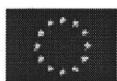


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Countries

Topics

News

Library

Contacts

Enlargement Weekly

28 May 2002

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

Articles this week

- ★ [Tough talk from ten candidates](#)
- ★ [MEPs support enlargement](#)
- ★ [How the European Parliament views the candidates](#)
- ★ [Tensions underlie Cyprus joint parliamentary committee meeting](#)
- ★ [More on Danube cooperation](#)
- ★ [Enlargement News in Brief](#)
- ★ [Enlargement Agenda](#)

TOUGH TALK FROM TEN CANDIDATES

All EU policies, including the structural and cohesion policy and the agricultural policy, should be "fully extended" to the new member states, according to the ministers of foreign affairs of the ten candidates aiming to complete EU accession negotiations before the end of 2002. They made a joint demand on May 22 for what amounts to more money to fund EU enlargement.

Meeting in Warsaw, the ministers of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia set out "four major requirements" for the outcome of negotiations on agriculture and financial framework - most relating to the financial terms of accession. But they insisted that "in order to fulfil these requirements, adequate

financial resources should be made available by the European Union for enlargement".

If any need for transitional arrangements or phasing-in periods is justified for financial structural and cohesion policy and agriculture, said candidates' ministers, these periods should not go beyond 2006, the end of the EU's current financial perspectives. They also say they want "equal conditions for farmers from current and new Member States...in order to guarantee their competitive position".

In addition, say the candidates, the net financial position of the new Member States after accession, including during the first year of membership, "should improve compared to the last pre-accession year".

The candidates' ministers said in their joint declaration that respecting their demands "is essential not only for the quality of the ten countries' membership in the European Union but also for generating support for the Accession Treaty in referenda". The ministers also reaffirmed their determination to conclude accession negotiations by the end of 2002, so as to become Member States by 1 January 2004 - and they made clear they expect the European Council in Seville in June to confirm this time-table and objective.

Bulgaria and Romania did not take part in the meeting. This is the first meeting at this level of the ten candidates identified by the EU as being likely to conclude negotiations this year and join in 2004.

MEPS SUPPORT ENLARGEMENT

There was strong support for EU enlargement from two European Parliament committees last week. On May 21, the budget committee gave its backing to a draft report from Reimer Böge on the financial implications of EU enlargement, which urges a realistic effort by member states to find workable compromises with the candidates. And on May 22, the foreign affairs committee endorsed the draft report by Elmar Brok and several colleagues on progress in the negotiations, which carried a similar message.

The text of the Böge report, as adopted by the committee, contains a sharp reminder to the member states of the need to look beyond their own national interests in finalising the negotiations. It "insists that the governments of the current member states do not jeopardise the enlargement process by adhering to national positions, but work together to find an agreement on the financial aspects of enlargement".

The text stresses the merit of concluding negotiations on all remaining chapters with the candidate countries by the end of 2002, so that the enlargement can take place in 2004. And underlines that the accession negotiations should not focus only on "the differences of interest between current member states"; negotiations must take into account "the needs and position of the candidate countries", and the result of the negotiations "has to balance the financial possibilities and the legitimate claim of new member states to be supported in raising the standard of living and the quality of life in their countries in accordance with the objective of economic and social cohesion in the European Union".

Similarly, the foreign affairs committee said member states should "find a satisfactory agreement as soon as possible on the common position for the chapters on agriculture, regional policy and budgetary issues so that these may be completed in sufficient time to close the negotiations as provided for in the road-map".

The report explicitly "aims to encourage the Commission, the member states and the candidate countries to accomplish their tasks during this crucial year of the accession process". And it expresses "firm commitment to support all efforts of candidate countries and the Commission in this crucial stage to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion by the end of this year in order to welcome as many new members as possible in 2004".



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

Overall, the candidate countries are urged to undertake more decisive action to overcome the problems of the Roma minorities, and to submit a report before the end of the accession negotiations on past and current actions, with firm commitments as to how to resolve remaining problems before the end of this decade. They are urged to promote good governance, to "combat efficiently the corruption which undermines efforts to consolidate the rule of law", and to ensure civil society support for government policy. Here too Parliament wants a report on corruption before the end of the accession negotiations, similarly covering the past and the future.

HOW THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VIEWS THE CANDIDATES

The European Parliament's foreign affairs committee's report on accession negotiations and the candidates included a brief series of individual country reports. Among the highlights:

- * it takes note of Bulgaria's concerns about being left behind in the accession process, and supports the view that a clear signal from the EU, with a definite timetable and a clear marked-out road-map, backed by generous pre-accession assistance, should be given by the time of the Copenhagen Council in December 2002; at the same time, it reminds Bulgaria that attention needs to be paid to the qualitative and transparency aspects of the privatisation programme.

- * on Cyprus, the draft report "reaffirms that only a single sovereign Cypriot State will be permitted to accede" - and although that State may be bi-zonal and bi-communal, "it has to be a fully functioning entity at international level and must be in a position to exercise decision making power".

- * the Czech Republic is reminded "that an efficient and effective civil service is an important prerequisite for both the political criteria and the implementation and enforcement of the acquis", and is urged to continue wide-ranging reform of the public administration and to adopt a civil service law.

- * Estonia needs to focus more on the search for optimal solutions rather than the rapid closure of more chapters; and on energy. Estonia's "problematic dependency on oil shale for its electricity supply can be scaled down only in the longer term", it says, and in the meantime "substantial investments to diminish the harmful impact of the oil shale industry on the environment need to be made" - with, the committee urges, EU assistance.

- * Hungary should "seek above all to control inflation and impose strict budget discipline. And in light of the objections which Hungary has raised to the Commission's enlargement financial proposal, it hopes for a mutually acceptable solution, "without undermining the principles of differentiation and merit as regards the accession of candidate countries, the aim being to place present and future Member States on a footing of fair competition on an open internal market".

- * Latvia and the EU would be "best served by a fair and open dialogue on the challenges and difficulties" still to be overcome, based on a strong shared commitment to concluding the pre-accession process in a timely and successful way", the draft report says. It also "notes with concern the continuing problems in the judiciary, including the backlog of court cases, the length of pre-trial detention and the often very bad prison conditions".

- * Lithuania's judiciary "is still in need of major improvement" and there is an urgent need to "strengthen the integrity of the judiciary, facilitate its operation and improve its standing". The committee also "regrets that only limited progress has been made in cutting the length of pre-trial detention and improving prison conditions".

- * For Malta, the draft "regrets that the Maltese Labour Party, the largest opposition party, does not support Malta's accession to the Union". But it welcomes senior Labour Party leader participation in the Convention on the Future of Europe as a signal "that Malta considers it



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

future to lie within the Union".

* Poland needs effective supervision of state aids, and a solution to the problem of the tax advantages accorded to the special economic zones, "so as to avert distortions of competition and enable this negotiating chapter to be closed". On agriculture, the Member States should "adopt a common position to pave the way for negotiations... in a spirit of openness seeking to offer Polish farmers the prospect of remaining competitive on the Union market". But Poland must, at the same time, speed up structural reforms in this sector. The draft report also expresses anxiety at Poland's unemployment (17.4% of the working population in December 2001), "which could further impoverish Polish society and jeopardise economic and social cohesion".

* Romania's "laudable" goal of completing negotiations before June 2004 is "a profound challenge", and the committee urges faster adjustment to EU political, economic and social standards. The committee also speaks of "the endemic problem of corruption", and the urgency of carrying out a strategic reform of the public administration and its depoliticisation as well as the elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive policy framework for internal financial control of public funds, including those managed under EU pre-accession aid.

* In Slovakia, facing elections later this year, all political parties need to support the government in maintaining the momentum towards accession, "so that there will be no slowdown due to the fact that the election campaign has already been launched", says the draft. And it deplores "the attitude of some opposition parties in continuing to boycott parliamentary positions such as the committee chairs which were allocated to them according to proper parliamentary procedure".

* In Slovenia, reforms in the procedure for land registry still need implementation, and framework legislation in order to create an independent, professional and accountable civil service is still needed. The committee also calls on the government to speed up privatisation in the insurance sector and to continue to reduce the overall prominence of state ownership in the economy through privatisations.

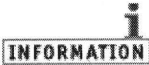
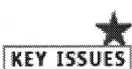
TENSIONS UNDERLIE CYPRUS JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETING

The anxiety over finding a solution to the Cyprus problem was a constant theme in the meeting of the EU-Cyprus Joint Parliamentary Committee in Nicosia on 22-24 May. Cyprus has made extraordinary progress in the accession negotiations and is clearly among the frontrunners for EU membership, the committee concluded. But, it went on, the solution of the Cyprus problem before accession "would be beneficial for all".

A solution is not, of course, a precondition for EU membership - as the EU has already established, and as the committee echoed. But, the committee said, the solution should aim at establishing one state, with single sovereignty, international personality and citizenship which should be able to speak with one voice and able to implement the *acquis* rapidly and effectively and participate in the work of all committees, institutions and organs of EU as or state entity.

There was strong support for the talks now underway between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. Michael Leigh, a director in the European Commission's Enlargement Directorate General, confirmed the EU fully supported the talks in the search for a political settlement. 2002 was crucial not only for the process of enlargement as a whole, but also for the future of Cyprus, he said. And he claimed that EU membership offered to all Cypriots the opportunity for economic well-being and political security. Anything arising from the political settlement that had implications for the *acquis* could be accommodated in the accession framework, he promised.

The need for a solution recurred in critical comments about the Turkish navigation and trade embargo against Cyprus, or "continuing destruction of the cultural heritage in the area".



Cyprus under Turkish occupation". And Cyprus' foreign minister Ioannis Kasoulides suggested that the Turkish side was not showing the same flexible attitude on the core issues as was the Greek Cypriot side.

MORE ON DANUBE COOPERATION

A conference in Vienna on 27 May will launch an informal Danube Co-operation Process aimed at re-establishing full navigation by clearing the bridge at Novi Sad in Yugoslavia this summer. The four initiators of the process will be represented at the conference in Vienna by Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase, European External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten and Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe.

The countries bordering the river in the Danube basin - Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the FR Yugoslavia - are also planning comprehensive cooperation in economy, environment, tourism, culture and subregional activities, including Euro regions.

So far, projects identified include the Sava River Basin Initiative, under which Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have agreed to cooperate to develop the Sava River as an international navigation route; a regional infrastructure programme which aims to provide a second fixed Danube crossing (a combined road/rail bridge) between Bulgaria and Romania, at Vidin-Calafat, and to rehabilitate the Bulgarian port of Lom, where efficiency and effectiveness have been impaired by conflict and blockades in the region.

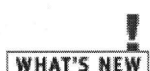
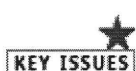
Enlargement news in brief

"Too early to discuss precise accession dates"

European Commission spokesmen dismissed as "a storm in a teacup" controversy which sprang up in Poland last week over accession dates. Polish media reported European Commission Enlargement Director General Eneko Landaburu as suggesting that the first accessions might take place on 1 July 2004, provoking official Polish complaints over what was seen as a six-month slippage in the envisaged enlargement timetable. In particular, concern was expressed in Poland over the potential loss of half a year's EU funding if accession did not take place at the beginning of the year. But the Commission's official response was that the EU's political commitment had already been made clear by the European Council. The Laeken summit in December 2001 stated that the EU is "determined to bring the accession negotiations with the candidate countries that are ready to a successful conclusion by the end of 2002, so that those countries can take part in the European Parliament elections in 2004 as members". At this point, when there are still "difficult negotiations ahead", it is not the time to discuss precise accession dates, said the Commission.

"Gains for Latvia's local governments after accession"

Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Indulis Berzins told local government representatives that they would be given broad opportunities to use EU funding after accession - provided that they are ready to use the offered resources. He was discussing the place and role of local governments in the EU when he met officials and elected members of Ogre town council during a domestic tour. EU funding would be channelled to support small and medium-size enterprises and the agriculture sector, and to upgrade infrastructure and to develop Latvian regions. He emphasised that it was in Latvia's interests to make maximum use of the opportunities that the EU offers for national and local development, and that it was "Latvia's duty to be able to use these opportunities". And talking to local schoolchildren, he urged them to "actively acquire education so that Latvia would be competitive in the future Europe".



Danish Presidency warns of urgency on accession negotiations

Denmark, which is due to take up the Presidency and manage the close of enlargement negotiations in the second half of 2002, is already emitting public signals of concern that slow-down this year could delay enlargement for years. Completing negotiations with the first candidate countries is one of the incoming Presidency's top priorities, but Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has identified three immediate obstacles: agreeing to a financing package for the new Member States, resolving the division of Cyprus, and obtaining Irish endorsement of the Nice Treaty. Rasmussen suggested that delaying enlargement this year could give rise to calls from some member states for concluding the new Treaty negotiations, or even agreeing the new financial perspectives for 2007-2013, or the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, before admitting any new members. He claimed that delay now could mean delay for as much as six years.

Elections creating new waves for EU enlargement

Edmund Stoiber, the Bavarian Minister-President, who might well replace Gerhard Schröder in the Federal Chancellery after the German general election in September, has recently said in public that he would want to see the Benes decrees repealed before the Czech Republic was admitted to the EU, and that he found it difficult to foresee a European Union that includes Turkey as a member. And the new political majority in the Netherlands is showing some hesitancy over enlargement. Leading Christian Democrats, who are expected to lead a new coalition government, have been insisting on the need for a tough EU position. Maxim Verhagen, who could become the Dutch foreign minister, has stated his opposition to a large scale early enlargement, and has warned that the new government might refuse an enlargement in 2004.

Solana sees enlargement and post-enlargement priorities

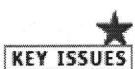
"The European Union is an attractive pole of stability, democracy and prosperity", said Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council and High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, speaking on "Europe's place in the world" at the Danish Institute of International Affairs in Copenhagen on 23 May. "We have maximised our status as a 'net exporter of stability' by acknowledging legitimate aspirations to join our Union; while emphasising that this is dependent on a commitment to our common values. Consequently, enlargement will ensure that Europe is bound together by these basic values, both internally and in its relations with the rest of the world. For the first time in our history we can look forward to the unification and stabilisation of our continent not on the basis of conquest, nor on the basis of an armed balance of power, but on the voluntary acceptance of and commitment to a set of values that inspires our civilisation", he said. But he stressed that the number one priority for an effective foreign policy would be to devote attention to "our neighbours, to the east and to the south of the enlarged EU. Our security, and partly our prosperity, will increasingly depend on stability at our borders", he said.

Latvia and Lithuania sign up to PECAs

Latvia and Lithuania each signed protocols with the EU on conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products to the Europe Agreements - PECAs, as they are known - in Brussels last week. These agreements are designed to ease free trade with the EU, even before accession, on products which are subject to regulatory assessment - electrical safety, electromagnetic compatibility, toys and construction products for Latvia, and machinery, lift trucks, personal protective equipment, electrical safety, electromagnetic compatibility and simple pressure vessels for Lithuania. Similar agreements with the Czech Republic and Hungary are already in force, and talks are in progress with Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

US farm policy "a threat to EU enlargement"

"The new US farm policy poses a threat to the efforts within the European Union to reform the



Common Agriculture Policy, and thereby also to the Eastern enlargement", according to Swedish Liberal Democrat Karl Erik Olsson MEP. Speaking at the opening of a European Parliament hearing on "Integration of New Members into the CAP - Effects on Agriculture East and West", Olsson said: "The new US farm policy, which increases agricultural support comes at an unfortunate and sensitive time. It can throw a spanner in the works of successful EU enlargement. An appropriate agricultural policy within the EU is needed in an enlarged EU. The increased level of support will raise trade barriers and give all those who don't want to reform the CAP a trump card. Instead of expecting candidate countries to fully adapt to the CAP - which is anyway about to become out-dated - we should try to find a middle way."

EU grant for OECD work with candidates

The European Union is planning to provide Euro 80,000 to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, among other things to boost competitiveness in the candidate countries. The grant is intended "to support actions which create a peer pressure with a view to implementing sound enterprise policies that support competitiveness in candidate countries and Stability Pact countries; and to complement the multilateral and bilateral dialogue with national administrations of candidate countries and Stability Pact countries that is organised at EU level, with a regional dialogue focused on the exchange of experience between representatives of public authorities, the private sector, bilateral donors and international financial institutions."

Agenda

Date	Event
May	
Tuesday 28th	<p>EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels</p> <p>European Parliament President Pat Cox visits Latvia, and meets Vaira Freiberga, president of Latvia, prime minister Andris Berzins, foreign affairs minister Indulis Berzins, and chief negotiator Andris Kesteris</p> <p>Meeting of the President of the European Parliament with the presidents of the parliaments of the candidate countries, Riga</p> <p>EU-Lithuania joint parliamentary committee, Vilnius</p>
Wednesday 29th	<p>EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels</p> <p>Candidate countries take part in EU Council of Ministers CIREFI working group, Brussels</p>
Thursday 30th	<p>EU Council of Ministers working group on the drafting of the EU Treaty meets, Brussels</p> <p>EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels</p>
Thursday 30th-	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Bulgaria



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

Friday 31st	European Parliament President Pat Cox visits Hungary
Friday 31st	European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy visits Malta and takes parting the meeting of candidate country trade ministers Accession negotiations with candidates at deputy level, Brussels
June	
Saturday 1st	European Commission President Romano Prodi takes part in international conference on enlargement, Naples
Monday 3rd	European Enterprise Commissioner Erkki Liikanen visits Slovenia
Thursday 6th- Friday 7th	European Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Antonio Vitorino visits Poland
Thursday 6th- Saturday 8th	EU-UNICE conference on entrepreneurship and sustainable development in an enlarged Europe, with sessions in which candidate countries present economic achievements and investment opportunities.
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
Wednesday 11th-Thursday 12th	EU-Slovenia joint consultative committee with the EU Economic and Social Committee, Ljubljana.
Friday 14th and Saturday 15th	Czech Republic parliamentary elections
Sunday 16th- Monday 17th	European Competition Commissioner Mario Monti visits Lithuania
Monday 17th- Tuesday 18th	European Culture Commissioner Viviane Reding visits Slovakia
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

★
KEY ISSUES

!
WHAT'S NEW

...
FAQ

@
MAIL-BOX

Az
INDEX

?
SEARCH

i
INFORMATION

M
FEEDBACK

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
Thursday 27th-Friday 28th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits 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



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

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.

★
KEY ISSUES

!
WHAT'S NEW

...
FAQ

@
MAIL-BOX

Az
INDEX

?
SEARCH

i
INFORMATION

IV/
FEEDBACK

Archives

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