulnerability to invest sentiment. The floating currency regime combined with still sizeable external deficits expose the economy and the financial system to potentially large swings in the exchange rate. Shoi term debt levels are low, but the foreign exchange exposure of the financial and corpora sectors combined is hard to assess. The foreign exchange exposure of the banking sector reported to be within prudential limits, but there is little available data on the foreign exchang exposure of the corporate sector.

Romania

The main challenges to Romania's macroeconomic and financial stability originate from th limited progress made towards the establishment of a functioning market economy. Albe incomplete, past reforms have established a sounder basis for economic development, a reflected by the resurgence of growth, the expansion of exports, the improved access to th international financial market, the rise in official reserves and the healthier state of the bankir system. Nevertheless, macroeconomic stability still needs to be secured and the financi sector remains weak. To avoid a repetition of the disorderly adjustments of the past and achieve a comprehensive restructuring of the economy, a resolute acceleration of structur reforms is needed. Most urgently, a further deterioration of the current account must b avoided. This calls for a sustained tightening of fiscal and income policies and improve financial discipline in the public enterprise sector,

Slovakia

The current Slovak government has achieved significant results in macroeconom stabilisation. Nevertheless, unemployment remains high and the trade and current accou deficits have surged in 2001. Fiscal measures, in particular strict adherence to th government's fiscal consolidation commitments embedded in the Pre-Accession Econom Programme and consistent with Slovakia's Staff Monitored Programme with the Internation Monetary Fund, are required to contain the current account deficit. Consistent compliance wi the announced privatisation plans will help to finance the current account deficit. In th medium-term, challenges continue to originate mostly from the external and fiscal side. Re convergence will require considerable investments and this will keep the current accou deficit sizeable. The deficit may in particular remain a source of vulnerability if the amount foreign direct investment diminishes and if it is financed by increasingly debt creating, shor term, and potentially more volatile capital inflows.

Slovenia

Following years of positive economic expansion and conservative macroeconomic policie robust growth continued in 2000 but slowed somewhat in the course of 2001. Despi uncertainties surrounding the foreign demand outlook and a more restrictive fiscal stanc positive growth prospects prevail for the medium term. Current account deficits have bee modest and are expected to remain so. For 2001 the deficit was small, partly as the result lower domestic demand. Exports generally showed strong growth but are expected to slo down somewhat. The real exchange rate is held more or less stable through a manage exchange rate to offset relatively high inflation. The almost completed liberalisation of capit flows could force a relaxation of the real exchange rate target. Inflation has been relatively ar persistently high. The central bank has so far largely accommodated persistent inflationa pressures. Bringing inflation down to lower levels remains a key policy challenge.

Turkey

Turkey's economy is currently in a phase of consolidation, after experiencing the wor economic slowdown since 1945. Substantial measures have been taken in order to increas macroeconomic and financial stability, but it is still too early to fully assess their overall impac The completion of the present reform package and the quality of implementation will be key f achieving sustainable macroeconomic developments and a sound financial sector. Turkey recent macroeconomic performance has been characterised by high volatility and a relative low average growth rate. The main underlying factors for this development are the short-ter orientation of economic policy by frequently changing coalition governments, and accumulate market distortions resulting from political intervention and postponed structural reforms. Hig public sector deficits created a chronic high-inflationary environment impeding medium-ter planning of economic agents. Considerable public sector financing requirements crowded o private investment and drove up domestic interest rates. Volatile inflows and outflows of shor term capital had a direct impact on money market and investment conditions. Fiscal policy dominated by servicing the considerable public sector debt, which increased further as a resu of bailing out the financial sector. Thus, public expenditures are strongly affected by intere rate fluctuations and there is no room for allowing automatic stabilisers to work. The prese reform package has started to address the structural imbalances.

Overall, the Commission report says that if the new macroeconomic and financial sect challenges in the candidates are not properly handled, it could "disturb the integratic process". Candidate countries' real convergence with current Member States has so far bee relatively modest and growth performance has been mixed. There is a need to create a enabling environment for faster growth and accelerated real convergence. However, if n properly handled by economic policy, the real convergence process could give rise excessive economy-wide or sectoral growth fluctuations. The catching-up process depends c continued high investment and rapid technological change and may be associated wi sizeable domestic savings-investment gaps. Domestic savings may not keep pace wi investment needs. In some cases financial sector development may even lead to decreases net private sector savings. Prudent fiscal policies will be crucial to avoid prospectively negati private savings-investment balances inducing unsustainable economy-wide saving investment gaps and corresponding current account deficits.

In addition, the report insists, the banking sectors in transition candidate countries do not y properly fulfil their financial intermediation role, so they cannot support economic growth ar macroeconomic stability as well as they should. The low overall intermediation may be prude banking behaviour against the backdrop of a lack of lending opportunities with sufficient attractive risk-return profiles and a lack of long-term funding, but it may also be a lack banking capabilities, the report suggests. Matters are further complicated because the no bank financial sector in transition candidate countries is still only starting, and does n compensate for limited bank intermediation. As well as promoting viable securities markets, is important that the regulatory and supervisory framework and its implementation as well a the framework for corporate governance and shareholder rights are being further developed s as to foster the confidence of investors, the report urges.

ENLARGEMENT DRIVING EU THINKING ON THE WIDER EUROPE

Over the coming months the EU is aiming to create a more consistent framework for i relations with the countries just beyond the fringe of the current enlargement exercise. Th General Affairs Council held what EU Council President Josep Pique described as "a interesting and wide debate" on the subject when it met in Luxembourg on April 15-16. Th issue for the Council is how to deal in the future with Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russ now that EU enlargement is bringing much closer the day when these countries will be dire EU neighbours. The European Commission and High Representative Javier Solana w prepare contributions to the thinking during the second half of 2002 on the possibilities f strengthening these relations.

Other meetings in the margins of the General Affairs Council examined specific aspects of th same challenge. The agenda of the Co-operation Council with Russia on April 16 include discussion of trade, where expectations are high, since more than a third of Russia's expor are to the EU, a figure expected to increase to around 50 % after EU enlargement, ar Kaliningrad, which will be encircled by EU member states after enlargement. Pique said c Kaliningrad "We're really making progress", and a special meeting of the EU-Russia C operation Committee is to be held in Kaliningrad in mid-May, with the hope of presenting sor concrete results at the May 29 EU-Russia summit in Moscow. European External Relatior Commissioner Chris Patten also described progress as "very good". The EU recognised, h said, the concerns of the Governor of Kaliningrad over access and visas and wanted to fir "the most suitable solution without driving a coach and horses through the Schenge Agreement". EU justice and home affairs ministers will look at transit and visas at their Counc meeting in April. "It is a real challenge and there are real problems because of enlargemer and we want to tackle them as successfully and comprehensively as possible", said Mr Patter

Moldovan Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev headed his delegation at the Co-operation Counc between the European Union and Moldova on 16 April in Luxembourg - a long meeting, as E Council President Josep Pique remarked after the meeting, running to an unusual two hour but justified by the importance that Moldova will increasingly have as a neighbour of th enlarged European Union. In addition to the opportunities for closer links on trade and oth forms of co-operation, the EU is concerned about remedying weaknesses in law and order th have created opportunities for crime and trafficking on a sensitive border area of what will b the enlarged EU.

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Enlargement news in brief

Negotiations open on institutions

The European Union is starting its talks with the twelve candidates in negotiations on the fin chapter - institutions. On April 19 and April 22, EU ambassadors and candidates chi negotiators will have their first exchanges on the questions covered by this chapter, particular voting rights and representation in the European Commission and Parliament. The chapter c budget and finance will also be discussed with ten candidates (but not with Bulgaria ar Romania). The chapter on structural funds and regional policy will be opened with Cypru Estonia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. Cyprus will also discuss the veterinary and phyt sanitary aspects of the agriculture chapter, and taxation. Romania will also discuss justice ar home affairs and social policy and employment. Latvia will also discuss telecommunicatior and information technologies, Lithuanian will also discuss justice and home affairs, ar Bulgaria will also discussion economic and monetary union and social policy and employment

Enlargement progress "reasonable", says General Affairs Council

"We have done reasonably well with enlargement", said EU Council President Josep Pique a the end of the April 15 General Affairs Council in Luxembourg. Foreign affairs ministe conducted a review of progress with enlargement, with presentations by the Presidency and b European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen. , The Council formally "welcome progress achieved in the accession negotiations", and restated its determination to mov ahead in line with the Nice road map for opening negotiating chapters, and the end-200 timetable for concluding accession negotiations agreed by the European Council in Götebo and Laeken. Because the Council can only move as fast as the EU's internal preparatior allow it, it also recalled that, "in order to stick to the road map established at Nice, it essential to establish EU Common Positions in the relevant remaining negotiating chapters" that is, the tough financial chapters of agriculture, regional policy and budgets. And, as N Pique remarked after the meeting, "We expect this week to receive more draft commc positions" from the Commission. The Council also adopted without discussion a decision th should help improve trade arrangements for processed agricultural products with Hungar The decision was the formalisation of an EU position in further talks to be pursued in the EU Hungary Association Council.

New member states "will be net contributors in first year"

On an optimistic estimate, new EU member states could obtain about three quarters of the E resources available for them after accession, according to a new study from the Vienr Institute for International Economic Studies, WIIW. "The EU enlargement process: curre state of play and stumbling blocks" assesses the likely balance between transfers from ar contributions to the EU budget by the new members of the EU in the first three years aft enlargement. Their net financial position will depend on their success in turning availab resources into disbursed transfers, the study says. Its less optimistic projection is that ra would be 50%, reflecting the rates of the worst performing EU members in receiving transfe from EU structural funds. And its worst-case scenario suggests a success rate of only 30% based on disappointing experiences with pre-accession aid in some candidate countries. Eve in the best-case scenarios, the first year of membership would most likely see the ne members assuming a net contributor position, to the tune of € 400 million to € 1.8 billion, th study says. In the worst-case scenario, the loss could be €3 billion. But in all three scenario the estimated net financial position will improve considerably in the second and third years membership. However, the study concedes that a purely mathematical approach is n sufficient to make a full assessment of advantages and disadvantages: "Possible no enlargement would entail considerable costs for the ten applicant countries in terms of th opportunities they would lose of achieving higher GDP growth rates", it adds.

Another warning from Poland

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Speaking at the Madariaga European Foundation on 16 April, Poland's former chief negotiato Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, warned that "the danger for delay still looms" over the accessic negotiations. He listed as the key risk areas possible hitches in the final stages of negotiatior now the difficult chapters are under discussion, non-ratification of the Treaty of Nice, and th possibility that debates in the EU's Convention on the future of Europe could lead to addition procedural delays. But, he went on, "delay could increase negative public opinion towards E membership, as could a reticent EU during negotiations". Faced with growing EU scepticism Poland, Saryusz-Wolski urged the EU to "lend a helping hand" in the final lap of negotiation for the benefit of all.

"Flexibility" in negotiations, says Verheugen

European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen says he is ready to be flexible in th upcoming negotiations. He told Latvian prime minister Andris Berzins - who came to Brusse on April 18 to express disquiet over the European Commission proposals on agriculture, ar particularly on quota levels - that "our position is the opening for negotiations - it is n something we are imposing", he said. The Commissioner said he had understanding for th Latvian position - "and we have flexibility in our approach... We are ready to discuss ar negotiate - I try to find solutions which are mutually acceptable and which do not crea negative social effects". He pointed out that as Commissioner, he was not in a position to sa what the member states would decide, but he said he had given the Latvian prime minister h commitment to help in the search for flexibility.

Romania making progress, but "needs more action against corruption"

Commenting on the present political situation in Romania, the EU-Romania joint parliamentai committee meeting on 15-16 April in Brussels took note of the "important efforts of tr Romanian government on its path to economic reform and its commitment to EU accessioi targets which demand a strong cohesion and consensus of the political forces and of tr population in the country". But it also asked the Romanian authorities "to act in a fashic allowing it to benefit from a high level of trust amongst the citizens, to improve its standards ‹ transparency in public life and in public administration and to strengthen its reaction ‹ corruption, without confusing the defence of individuals' reputation with the national interest". described the fight against corruption through an effective and well-informed strategy "as major challenge and test of Romania's modernisation". Corruption "must be resisted governmental and non-governmental bodies", it insisted, and welcomed the more active an corruption efforts of authorities and non-governmental bodies, including the establishment, la January of the National Anti-Corruption Prosecutors Office. But it expressed "concern aboi the limited result of the national plan of action against corruption of October 2001 and asks fı its serious and prompt implementation".

Agenda

Date	Event
April	
Monday 22nd	European Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin visits Slovenia European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen receives Bulgarian foreign affairs minister Solomon Passy, Brussels EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels
Tuesday 23rd	European Parliament foreign affairs committee debates Kaliningrad, and hold discussions with Meglena Kuneva, chief negotiator of Bulgaria,and the EU's negotiator, Morten Jung-Olsen, Vasile Puscas, chief negotiator of Romania, and the EU's negotiator Enrico Grillo Pasquarelli, and with Janez Potocnik, chief negotiator of Slovenia and the EU's negotiator, Jaime Garcia-Lombardero. European Commission President Romano Prodi and Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen receive the Maltese prime minister Fenech Adami, Brussels EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels
Tuesday 23rd-Wednesday 24th	European Commission conference on entrepreneurship in candidate countries, Maribor, Slovenia
Wednesday 24th	EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels European Commission scheduled to adopt economic forecasts for the candidate countries
Thursday 25th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen speaks at Forum Europe conference on EU enlargement, Brussels European Internal Market Commissioner Frits Bolkestein visits the Czech Republic and meets deputy prime minister responsible for labour and social affairs Vladimir Spidla, and finance minister Jiri Rusnok.

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	Pat Cox, European Parliament President, meets Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, Brussels
Friday 26th	European Internal Market Commissioner Frits Bolkestein visits Slovakia and meets deputy prime minister Ivan Miklos, finance minister Frantisek Hajnovic, and economic affairs minister Lubomir Harach. EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels EU Political and Security Committee meets with candidate countries, Brusses
Thursday 25th-Friday 26th	Meeting of the liaison officers of the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries, Malta
May	
Thursday 2nd-Friday 3rd	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Slovakia
Monday 6th	European Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler visits Bulgaria
Tuesday 7th	Meeting of the EU-Hungary Joint Consultative Committee, Budapest,
Monday 13th-Tuesday 14th	Meeting of the EU-Poland Joint Consultative Committee, Poland.
Thursday 16th-Friday 17th	European Institute of Public Administration conference on "A roadmap for candidate countries: how to steer eurozone integration economically", Maastricht
Thursday 23rd	Meeting of the EU-Slovak Republic Joint Consultative Committee
Thursday 23rd-Friday 24th	European Commission Vice President for Transport and Energy Loyola de Palacio visits Poland
Wednesday 22nd-Friday 24th	Meeting of the EU-Romania Joint Consultative Committee, Alexandria
Thursday 30th-Friday 31st	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Bulgaria
Friday 31st	Negotiating session at the level of deputies (EU ambassadors and candidates' negotiators), Brussels. European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy visits Malta
June	
Monday 3rd	Possible negotiating session at the level of deputies (EU ambassadors and candidates' negotiators), Brussels.
Monday 10th	General Affairs Council will review the state of the enlargement process,

	Luxembourg
Monday 10th - Tuesday 11th	Ministerial negotiating session with foreign ministers of the EU and of the candidate countries, Luxembourg
Friday 14th and Saturday 15th	Czech Republic parliamentary elections
Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd	Seville European Council: European Commission reports on the implementation of the plan of action for strengthening the candidates' institutions.
Monday 24th	Informal meeting of education ministers from the EU and the candidate countries, Bratislava
Wednesday 26th	EU/European Economic Area (EEA) consultative committee will discuss the implications of EU enlargement for the future of the EEA at its annual meeting, Egilsstadir, Iceland
July	
Monday 1st	Start of Danish Presidency of the EU: the aim is to close negotiations before the end of the year with those countries that are ready. The Laeken summit noted that, if progress is maintained in the negotiations and in the reforms, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia could be ready.
Friday 5th	European Commission conference on enlargement from a local and regional perspective, Brussels
Thursday 11th-Friday 12th	Economic and Social Committee Joint Consultative Committee with Turkey, Erzerum
Autumn	
Details tbc	Estonian local elections
Details tbc	Slovak parliamentary elections (probably September)
Details tbc	Slovenia presidential and local elections
October	
Details tbc	Hungary local elections
Details tbc	Latvia parliamentary elections
Details tbc	Poland regional elections

Wednesday 2nd-Thursday 3rd	Meeting of liaison officers from supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors, Luxembourg
24th and 25th	Brussels European Council: enlargement will be on the agenda and the Commission's regular reports on the candidate countries may be available.
November	
Details tbc	Ecofin Council discusses the report on economic dialogue with the candidate countries
Details tbc	Lithuania presidential elections
Thursday 28th and Friday 29th	Meeting of the presidents of the supreme audit institutions of the member states and the candidate countries, Luxembourg
December	
tbc	Meeting of heads of supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors, Bucharest
Thursday 12th, Friday 13th	Copenhagen European Council - enlargement may be on the agenda again, taking account of the aim of concluding accession negotiations by the end of the year.

Archives

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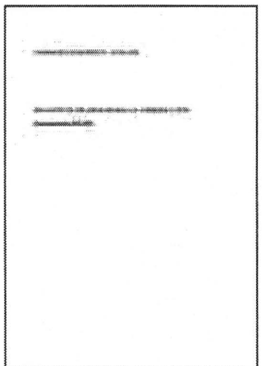
Comments are welcome and should be addressed by e-mail to enlargement@cec.eu.int.

The EU's relations with Latin America

Document de stratégie régionale 2002-2006

& Programme Regional Indicatif 2002-2006



• Text intégral

Amérique latine : Commission européenne adopte une stratégie pour coopération régionale 2002-2006

IP/02/598 - Bruxelles, 22 avril 2002

La Commission européenne a adopté deux décisions importantes pour sa coopération régionale avec l'Amérique latine. Premièrement elle a développé une stratégie régionale de 5 ans. Les actions prioritaires de ce programme sont la promotion de l'intégration régionale par le renforcement des réseaux de la société civile, une initiative sociale pour contribuer à la réduction des inégalités et un programme pour la prévention des catastrophes naturelles. Le budget indicatif régional est de 250 M€. La deuxième décision porte sur un programme de bourses d'études de haut niveau, doté de 45 M€ pour la première phase 2002-2005 (Alßan). Saluant l'approbation de ce programme par la Commission, le Commissaire des Relations extérieures, Chris Patten, a déclaré: « Ce programme ambitieux est une expression concrète du renforcement du partenariat bi-régional, tel qu'initié au Sommet Union Européenne/Amérique latine de Rio en 1999, à la veille du Sommet de Madrid en mai 2002. Il constitue également une des réponses de la Commission européenne pour aider les pays d'Amérique latine à faire face au double défi d'une transformation économique visant à rendre leurs économies plus compétitives tout en assurant la stabilité des institutions démocratiques et la modernisation de l'administration publique ».

L'Amérique latine est caractérisée par de grandes différences de développement entre les pays et au sein des pays eux même. Confrontés aux enjeux de la mondialisation les deux défis majeurs concernent l'intégration régionale et la réduction de la pauvreté qui atteint 40% de la population. L'objectif est de contribuer au développement économique et politique de la région tout en s'attachant à la réduction des inégalités sociales, pour que la croissance économique soit plus équitablement distribuée. Deux axes d'intervention prioritaires ont été privilégiés :

Le renforcement du partenariat entre les réseaux de la société civile des deux régions :

Par le lancement de nouveaux programmes :

- ***@lis :*** la promotion de la société de l'information. Ce programme est doté de 67.5 M€ et était déjà annoncé en décembre 2001(1); il sera lancé par Erkki Liikanen, Commissaire de l'Entreprise et Société d'Information le 26 avril à Seville, Espagne. http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/alis/index_en.htm

- ***Alâan :*** Un nouveau programme de bourses de haut niveau pour permettre à 3900 étudiants et chercheurs latino-américains de venir étudier et faire des recherches dans des universités européennes. Cela permettra un accès plus large aux universités européennes au service de la modernisation des structures politiques, économiques, sociales, éducatives et culturelles de l'Amérique latine. Dans la première phase 2002-2005, Al€ßan est doté de 45 mio €. Le programme est prévu jusqu'à 2010 avec un montant totale de 88 mio €. Le programme sera lancé officiellement par le Commissaire aux relations extérieures Chris Patten, le 16 mai 2002 à Madrid.
  http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/Alban

Par la continuation de programmes existants :

- ***URB-AL :*** Un programme de coopération décentralisée auquel participent 1200 villes des deux régions avec pour objectif de développer des liens directs et durables entre collectivités locales.(2)
  http://www.urb-al.com/
- ***ATLAS :*** Un projet d'appui aux relations entre les Chambres de commerce des deux régions, afin de faciliter les transferts de savoir-faire entre les CCI (200 chambres concernées - 6 M€)
- ***AL-Invest :*** la promotion du commerce et des investissements en facilitant les rencontres entre petites et moyennes entreprises des deux régions (40 M€)
  http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/al-invest/index_en.htm
- ***ALFA :*** La coopération entre universités (27 M€).

Initiative pour la réduction des inégalités sociales (30 M€):

L'objectif de cette initiative est d'améliorer la capacité des administrations latino-américaines à développer des politiques sociales (fiscalité, dépenses publiques, système de santé notamment) et à lutter contre l'exclusion de certains groupes de la population. Cette objectif sera poursuivi avec les activités suivants :

- Développer des bases d'information sur les populations défavorisées à travers des opérations de recensement et des enquêtes
- Développer une méthodologie applicable aux dépenses publiques sur une base pilote
- Identification de politiques ciblées sur les populations pauvres
- Actions de formation et diffusion

Renforcer la prévention et la préparation aux catastrophes naturelles et assurer la mise en oeuvre rapide des actions de réhabilitation et reconstruction (40 M€) , notamment à travers :

- de mécanismes permettant la mise à disposition rapide des fonds communautaires pour la réhabilitation et la reconstruction
- le soutien aux actions de diffusion et d'acquisition des expériences couronnées de succès
- l'élaboration d'un annuaire regroupant les organisations nationales et régionales de protection civile d'Amérique latine et d'Europe, d'un inventaire de sources d'aide et d'un manuel d'orientation pour le coopération en cas de catastrophes
- des actions de formation et d'échange d'information entre autorités compétentes.

Comme action d'accompagnement un **observatoire des relations EU-Amérique latine** sera développé, pour créer un réseau d'instituts des deux régions permettant le suivi des agendas des relations UE-Amérique latine et multilatérales, ainsi que des thèmes sous-regionaux (1,5 mio €).

En outre, la création d'un réseau des administrations responsables dans le domaine de la **gestion durable de l 'énergie** est prévu pour 2005/2006 (20 moi €)

Background :

La stratégie régionale est complémentaire des actions de coopération développées aux niveaux sous régional et national avec les pays d'Amérique latine. Elle tient compte notamment des priorités thématiques dans les domaines de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme, de la protection de l'environnement, de la lutte contre la drogue et du soutien à l'action des ONG. Elle vise aussi la complémentarité avec les actions communautaires de coopération entreprises par le passé ainsi qu'avec celles des principaux donateurs dans la région.

La Communauté européenne est la seule institution à mener une coopération bi-régionale en Amérique Latine. Ce document est le premier d'une série de stratégies concernant les pays d'Amérique latine et ses sous régions (Amérique centrale, pays andins et Mercosur).

17 pays sont concernés par la stratégie régionale : le Mexique, Panama, le Guatemala, le Honduras, le Salvador, le Nicaragua, le Costa Rica, la Bolivie, la Colombie, le Vénézuela, le Pérou, l'Equateur, le Brésil, l'Argentine, le Chili, l'Uruguay, le Paraguay.

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(1) **IP/01/1761**

(2) **Dans sa nouvelle phase (2000-2005), URB-AL est doté de 50 M€. Ces fonds etaient obtenus sous des accords antérieurs.**