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SELECT A COUNTRY

Countries

Topics

News

Library

Contacts

Enlargement Weekly

18 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

- ★ [No EU agreement yet on direct payments to farmers](#)
- ★ [Ministerial negotiations with candidates prepare for final lap](#)
- ★ [Candidates react to decision on agriculture negotiations](#)
- ★ [Candidate's delegates spell out their positions at the convention](#)
- ★ [Agreement on closing Ignalina nuclear power plant](#)
- ★ [European parliament backs enlargement progress](#)
- ★ [Enlargement News in Brief](#)
- ★ [Enlargement Agenda](#)

NO EU AGREEMENT YET ON DIRECT PAYMENTS TO FARMERS

European Union foreign affairs ministers had an in-depth discussion on enlargement at the General Affairs Council in Luxembourg on June 10. Ministers welcomed the "considerable progress" achieved under the Spanish Presidency, but could not reach agreement on common position on the agriculture chapter. Differences of opinion remain between EU Member States on when farmers in the new member states should benefit fully from the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

The focus of debate is the provision of direct payments to farmers. Candidates say they should receive them immediately, and in full. The Commission has recommended that they receive them from 2005, and then only gradually, so that they would reach the same level as current Member States in 2013. France and Ireland broadly agree with the Commission, but Germany and the Netherlands are strongly opposed to any direct payments. And the UK and Sweden are urging that a decision be delayed until later in the year. The division among Member States reflects their strategic interests on EU farm support: net payers into the EU budget are already urging cuts in the impending reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the fixing of the EU's next set of financial perspectives from 2007, while net beneficiaries wish to confirm the concept of farmers' subsidies.

Agreement has already been reached on most aspects of the agriculture chapter, including veterinary and phyto-sanitary issues, so as to preserve a high level of food safety in the EU after enlargement. The question of direct payments will be examined again at the June 11 General Affairs Council. The President of the Council, Spanish foreign affairs minister Jose Piqué, called on all Member States "to show flexibility" in a bid to keep to the timetable for the enlargement negotiations. European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen said he thought there was still a "good possibility" of finding a common position on agriculture for everything but direct payments, at least informally, and that should allow work to proceed with the candidate countries. But it is unlikely that the EU will agree its full common position before the Brussels summit in October.

The Council also approved conclusions on monitoring in the candidate countries. It welcomed the Commission's action plans for strengthening the candidate countries' administrative capacity, accompanied by further special financial assistance of up to € 250 million out of PHARE funds (see [previous issue](#) of ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY). It called on the Commission to continue with regular, transparent monitoring of practical implementation of the EU acquis right up until the time of accession, with priority in veterinary and phyto-sanitary matters given to prevention and control of transmissible sub-acute spongiform encephalopathies, to external border inspections and to bringing livestock production and processing establishments up to standard. In justice and home affairs monitoring will focus particularly on control of external borders and illegal immigration, on combating organised crime, money laundering and corruption, and to effectiveness of the judicial system.

MINISTERIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANDIDATES PREPARE FOR FINAL LAP

Ministerial accession conferences with the twelve candidate countries currently in negotiation took place in Luxembourg on 10-11 June. A total of 83 chapters were negotiated, 20 of which were opened for the first time and 49 of which were provisionally closed (including those already discussed during earlier preparatory sessions at the level of EU ambassadors and candidates' chief negotiators) (see table below).

Hungary formally completed talks on transport. Cyprus closed competition policy, taxation, regional policy and structural instruments and institutions. Slovenia closed transport and institutions. Poland closed free movement of persons, free movement of capital, fisheries, transport, taxation, and institutions. Latvia reached provisional agreement with the EU on competition policy, transport, telecommunications and information technologies, regional policy and structural instruments, and justice and home affairs. Estonia closed institutions, regional policy and structural instruments, free movement of persons, transport, justice and home affairs, and customs union. Slovakia reached agreement on transport, taxation, financial control, justice and home affairs, and institutions. Lithuania closed energy (see separate story below) and regional policy, transport, taxation, justice and home affairs, financial control, and institutions. The Czech Republic closed regional policy and structural instruments. And Malta closed free movement of capital, justice and home affairs and institutions.

The outcome of the conferences confirmed that the Spanish Presidency has managed to keep closely to the work programme, despite the increasing complexity of the negotiations. It has also resolved many of the outstanding problems in chapters left over from previous negotiating rounds. Provisional closure was agreed on sensitive chapters such as transport, competition



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

regional policy, justice and home affairs, and energy. And during the Spanish Presidency seven chapters have been opened with Romania, bringing its total to 24, meaning the country is now on track to achieve its target of opening all 30 negotiating chapters by the end of the year. With Bulgaria, this objective has already been met, along with provisional closure of 20 of them.

The closure of these chapters largely clears the decks for the EU and the candidates to focus during the rest of this year on the key chapters still to be agreed - those with a significant financial aspect. The EU has already presented its negotiating position to most of the candidates on financial and budgetary provisions and on regional policy and structural instruments. It is only on agriculture that the EU common position has yet to be finalised (see story above). Once the European Commission's regular reports are published in October, the aim is to move swiftly into the closing stages of talks with the ten candidates designated at the Laeken summit in December 2001 as potential 2004 entrants (all those currently negotiating except Bulgaria and Romania).

Bulgaria closed free movement of goods, free movement of persons, taxation, economic and monetary union, social affairs and employment, industry policy, and institutions. Bulgaria's foreign affairs minister Simon Passy said he was satisfied. He confirmed that Bulgaria now aims to complete negotiations in 2003, with accession before Bulgaria's originally scheduled date of the beginning of 2007. Romania closed social affairs and employment and institutions. Romania's European integration minister Hildegard Puwak said Romania aimed to complete negotiations by the end of 2003 or early in 2004, because the rhythm of negotiations was an important trigger to making changes in Romanian society too.

For the latest state of the negotiations, see
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/chapters/>

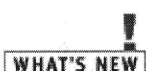
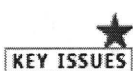
CANDIDATES REACT TO DECISION ON AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS

When they came to Luxembourg on June 10, the candidate countries reacted to the announcement of a delay in the EU's opening of negotiations on the financial aspects of the agriculture chapter, following the differences that emerged between Member States at the General Affairs Council on the question of direct payments to farmers in the new member states. The reactions ranged from optimism through mild disappointment to serious concern.

Cyprus' foreign affairs minister Ioannis Kasoulides said it was "disappointing but not a blow" that the EU had no common position on agriculture, and hoped for a decision by October. An Polish foreign affairs minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz rejected suggestions that the member states' failure to agree a common position on agriculture was a serious setback. "Everything is going fine", he said. "There is no reason for pessimism".

Latvian chief negotiator Andris Kesteris said that he was not very disturbed by the EU failure to agree on direct payments for agriculture. "I would be seriously worried if there was no common position by October, but not until then. This is a political rather than a practical problem. Lithuanian foreign affairs minister Antanas Valionis said negotiations had reached "the crucial stage when the most important chapters are to be dealt with", and that he was "convinced" that the EU would soon reach a common position on agriculture. He said if an early compromise EU common position on agriculture excludes direct payments "it will make success difficult, but not impossible".

Czech foreign affairs minister Jan Kavan expressed understanding for the EU sensitivity to agriculture, "but", he said, "we have one clear goal which is to assure full competitiveness of Czech farmers in the EU after accession, and the current EU position does not comply with this goal". He hoped for a resolution before the Brussels summit, because there will be "only a short time to agree". He said he was, however, "cautiously optimistic": "With a great degree of political will, if there is a solution in October the road map could still be followed. I make no predictions now about the postponement of the process".



Hungary's chief negotiator Endre Juhasz said he regretted that the EU was "unable to formulate a comprehensive common position including all the elements". Estonia's foreign affairs minister Kristina Ojuland said she was "hopeful" of an early agreement on agriculture with the Spanish Presidency: "We need a common position as soon as possible. We would like to see EU agreement, since October might be already too late."

Slovenian foreign affairs minister Dimitrij Rupel regretted that the EU could present no agriculture position at the meeting. "We expect the member states to find a solution that sticks to the roadmap. Any deviation would postpone enlargement or make it even more difficult", he warned. Slovak foreign affairs minister Eduard Kukan said: "We would like to negotiate with the EU on the basis of a common position including direct payments, and hope for a position to emerge before Seville". To defer negotiations to the end of the year "will create unnecessary tension and complicate dramatically the situation".

CANDIDATE'S DELEGATES SPELL OUT THEIR POSITIONS AT THE CONVENTION

There was wide agreement during the regular discussion in Brussels on 6th and 7th June concerning bringing Justice and home affairs into the more normal Community decision-making procedure. The only notable difference in emphasis between was the stronger backing from candidate countries for a common approach to border controls. Similarly, the constitutional issues saw candidates speaking along broadly the same lines as those from present member states on issues such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Candidate country speakers were very much in the mainstream in backing a stronger role for national parliaments in the EU's institutional architecture, and consequently, in rejecting the option of a permanent second chamber as too burdensome, preferring to deepen co-operation and to do more to raise the profile of EU issues within national parliaments themselves. Referring to the model used in the Danish and Finnish parliaments, speakers from Lithuania and Slovenia explained how they were already developing strong parliamentary scrutiny of government positions.

The session also saw the setting up of six working groups (with their presidents in brackets) on subsidiarity (M. Méndez de Vigo), the Charter of Fundamental Rights (A. Vitorino), the Union's legal personality (M. Amato), the role of national parliaments (Gisela Stuart MP), complementary competencies (M. Christophersen), and economic governance (Klaus Hänsch). The members of the Convention are split between the different groups, with a balance in terms of both nationality and function (representatives of governments, national parliaments, European Parliament, Commission). Commission representation in each group was assured either by one of the two Commissioners responsible, i.e. MM. Vitorino and Barnier, or by the Director responsible in the Commission, Paolo Ponzano. The groups also give a chance for alternate members of the Convention to play a full role. Further working groups on justice and home affairs and external relations should follow soon.

For a verbatim account of the session, see the Convention web site on http://www.europarl.eu.int/europe2004/textes/verbatim_020606.htm

AGREEMENT ON CLOSING IGNALINA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Last week's EU accession negotiations with Lithuania produced a new agreement on closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant - a much-discussed problem closely, if not directly, linked to Lithuania's accession. Ignalina is a major power generator for the Lithuanian economy, but because of its design (it has two 1500 RBMK-type reactor units inherited from the former Soviet Union), Lithuania has been under intense pressure to close it early. A formula reconciling the EU's safety concerns with Lithuania's economic challenges was worked out during the Luxembourg talks on June 11. As European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen remarked after the talks, "This is the first agreement to close a Chernobyl-type reactor".

Lithuania delivered a declaration that it will close unit 1 of the plant before 2005 and unit 2 by 2009. An EU declaration acknowledges readiness to continue to provide adequate additional assistance for decommissioning after Lithuania's accession, via a programme to be subject to



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

further negotiations. The EU is ready to help because it accepts that the decommissioning of Ignalina will have to continue beyond the current financial perspectives, which expire at the end of 2006, and that for Lithuania this would be an overwhelming burden.

The precise terms and conditions have not yet been fixed, however. The EU has committed itself to come back to this issue before the end of the accession negotiations. And welcoming the agreement, foreign affairs minister Antanas Valionis said Ignalina needs € 2.4 billion over decades, "and we need financial help" - but acknowledged that he was not himself sure exactly when and how the deal would be finalised.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BACKS ENLARGEMENT PROGRESS

The European Parliament gave its strong backing to the EU enlargement process when debated the subject at its Strasbourg plenary session on June 12-13. The half-dozen enlargement-related resolutions the Parliament adopted expressed:

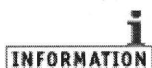
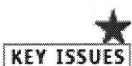
- support for the process as a whole,
- encouragement to Member States to take a more generous view of the funding of it,
- opposition to any new obstacles in the way of enlargement nor to require the candidate countries to do more than is necessary to transpose and implement the acquis,
- anxieties over human rights, corruption, and crime,
- insistence on high standards in nuclear safety, environment, food safety, and consumer standards; and
- disappointment at the operation of some of the EU assistance programmes for the candidates, particularly delays in implementing the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD),
- recommendations that border regions should receive more and better help than has so far been proposed in the Commission's action programme.

On the highly topical question of direct aids to farmers, Parliament took a middle line supporting the view that new member states should receive them, but that they should be phased in gradually over ten years. Parliament also endorsed 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. It is also keen to ensure that countries that have already reduced output levels whilst becoming competitive are not penalised, and it wants the special support for subsistence farming proposed by the Commission to be available to farmers seeking to diversify. One of the reports adopted by the Parliament pointed out that only 11 % of SAPARD money is earmarked for development or diversification of agriculture, and it urged more support for the creation of alternative employment in rural areas.

The principal report on the state of enlargement negotiations emphasised the "historic necessity" of enlargement, and its role in ensuring lasting peace, stability and prosperity for the continent. It was adopted by a large majority. A report on the financial impact of enlargement insisted that the political and economic benefits of accession are more important than Member States' budget balances. This too won a massive majority vote in favour.

The Parliament also issued an explicit appeal to the countries which are able to join the Union first to renounce in advance their right of veto against the others joining later.

A strong message about the need to keep up the momentum of EU enlargement emerged from the early stages of the Parliament debate. European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen in particular issued a warning to member states that they must not let disagreements over finance impede the process. But the Presidency and the major political parties also expressed strong support for keeping to the timetable and closing negotiations with leading candidates in time for them to join in 2004. Speaking at the opening of the plenary session debate, Commissioner Verheugen warned against a delay of the enlargement process.



due to division amongst the fifteen EU member states. He said: "It is not surprising that, on the issue of direct payments for farmers, important difficulties have emerged". But he said that now that discussion had started on the realities of the distribution of the cost burden, "the citizens of Europe should be told that they will not get the considerable political and economical benefits of enlargement for free". Member states should not hide behind concern over the acceptability of costs so as to question the clear objective of enlargement already agreed by the EU, or to pretend that these questions have not already been addressed in the Berlin Council in 1999, he insisted.

Enlargement news in brief

New Czech Government likely to maintain course for membership

The results of the general election in the Czech Republic on June 14-15 appear to have confirmed the country's policy of preparing for early EU accession, although coalition talks are only now getting underway on the formation of a new government. The social democratic (CSSD) party, with its 30% support, established a clear lead over Vaclav Klaus' centre right ODS civic democrats, and is certain to head the new government. Vladimir Spidla, the new CSSD leader, championed EU accession in the election campaign more enthusiastically than the ODS leader, who has repeatedly expressed concerns over loss of sovereignty to Brussels. However, the most probable coalition, of the CSSD and the centre-right Coalition grouping will have only a thin overall majority, because of a stronger-than-expected showing by the communist party, which won 18% of the vote. European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen said the result of the elections was a confirmation of the Czech Republic's European orientation and a proof of the stability of Czech democracy. Right-wing German MEP Bernd Posselt, who is also a leading figure among Sudeten Germans, also welcomed the outcome, saying he expected some of the heat to go out of the debate on the Czech Presidential Decrees as a consequence of the result.

Enlargement on the Seville agenda

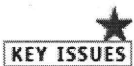
The European Council at Seville on June 21 will discuss the enlargement process. Two documents are on the table: a report on the progress made by the candidate countries in meeting the commitments made in the negotiations on accession, and another report on the communication strategy for enlargement. The reports say negotiations are progressing satisfactorily and candidates are generally meeting their commitments in the negotiations, in accordance with the agreed timetables. Meanwhile, the candidate countries need to further develop their administrative and judicial capacity to be able to properly implement and enforce the rules and standards of the European Union upon accession. And as the accession of the first new EU member states draws closer, the EU needs to be able to answer questions from the public in current and future member states about what the enlargement of the EU will actually mean for them. The EU should be able to address misconceptions where they exist and let the people know that their concerns are being taken seriously, the communication report urges.

See the Seville web site of the European Commission on http://europa.eu.int/comm/seville_council/index_en.html

Havel describes possible disadvantages as "insignificant"

Czech President Vaclav Havel has said that any disadvantages his country suffers on account of accession to the EU will be "insignificant" compared with the expected advantages. "I do not see any disadvantages. If there are any, they will be entirely negligible compared with the advantages, and especially with the historic event of the Czech Republic entering the family of European states." In addition, Havel warned that "our country's future will be that of a peripheral state on the periphery of Europe" if it fails to enter the EU.

Prince Charles visits Poland



Prince Charles of the UK, well known for his espousal of environmental causes, visited the office of the International Coalition to Protect Polish Countryside, during a recent trip to Cracow. ICPPC has developed a high profile as a vigorous opponent of EU agricultural proposals in the context of enlargement and Polish accession to the EU. Its argument is that "the future of the Polish countryside hangs in the balance. On the one hand the thousands of small family farms across the country hold the key to maintaining the wealth of bio-diversity for which Poland is renowned. On the other hand the forces of globalisation and agribusiness are attempting to establish a factory farming mono-culture on this same land". He also visited Sunflower Farm, an ecological technology centre, and inspected a building made from clay and straw and heated and powered with solar energy, an experimental sewage treatment plant, a rain water collecting system, and solar thermal installation. He met organic farmers from the region, who welcomed him with bread and salt and a song written especially for the occasion.

Poland accepts terms on transport chapter

Poland closed its negotiations with the EU on the transport chapter on June 11 (see story above), covering land transport, railway transport, air transport and maritime transport. In the area of land transport, it has accepted a 3-year transitional period for implementation of the EU regulation on road haulage cabotage operations, with a possibility for an extension for another two years. It has been granted a transitional period until the end of 2010 on maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic. And for heavy vehicles in international combined transport, it has accepted that the transitional period covers only cases where a single-axle load exceeds the load admitted, on a given unadjusted section of the Polish road network. In rail transport it has won a transitional period until the end of 2006 on access to the Trans-European Rail Freight Network in Poland for railway undertakings from other Member States.

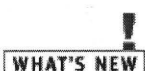
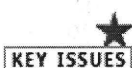
EU-compliant labour law enters in force in Latvia

The new Latvia labour law came into effect on 1 June. It takes account of the numerous European Union directives in the field of labour rights, for example covering labour contract, working and rest time, and non-discrimination. The Law also includes the principles of the European Social Charter and the Convention of the International Labour Organisation. The new law was drafted by state institutions and social partners, the representatives of employees and employers from the Latvian Association of Free Trade Unions and the Latvian Confederation of Employers.

Focus urged on small firms and agriculture in Hungary

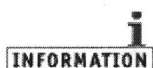
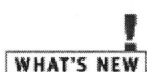
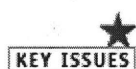
The Hungarian government should consolidate and develop policy measures in favour of smaller firms, and in particular it should guarantee more stable and accessible legislation according to the EU-Hungary Joint Consultative Committee, the joint body with the EU Economic and Social Committee. In a recently adopted declaration, the JCC says priority areas of action are adequate access to capital and to credit, simplification of administrative rules, start up support, and tax incentives linked to training and new technologies. In its action plan to help the candidate countries, the European Commission should focus on strengthening Hungarian regulatory authorities and implementation of appropriate information technologies in public administration, to support business activity, the committee urged. Noting the need to boost information about accession and about its impact in the candidate countries and the Member States, particularly among civil society organisations, the Committee also said: "The efficiency of the instruments used to create a consensus on the acceptance of the accession must be increased, and citizens of EU Member States and Hungary must be fully informed of the benefits and risks involved in the enlargement of the EU".

Agenda



See also the new "Enlargement events calendar" on the DG Enlargement web site .
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/events/calendar.htm>. This gives a run-down of publ
events related to the enlargement of the EU taking place in al current and future membe
states.

Date	Event
June	
Monday 17th-Tuesday 18th	<p>European Culture Commissioner Viviane Reding visits Slovakia</p> <p>Candidate countries take part in EU Council of Ministers working group on asylum, Brussels</p> <p>EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels</p> <p>European Parliament committee on regional policy, transport and tourism discusses the recommendation by Dana Rosemary Scallon (EPP-ED, IRL) on the Interbus Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus, to which most of the candidate countries have now acceding. Brussels</p> <p>European Parliament committee on women's rights and equal opportunities discusses a report by Lone Dybkjær (ELDR, DK) on the EP delegation visit to the Baltic States last month, Brussels</p> <p>European Parliament constitutional affairs committee discusses the Convention on the Future of Europe in the presence of representatives of national parliaments of candidate countries, Brussels</p> <p>EU-Turkey joint parliamentary committee, Brussels</p>
Wednesday 19th	EU Council of Ministers working group on the drafting of the EU Treaty meets, Brussels
Thursday 20th	<p>EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels</p> <p>EU-Slovenia joint parliamentary committee, Brussels</p>
Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd	Seville European Council: European Commission reports on the implementation of the plan of action for strengthening the candidates' institutions, and on the enlargement communication strategy.
Monday 24th	<p>EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels</p> <p>Informal meeting of education ministers from the EU and the candidate countries, Bratislava</p>
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 European Regional Affairs Commissioner Michel Barnier visits Poland
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 18th-Friday 19th	European Commission President Romano Prodi and Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visit Turkey
August	
Friday 16th - Monday 19th	Pope John Paul II visits Poland
September	
Friday 20th - Saturday 21st	Parliamentary elections, Slovakia
Autumn	



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

Details tbc	Slovenia presidential and local elections
September/October	
Details tbc	Self-governmental elections, Poland
October	
Details tbc	Local governmental elections, Hungary
Details tbc	Parliament elections, Latvia
Details tbc	Partial Senate elections, Czech Republic
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	Local elections, Czech Republic (including first elections for the Prague region)
Details tbc	Local elections, Estonia
Details tbc	Presidential, Local, and National Council (Second Parliamentary Chamber) elections, Slovenia
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	
Details tbc	Meeting of heads of supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors, Bucharest



KEY ISSUES



WHAT'S NEW



FAQ



MAIL-BOX



INDEX



SEARCH



INFORMATION



FEEDBACK

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.
Sunday 22nd	Presidential elections, Lithuania (second round on January 5, 2003)
January 2003	
Details tbc	Presidential elections, Czech Republic
February 2003	
9th and 16th	Presidential, elections, Cyprus
March 2003	
Details tbc	Parliamentary elections, Estonia
July/August 2003	
Details tbc	Presidential elections (elected by the parliament), Latvia

Archives

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★
KEY ISSUES

!
WHAT'S NEW

...
FAQ

@
MAIL-BOX

Az
INDEX

?
SEARCH

i
INFORMATION

✓
FEEDBACK

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On 19 June 2002, the European Commission adopted this Communication, which notes that the introduction of euro notes and coins at the beginning of this year was a landmark achievement in the history of European integration. The benefits of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) have been felt already for some time. EMU is based on a commitment to sound macroeconomic policies, which have helped to create a new culture of economic stability in Europe. In turn, this has enabled Europe to weather the recent slowdown in the world economy. Furthermore, thanks to the euro, the kind of damaging intra-European exchange rate tension that often characterised previous episodes of adjustment to external shocks has been avoided. With the euro in place, the citizens of euro area countries can now look forward to the benefits of increased price transparency, more intense competition in the market place and greater financial integration in Europe.

