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Enlargement Weekly

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11 June 2002

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

Articles this week

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" ENLARGEMENT IS NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM, IT IS PART OF THE SOLUTION " VERHEUGEN

"Enlargement is not part of the problem, it is part of the solution", Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen insisted last week. "We know the concerns of our citizens" as regards enlargement, "but we have the answers to these concerns" he said in Brussels. He attacked head-on the preconceptions that cheap labour influxes will destroy employment in the EU, or send real estate prices soaring in the candidate countries, or lead to opportunities for international crime and increases in corruption and fraud.

"There were widespread fears over the consequences on the labour market of the Spanish and Portuguese accession, but there was no invasion of cheap labour and the transition arrangement agreed was therefore also shortened" he said. And "the negotiations have shown that when concerns are well founded, reasonable solutions can be found. We have found

instance found a compromise concerning the free movement of labour and we have four compromises on the acquisition of land in the candidate countries."

On security concerns, Verheugen said: "We have to face the threat of a sophisticated and ruthless international criminality already today, be it in trafficking of human beings or in drug The enlargement process can and should contribute in making us better equipped to meet such threats. The enhanced co-operation will strengthen the necessary law-enforcement institutions in the candidate countries. The accession negotiations will accelerate the ongoing reform process of the judiciary. And with the prospect of membership the candidate countries will be part of the future common measures in this field."

According to the Commissioner, "enlargement gives further stability to our neighbours. It allows them to participate in our community policies, which provide the basis for security and welfare of our citizens."

ENLARGING EUROPE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The EU candidate countries and their business organisations were well represented at the European Business Summit in Brussels on 6-7 June, a gathering of 1500 policy makers and business executives discussing entrepreneurship and sustainable development in an enlarged Europe. So too was the European Commission, with several members of the Commission taking part alongside Günter Verheugen. Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner Ar Diamantopoulou, Consumer Affairs and Public Health Commissioner David Byrne, Competition Commissioner Mario Monti, Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, Enterprise Commissioner Erkki Liikanen, Education and Training Commissioner Viviane Reding, and Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin all participated in debates at the meeting, while the Commission's negotiators with the candidates moderated many of the country-specific discussions that took place over the two days of the meeting. Meanwhile, in the run-up to the publication of the EU's own regular reports on the candidates, due out in October, individual assessments were presented by UNICE, the European business confederation, on the state of business-readiness of each of the candidates.

"We are strong supporters of EU enlargement", stated Georges Jacobs, President of UNICE "but only one which is guided by a merit-based accession of those candidate countries that fulfil the accession criteria." For UNICE, accession should neither be delayed for frontrunners nor precipitated for countries which are not ready. Based on the outcome of its assessment UNICE is "confident that a large number of candidate countries will be able to complete negotiations by the end of this year in order to be ready to join the Union in 2004", said Jacobs. "Most, and possibly even all of the ten front runner countries... could be part of the Union soon provided they pursue with determination their action to implement and enforce the acquis communautaire fully by the time of accession", in UNICE's view.

But "substantial shortcomings" remain, including lack of administrative capacity in tax administration, customs, public procurement offices and privatisation agencies. The judiciary needs improvement to ensure timely, efficient and consistent application of legislation. Privatisation, notably of utilities and the energy sector, need to make progress. More should be done to improve the investment climate such as the reduction of red tape (e.g. registration of enterprises) and bureaucracy. And more needs to be done in a number of countries in the fight against corruption.

Commissioner Verheugen took the opportunity to stress his message that there are answers to the concerns of citizens over enlargement. "Negotiations have shown that when concerns are well founded reasonable solutions can be found" - as for instance with the free movement of labour and the acquisition of land in the candidate countries. And while the threat is real of sophisticated and ruthless international criminality, in trafficking of human beings or in drug "the enlargement process can and should contribute in making us better equipped to meet such threats". Across the full range of capacities that the candidates will have to acquire, "We have developed a detailed and sophisticated system of instruments to help candidate countries in their preparations for membership. At the same time these instruments serve as

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safeguard for the Union that new members can meet their obligations as members", he said.

European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection David Byrne said that in respect of food safety, "the challenge is to bring standards in the candidate countries up to current EU standards and not to tolerate any weakening of food safety levels within the enlarged internal market." Current concerns include the need for a new network of Border Inspection Posts "to guard against potential threats from imports to public health, animal health and plant health within the Union"; enforcement of EU rules on the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (such as mad cow disease), and the upgrading of agri-food establishments in the to EU standards. "There will be no compromises when it comes to public health", he insisted. "Candidate countries need to deliver; they need to ensure that their systems and facilities are up to scratch".

European Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin called on candidates to join its research efforts. In the enlarged European Union, research and development will be key to meeting the challenge of turning the EU into an economic powerhouse, with more and better jobs and sustainable growth, he told the summit. "Entrepreneurs from candidate countries... are fully aware that research is the main driver for innovation and economic development. And they will be key players in achieving the March 2002 Barcelona European Council of raising EU average R&D spending to 3% of European Gross Domestic Product (GDP)", he said. Europe has plenty of knowledge and know-how, but it does not invest enough in R&D, and certainly not in the most consistent way. Member states, candidate countries and EU institutions, policymakers and entrepreneurs, have to join forces to meet this challenge", he insisted.

Forward looking research organisations and technology institutes in the candidate countries have already picked up on the opportunity to promote leading edge research results on the EU's CORDIS virtual technology marketplace (<http://www.cordis.lu/marketplace/>). Recent examples include Slovenian and Polish mobile parking and payment technologies for cars, Hungarian breakthrough glass recycling method for the construction industry, and revolutionary Bulgarian computer technology for the knitting of textiles. Many of these come through technology transfer organisations in the candidate states that belong to the European Commission's innovation relays centres network.

Anna Diamantopoulou, European Commissioner for Social Affairs and Employment, said she wanted to be clear about how the Commission sees Europe-wide social policies in the context of enlargement. "We recognise, of course, the significant differences in living standards that exist - among these countries, and also relative to the current EU average", she said. Slovenia and Cyprus may indeed have 75-80% of average EU incomes (rather more, she pointed out than either Greece or Portugal had when they joined the EU), but living standards in many other candidates "are half, or much less, than the EU average".

"We have to be clear about what we expect, and how they will progress", she said. "Social policy is not an expensive optional extra. It is part of the investment that is needed in order to become a modern, high performance, European economy and society... Social standards such as health and safety are absolute, like some environmental standards".

But, the Commissioner conceded, other standards "are more appropriately seen as proportional, in that they can only rise in line with increased economic and productivity performance." It is no part of the enlargement progress to inhibit the short-run comparative advantage of these countries, she confirmed.

According to a report from the EU's Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions presented at the summit, an increasing number of micro, small- and medium-size enterprises in the candidate countries lack formal structures for bargaining and social dialogue. Although tripartite partnerships of employers, workers and governments have played an important role in the development of industrial relations in the candidate countries, only a handful of large enterprises report to have what can be characterised as similar to industrial relations in the European Union, said Stavroula Demetriades, co-ordinator of the Industrial Relations research team at the Foundation. "The low levels of collective bargaining should be



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of great concern to governments and social partners in both the European Union and candidate countries," she said. "The development of inter-sectoral and sectoral collective bargaining would help lay down minimum standards, avoid wide wage disparities and differentials in working conditions, while setting the framework for healthy competition."

Lajos Nyiri, CEO of the Zinnia Group in Hungary told one of discussion panels at the summit that some of the central and eastern European candidate countries may face substantial difficulties in achieving a match between their future skill demands and the competencies of their existing labour force. There are some concerns that the gap between the demand and supply of high-skilled workers is growing in the region. Workers in candidate countries generally lack flexibility of adaptation, so it usually takes half a year longer to reach the same level of productivity comparing to Western Europe. "It seems that the education systems and the experience of workers in the period before transition did not prepare them adequately for the requirements of the market economy." The skills gap may prove a major challenge to the central and eastern European countries, and they should adjust their educational system curricula and training programmes to global labour market requirements, and improve economic conditions to create local labour market demands for highly qualified and trained ICT professionals.

NEW EU MOVE TO BOOST ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY IN CANDIDATES

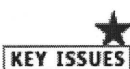
Candidate countries need to develop their administrative and judicial capacity better if they are to be able to implement and enforce EU rules and standards on accession, the European Commission said last week. It has already drawn up individual action plans jointly with each negotiating country, and these are now being implemented. And on June 5 the Commission adopted a report reviewing the action plans and expressing confidence that the candidate countries "will be able to make convincing progress in the months to come".

The report shows that most of the commitments made by the candidate countries are being met. The Commission has proposed further support for the new Member States after accession, through a special € 380 million transition facility.

But the Commission has found gaps - in legislation, in management structures and authorities in co-ordination or arbitration systems, in training of officials, judges, or the business community, and in upgrading required IT systems. Only Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Malta, and Poland do not need specific programmes to strengthen public administration in the areas covered by the political criteria for accession: each of the others need action ranging from developing a civil service code of ethics to boosting quality control functions. Only Malta and Cyprus escape the need for further work on judicial reform, and only these and Estonia and Slovenia are spared a special programme on anti-corruption capacity. Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, and Slovenia are judged sound enough on human rights and minorities and do not need special programmes: the others are not.

Other specific programmes provided for cover land questions in most of the candidate countries, bankruptcy in some, business environment in others, and strengthening of the financial sector or public finance capacity in still others. Across most of the internal market areas, action plans are provided for one or more of the candidates - and for most of them in respect of energy and transport, and for all of them in respect of state aid and anti-trust capacity. There are sectoral action plans covering "ensuring sustainable living conditions" (through environment and health and safety standards, or social policy and employment, or agriculture), "ensuring the overall protection of citizens" (which relates to justice and home affairs, food safety, and consumer protection), and "ensuring proper management of EU funds" (in such areas as financial control or statistics).

Individual action plans have been jointly prepared by the Commission and each negotiating country over recent months, identifying the next steps required to achieve an adequate level of administrative and judicial capacity, and are now being implemented. The action plan will be accompanied by special financial assistance of up to € 250 million in 2002. "It is important that candidate countries make full use of the opportunities offered by the Action Plans, and speed up their efforts along those lines", said a Commission statement.



Commission monitoring will now focus principally on areas such as developments in the financial services area, the fight against piracy and counterfeiting, state aids, nuclear safety, restructuring of major industries, justice and home affairs, and environment. But the Commission indicates that there is work to be done in the areas covered by each of the negotiating chapters, except in non-controversial chapters such as science and research, education and training.

The European Commission report expresses confidence that "provided each country continues and steps up its efforts, the negotiating countries will be able to make convincing progress in the months to come". But it points out that it will continue the monitoring process up until accession - and even then the new Member States will not be in full compliance, admitted the Commissioner. So "building up an adequate administrative capacity is a process that will not end with accession, but will need to continue beyond", the Commissioner adds - highlighting the Commission's proposal for a special transition facility of € 380 million for the post-accession phase.

A BIG WEEK IN THE PARLIAMENT FOR ENLARGEMENT

The mid-June European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg will be devoting much of its attention to enlargement. On June 12, the EU Council of Ministers and the European Commission will provide progress reports at the opening of a joint debate on enlargement. The Parliament will then discuss a series of reports on different aspects of enlargement, ranging from finance to agriculture, and women's rights to asylum seekers.

Top of the agenda will be the report by Elmar Brok on the state of enlargement negotiation which contains twelve sub-sections on the individual candidate countries. The Parliament **foreign affairs committee** has already backed this report and wants to send a message of encouragement "in this crucial final year of the accession process". The Committee has restated its commitment not to place new obstacles in the way of enlargement, or to require the candidate countries to do more than is necessary to transpose and implement the *acquis communautaire* (existing Community law and treaties).

The report does however insist on the need for the candidates to continue meeting the political criteria, in particular by taking more energetic measures to combat discrimination against minorities. It also highlights the need for these countries to promote "good governance" internally by combating corruption and organised crime through practical measures and to submit a report on their efforts to the EU institutions before the end of the accession negotiations.

The draft report also voices concern at the delays in implementing the SAPARD programme for rural development, and argues that efforts should focus more on making better use of the pre-accession funds, in particular by supporting administrative capacity-building at central and regional levels. The committee also urged the member states to agree as soon as possible on a common position for the chapters on agriculture, regional policy and budgetary issues so that they can be completed in good time.

The Parliament will also discuss a report from the **regional, transport and tourism committee** on the effect of enlargement on border regions. This report considers that the money allocated to border regions is insufficient. But it also agrees that the Commission's plan for a phased introduction of transitional measures for the border regions is sensible. The possibility of taking into account regional and sectoral differences on the free movement of workers and services should be feasible.

A further report to be debated covers the first year of operation of the **ISPA** pre-accession funds, designed to support the efforts of the ten applicant countries to adapt to EU rules in the environment and transport sectors. The Commission should work to improve the quality of projects, with better instruments for assessing their impact and promoting the projects which perform best, and should monitor project management closely, making sure that Community rules and procedures are scrupulously applied, the draft report says.



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The **budget committee's** report on the financial impact of EU enlargement will be discussed with its assertion that the benefits of accession will outweigh any costs to member state budget balances. But it admits that the financial cost of enlargement cannot be calculated until the accession negotiations are completed.

The **agriculture committee's** report on the SAPARD programme is also on the agenda. It calls on the Commission to provide a written statement with detailed information on the outstanding obstacles to the transfer of SAPARD funds to applicant countries. It maintains that preparations for accession are being hindered by delay in implementing the programme. The draft endorses a reorientation of the SAPARD programme towards alternative employment strategies in rural areas. And it calls for a specific new proposal called INPARD (Innovative Participatory Rural Development) which should create additional employment and income as well as strengthening civil society.

Another report from the **agriculture committee**, also up for debate, backs the phasing-in of farm subsidies to new member states gradually over a ten-year period. The committee says that "an excessive influx of cash as a result of direct payments" would allow low productivity to persist and discourage investment. Instead, it believes priority must go to supporting rural development. It also endorses the Commission's proposal for a simplified system of area payments and believes the applicant countries should be allowed to make top-up national payments, under certain conditions.

Parliamentarians from candidate countries will be attending meetings in Strasbourg during the week, invited by MEPs for an early taste of life in Strasbourg. And on behalf of the ELD group, Baroness Sarah Ludford of the UK and Louisewies van der Laan of the Netherlands will be asking the Commission to respond to questions on the rights of asylum seekers from future member states. Given the fact that a French court has recently granted asylum to a group of Hungarian Gypsies, MEPs want to know from the Commission how many EU countries are accepting asylum applications from the 12 candidate countries. The questions relate to whether or not the Commission agrees that countries that are not afforded sufficient protection by the state to warrant processing of asylum applications or granted asylum should resolve such problems before accession to the EU. The two MEPs are asking for concrete action plans with timetables and deadlines to resolve this issue. Anna Karamanou of Greece, on behalf of the Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities Committee, will be asking the Commission to clarify the situation with regard to equal opportunities in the candidate countries and what measures to promote equal opportunities have been funded by EU programmes.



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Enlargement news in brief

Member states differ on direct aids for candidates' farmers

Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden are opposing the European Commission proposal to phase in direct aids to farmers in the new member states between 2006 and 2011 because they fear it will perpetuate the current EU policy of high levels of agricultural support which they want to see reduced in the context of the impending reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.

"Negotiations going well", says Verheugen

"The enlargement negotiations are proceeding on schedule. We have made further substantial progress under the Spanish Presidency. The objectives of the roadmap have been met. The intention to conclude negotiations with most countries by the end of this year are ambitious but realistic", insisted European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen last week. More than 80% of the negotiating chapters will be provisionally closed by the end of June, he predicted, and candidate countries will be well prepared for membership, he said, because "this enlargement round is better prepared than any previous enlargements." But he added a warning: "It is", he said, "understandable that the people now want to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The appetite for further reform might well diminish if the perception starts to go

ground that the goal of EU membership will never be in reach."

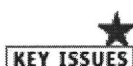
Prodi Commission claims enlargement rhetoric approaching reality

Enlargement is one of the highlights of the mid-term review of the Prodi Commission after two and-a-half years in office - entitled "Closing the gap between rhetoric and reality" - released last week. "One of the top priorities of the present Commission, enlargement, which aims to achieve a peaceful unification of our continent to ensure peace, stability, democracy and prosperity between the Baltic Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, is close to becoming reality", it says. "The negotiation strategy proposed in 2000 by the Commission and approved by the European Council led to significant progress in the talks, allowing for agreement with candidates on issues as sensitive as for instance the environment, free movement of workers, purchase of land, transport or justice and home affairs.

Based on some key principles and on a detailed 'road-map', this strategy proceeds according to schedule and will enter soon its final phase with negotiations on the most challenging issues, in particular agriculture, regional policy and budget, on the basis of the Commission proposals presented earlier this year." The report predicts that if this momentum is maintained it will be possible to conclude negotiations at the end of the year with the best-prepared countries. Then the ratification process of the Accession Treaty could be launched in time for the future new Member States to participate in the European elections in 2004 as members of the Union.

Good and bad in candidates' level of IT access

Progress of the eEurope+ action plan in the EU candidate countries was reviewed at a ministerial conference on the Information Society, entitled "Connecting Europe", in Ljubljana on 3-4 June. National strategies and programmes have been developed in the candidate countries and implementation of relevant EU acquis (on telecommunications and e-commerce in particular) is well on track, it found. In particular, telephone and mobile penetration rates are high, there are ambitious programmes for computers in schools, and significant progress has been made on e-Government. However, the cost of Internet access varies widely, PC costs are often prohibitive for home users, and little data is as yet available on areas such as e-commerce.



The eEurope+ action plan aims to accelerate the reform and modernisation of the economies in the candidate countries, to encourage capacity and institution building, to improve overall competitiveness, and to enhance social cohesion. Good co-operation between the EU and candidate countries on Information Society issues can help support the EU enlargement process and make information and knowledge available to citizens and the private sector, the Commission says. Hosted by Slovenian industry minister Pavel Ganfar and Information Society Commissioner Erkki Liikanen, the meeting brought 40 ministers or deputies from all 11 candidate countries together with political, business and academic representatives of EU member states and the countries of south-east Europe.



Commission competition ruling on Slovak/French/German/Russian gas deal

In one of its first rulings relating to the candidate countries, the European Commission has cleared the acquisition of joint control of Gaz de France and Ruhrgas over a Slovakian gas supplier. On June 7 it approved the move by Gaz de France and Germany's Ruhrgas to take over Slovenska plynárenská priemysel - giving them control over the Slovakian part of the transit gas pipeline from Russia to Germany and Austria. This accounts for approximately 75% of the Russian natural gas sales to the European Union. However, the Commission decided the deal presents no competition problems because the current users have secured access to the pipeline through long-term transit contracts. In addition, an alternative pipeline already exists, and a third one is planned.



Greece wants more attention for Romania and Bulgaria

Greece, which takes over the EU Presidency at the start of 2003, has prepared proposals to help Romania and Bulgaria, for discussion during June with EU foreign affairs minister. Greece says the updated road maps for these countries "should include precise timetable and indicative target dates" for concluding negotiations and for accession. The candidate own target dates "would seem reasonable, provided the present impetus is maintained and reinforced" - Romania aims to finish negotiations in "very early 2004" and join by January 2007, while the official Bulgarian objective is to join the EU in 2006. But Greece suggests considering more flexible performance-related time-tables. On aid, the Greek proposal says only there should be a "substantial increase" that takes into account the countries' absorptive capacity. "An increased emphasis on investment in infrastructures seems reasonable", concludes.

A tough life in candidate countries?

Workers in the candidate countries work longer hours than their counterparts in the EU averaging 43.61 hours per week compared to 38.25 hours in the EU, according to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. They also consider their health and safety to be more at risk because of work than workers in the European Union (40% as opposed to 27%), reporting higher levels of fatigue and musculoskeletal problems, concludes the Foundation's first survey on working conditions in the candidate countries.

Gender as an enlargement issue

The role of women and gender equality in the enlarged Europe Union were discussed by the European Parliament committee for woman's rights with parliamentarians from the candidate countries in Brussels on June 3. And the committee is to hold a public hearing in September on the place of women in the candidate countries. Political involvement was the focus of much of the discussion at this first meeting on the subject. Anna Karamanou (PSE, GR), committee chair, underlined the common need for balanced representation of the two sexes on the electoral rolls, particularly in light of the European Parliament elections in 2004, in which most of the candidate countries are expected to take part. For Patsy Sørensen (Greens/ALE, B), this was more than just a matter of modifying technical arrangements: politics should be made more attractive, so that women could balance professional involvement with family life.


Candidate country representatives, many of them also associated with the work of the European Convention, pointed out both the imbalance among Convention participants and the absence of women as chairs of the working groups. A Cyprus delegate complained that gender equality questions are not a priority within the framework of the EU accession negotiations. A Lithuanian viewed as improbable equal representation in EP elections. Balance was still a long way from being achieved at national level. But a Bulgarian delegate claimed big national advances - heavily promoted by the Prime Minister - the country's forming, with 63 women among the 240 members of the national parliament, 27%, compared with 11% before the last elections.

Agenda

Date	Event
June	
Monday 10th - Tuesday 11th	Ministerial negotiating session with foreign ministers of the EU and of the candidate countries, Luxembourg
Tuesday 11th	Enlargement negotiations at ministerial level, Luxembourg

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	EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels
Wednesday 11th-Thursday 12th	EU-Slovenia joint consultative committee with the EU Economic and Social Committee, Ljubljana.
Wednesday 12th	European Parliament debate on enlargement - covering current state of the negotiations, the financial impact of enlargement, and agriculture; Strasbourg. EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels EU Council of Ministers working group on the drafting of the EU Treaty meets, Brussels
Wednesday 12th- Friday 14th	European Commission conference on Internet and cities, Zakopane
Friday 14th and Saturday 15th	Czech Republic parliamentary elections
Wednesday 12th-Sunday 16th	European Youth Forum Baltic Sea Youth Project 'Challenge for Challenge, Riga
Thursday 13th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Estonia European Budget Commissioner Michaele Schreyer speaks on the impact of enlargement on the German new Länder, Magdeburg European Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner Ana Diamantopoulou speaks on the impact of enlargement on employment and the economy, Thessaloniki
Thursday 13th-Friday 14th	Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies enlargement conference, University of Marne-la-Vallée, France
Friday 14th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Latvia EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels
Friday 14th-Saturday 15th	European Association for Research managers and Administrators and Euro-science conference on integrating European research, Budapest
Saturday 15th	European Budget Commissioner Michaele Schreyer speaks on the opportunities enlargement presents for German border regions, Greifswald
Sunday 16th-Monday 17th	European Competition Commissioner Mario Monti visits Lithuania
Monday 17th-Tuesday 18th	European Culture Commissioner Viviane Reding visits Slovakia


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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
Tuesday 25th	Economic and Social Committee economic and social cohesion section discusses cohesion and enlargement, Brussels
Tuesday 25th- Wednesday 26th	Baltic Council of Ministers, Lithuania
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	Economic and Social Committee external relations section discusses accession progress of Romania and Slovenia, Brussels
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.
Thursday 4th- Friday 5th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Lithuania
Friday 5th	European Commission conference on enlargement from a local and regional perspective, Brussels
Friday 5th- Saturday 6th	"Riga 2002: The Bridge to Prague" - summit of NATO candidate countries, Riga
Thursday 11th- Friday 12th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Poland Economic and Social Committee Joint Consultative Committee with Turkey, Erzerum
Monday 15th- Tuesday 16th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Hungary
Thursday 12th- Friday 19th	European Commission President Romano Prodi and Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visit Turkey
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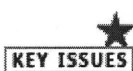


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Details tbc	Slovak parliamentary elections (probably September)
Details tbc	Slovenia presidential and local elections
October	
Details tbc	Hungary local elections
Details tbc	Latvia parliamentary elections
Details tbc	Poland regional elections
Wednesday 2nd-Thursday 3rd	Meeting of liaison officers from supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors, Luxembourg
Sunday 20 October	Estonian local elections
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

ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY is prepared for the Information Unit of the Enlargement Directorate General of the European Commission. As part of its communication strategy on enlargement, the Commission makes this bulletin publicly available.

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



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