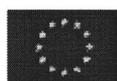


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Enlargement Weekly

09 July 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 and candidate countries, and how the main challenges are being met. [[Previous issues](#)]

Articles this week

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"THE COST OF ENLARGEMENT?" 1/1000 OF THE AGGREGATE GDP OF THE ENLARGED UNION, SAYS THE PRESIDENCY

The new Danish Presidency of the European Union assumed its role on July 1 with a heavy insistence on the priority it attaches to meeting EU targets on enlargement.

As it says in its programme for the Presidency - entitled "One Europe" - the "main priority is to conclude the enlargement negotiations with up to 10 new member countries", and to complete a virtuous circle from Copenhagen in 1993, where conditions for EU accession were defined to the summit in Copenhagen in 2002. "A successful conclusion to the enlargement negotiations will contribute to the creation of one whole and undivided Europe", says Denmark. The Danish timetable foresees that the European Council will decide "in the autumn of 2002

on the candidate countries with which negotiations can be concluded. It aims to close outstanding issues that are not related to the financial package during July and September. The EU's position on all the financial questions concerning enlargement will then be established for presentation to the candidate countries no later than early November. The period between the Brussels summit and the summit in Copenhagen will then be spent on negotiations with candidate countries. As the Presidency says: "We will need some weeks before the December European Council for these negotiations. These are sensitive issues also in candidate countries. Therefore, we cannot wait until December for EU to decide on these issues."

Denmark also insists that "the backing of the people is vital to the enlargement process", and promises that it will exert itself "to ensure that the final phase of the accession negotiations conducted in such a way that the people's support is maintained, in both candidate and member countries". After the conclusion of the accession negotiations two to three months will be needed for the completion of the accession treaty. Then, after approval by the European Parliament, it will be signed in the candidate and member countries, and can be ratified. In most of the candidate countries, the ratification will entail a referendum - and "without popular support, part of the purpose of this gigantic peace and union process will crumble away", Denmark warns.

Denmark has pointed clearly to the scale of the challenge. "Concluding the enlargement negotiations is not a task that the Danish Presidency can shoulder alone", it concedes. It demands "a substantial effort and a willingness to compromise from all concerned". "Enlargement is not a gift from West to East. Enlargement is in the interests of Europe as a whole", remarked Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen on July 3.

Other leading figures in the Danish government have been making similar points. Danish Minister for European Affairs Bertel Haarder said in London on July 2: "If we do not meet the agreed deadline, it would risk postponing the entire enlargement process for years. The credibility of the EU is at stake," he said. He pointed out that the direct costs in the field of agriculture linked to enlargement would amount to less than 0.1% of GDP in the current budgetary period - "a very limited amount, indeed, seen in the context of the increased opportunities for trade and investment that enlargement would bring", he argued.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Per Stig Møller also aimed to provide reassurance on the financial questions on July 3 when he said: "The Commission's proposal on the financial question remains within the European Union's financial framework for 2004-2006, even if the working hypothesis today is ten countries": the 40 billion earmarked for the accession of new member states in these three years "is about one thousandth of the aggregate GDP of the member states and the candidate countries. Not a high price to pay for the reunification of Europe".

The Presidency is also being hard-headed about the criteria the candidates will have to meet. "Not all the candidate countries negotiating are expected to be able to conclude accession negotiations under the Danish Presidency", says Denmark. The ten countries mentioned at the European Council meeting in Laeken "will all need to maintain the fast pace in the negotiation and reform processes in order to achieve the objective of concluding the negotiations in 2002", it warned last week.

The Danish Prime Minister, emitting a warning that "(e)ven a small delay can put back the entire process", insisted that "no country should be asked to wait for other countries", as that would be "unfair" to those among the Laeken ten who have completed their preparations. "If only some of the ten countries are ready, then we must conclude negotiations with them, so that they may be admitted", he said. As a consequence, particular efforts must be made to ensure that the progress towards membership of those countries (which will certainly include Bulgaria and Romania) "is continued and intensified". Meanwhile, "like other candidate countries, Turkey must fulfil the political conditions for membership in order for negotiations to commence."

See the Danish Presidency web site on <http://www.eu2002.dk/main/>

REGIONS VITAL FOR ENLARGEMENT

The 3-4 July plenary session of the EU's Committee of the Regions focused heavily on enlargement, with participation from European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen, Danish minister for European affairs Bertel Haarder, and representatives of regions from the candidate countries. Commissioner Verheugen stressed the importance of local and region



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levels of government in preparing candidate countries for EU accession. But he also put in strong bid for a more reasoned approach to the entire enlargement project. And leading members of the Committee urged a stronger role for them in making enlargement work particularly in relation to ensuring that information circulated adequately to citizens in the EU and in the candidate countries.

Verheugen said he was concerned that "media and political circles seem to reduce the enlargement process to a mere question of money, financial flows and the balance of power within the EU". He insisted that the main reason for enlargement is not financial: "It is to answer two key challenges: the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON, and how to make Europe fit for the challenges of the future. Enlargement is about guaranteeing freedom and stability eastwards up to the shores of the Black Sea. Meeting these challenges requires greater unity on our continent".

Expressing confidence that "despite all the difficulties the EU will achieve its objective", the Commissioner said he believed the remaining chapters would be solved without major difficulties. "No-one will let enlargement fail over direct payments", he predicted. He also expressed "great faith in the wisdom of the Irish people", looking forward to their ratification of the Nice Treaty "to ensure the enlargement takes place".

The President of the Socialist group within the Committee of the Regions, Michel Delebarre warned of a need for greater transparency and more information about enlargement, to boost support for accession among the citizens of the candidate countries. He saw a clear role for the Committee in this process, with its strong links to the grass roots: "We should ideally have observer members from the new states as soon as the treaties are signed, but we would need funding to make this possible", he remarked.

The representatives from the candidate countries offered a parallel view. Despite the diversity of their situations, one common theme that emerged from their interventions was a desire to play a more active role in the enlargement process in their respective countries, and to see the decentralisation process go further.

For a full report of the plenary, see <http://www.cor.eu.int/corz203.htm>.

The theme of local and regional participation in the enlargement process was taken up at a conference on 5th July sponsored by the Presidency and the Commission. The conference "Enlargement from a local and regional perspective" brought together representatives of regional and local government from current and future member states to discuss participation in the enlargement process, and in the EU after accession.

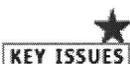
(See <http://www.kk.dk/5julyconference/>)

ESTONIA "SATISFIED" WITH TAXATION NEGOTIATIONS

"The tax exemption on investments will be preserved", Estonia announced with satisfaction after its negotiations with the European Union in Brussels on June 28. The Estonian delegation was led by the deputy-under-secretary of the ministry of foreign affairs Alar Streimann, who emerged from the meeting - at which the taxation chapter was provisionally closed - saying that both sides were of the opinion that the agreement reached was "a significant achievement". It was possible to find rational solutions acceptable to both sides on a sensitive issue, said Streimann.

The specific feature of the Estonian tax system, the tax exemption on investments, will be preserved, since the basic principles of the income tax act do not contradict the principles of the EU, but rather instead encourage investments, according to a statement later issued from the ministry of foreign affairs in Tallinn. In addition, Estonia will be able to retain the 5% value added tax on heating energy sold to the population until June 30, 2007; Estonia's request for a transitional period is a response to the current standard of living of Estonia, where two thirds of the population live in housing with centrally-supplied heating. An increase in the value-added tax on heating energy would have affected the lower income groups, primarily families with children and single parent families.

Agreement was also reached on a transitional period until 2010 for harmonising the excise duty rates on cigarettes and smoking tobacco. Raising the excise duty would have negatively affected the inhabitants' purchasing power and brought an increase in tax fraud and contraband, according to Estonia. A further transitional period until December 31, 2008 was



agreed for adapting Estonian some aspects of corporate tax legislation to EU rules. And an agreement was reached on a derogation on the VAT threshold for registration of taxable persons: the current threshold of 250 000 Estonian kroons for registration will remain the same even after EU accession.

But Estonia compromised on its requests for transitional periods until 31 December 2006 for zero rate of value-added tax on electricity generated by wind and hydroelectric power, and for six and a half years grace before bringing into line its tax- and duty-free sales on ferries.

Overall, Estonia believes that "significant progress" was made during the Spanish Presidency on the accession negotiations, and that solutions have been found in a number of difficult issues. "Six months ago we regarded the forthcoming complex issues with a certain hesitation but at the moment we can say that we have made even more progress during the Spanish Presidency than we hoped," said Streimann.

LITHUANIA STILL IMPATIENT ON AGRICULTURE

Lithuania welcomes the adoption of the EU common position on agriculture, but it expects that the EU member states will reach an agreement on direct payments without delay so that it can begin substantial talks on this issue, said Petras Austrevicius, Lithuania's chief negotiator during the June 28 accession negotiations in Brussels.

At present, he said, "the provisions of the EU common position are insufficient because of important circumstances specific to Lithuania" in respect of reference periods and quotas. Because of the simultaneous processes of transition from the planned to the market economy and property restitution, Lithuania's agricultural sector has undergone a significantly more dramatic transformation of ownership, markets and consumption patterns and has experienced a considerably higher pressure than in other central European candidate countries, he argued. For example, property restitution had led to the establishment of over 130,000 individual farms with an average size of just 8.4 hectares, with only 2 per cent of all farms larger than 5 hectares. In addition, he said, in 2001, over 15 per cent of Lithuania's agricultural land was uncultivated - significantly more than the EU average of 10 per cent. So the share of agricultural production in GDP decreased almost fourfold during the last decade (from 27.7 per cent of GDP in 1990 to 7.5 per cent in 2000).

For these and other reasons, "application of the reference periods and quotas proposed for Lithuania by the EU would negatively impact upon the development of the food processing industry and the effectiveness of land use, and would lead to significant distortions in the labour market", he said. Lithuania will provide arguments in support of adjustments to the current EU proposal, he promised - particularly to obtain a flexible application of the reference periods within the last decade for specific product groups, and targeting the definition of the average yields and quotas of milk and sugar.

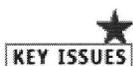
But Austrevicius noted with satisfaction that the EU side was able to accommodate three of Lithuania's requests for transitional periods: two on organic farming until 1 January 2006, and on fat content in drinking milk until 1 January 2009, and requests in the wine and alcohol sector. This, he said, "will allow a smoother adaptation of certain farmer and consumer groups to the EU regulatory regime."

And overall, the Lithuanian negotiator said he was pleased with the progress made in the negotiations. "With five very complex chapters preliminary closed as well as phytosanitary and veterinary aspects of the agriculture chapter agreed upon this semester, we have progressed well in fulfilling our objective to complete accession negotiations this year.... In comparison with the agenda we faced just five semesters ago, only a limited number of issues remain to be agreed upon in order to enable conclusion of negotiations", he said.

For the latest status of the negotiations, see the DG Enlargement web site at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/pdf/stateofplay_28june2002.pdf

SLOWER GROWTH IN TRANSITION COUNTRIES?

After satisfactory performance of the transition countries in 2000, growth slowed down in 2001 as the external conditions deteriorated. And this tendency has not been checked in the first



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quarter of 2002, according to "Transition Countries in 2002: Losing Steam", the late publication from WIIW Research Reports. Industrial production has weakened, in some countries even declined. Expanding consumption has been the major growth factor, it says. Meanwhile, capital formation weakened or contracted. "This does not augur well for economic growth in the medium-term future." The report predicts that current account deficits will continue to be financed largely - "and safely" - by inflows of foreign direct investment. But it warns that while persistent unemployment will generally have no destabilising political consequences because of its associated social problems, this cannot be so safely assumed for Poland.

Meanwhile, the new WIIW-WIFO data compilation of foreign direct investment in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union suggests that the world-wide decline of FDI in 2001 had no major direct impact on the transition countries. But stagnation in leading economies and the loss in market value of a number of transnational corporations led to the scaling back of investment plans for 2002 and this has affected direct investments in eastern European countries. In the central European transition countries the FDI inflow in the first three months of 2002 was about one half of the previous year's level.

"For Poland, a country with home-made economic stagnation, the prospects are bleak for the rest of the year as well", it says. "But in the Czech Republic, energy sector privatisation may give a boost. As to Hungary, the record FDI of 2001 will certainly not be achieved". Slovak and Slovenia represent the main exceptions to the declining trend. A major increase of FDI will be booked in Slovakia, which sold 49% of the gas transit transport company in March for US\$ 2.7 billion. Together with the expected electricity sector privatisation the annual inflow may double compared to the previous year. Slovenia had a record level of FDI inflow in 2001 that will most likely be surpassed in 2002. The privatisation of the banking sector has finally started and also companies privatised earlier to dispersed owners and funds are attracting new foreign capital. Romania and Bulgaria are pursuing a slow privatisation policy that can attract only modest FDI for some years. They also feature a growing economy and low wages attracting investors to the labour-intensive light industries.

Recent developments have not changed the basic features of per capita FDI in central and eastern Europe. The Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary report the highest per capita stocks, followed by the Slovak Republic, Croatia, Slovenia and Poland. These, says the report, are the countries with intensive corporate integration with the European Union. For the rest of the countries in the region the amount of FDI is meagre. However, foreign companies may acquire great economic importance even if the invested amount is small. For instance, the amount of FDI in Romanian manufacturing is only US\$ 2 billion, but the result is that 38% of the sales and 44% of the exports is produced by foreign affiliates. In the case of Bulgaria, on about US\$ 800 million has been invested into the banking sector, but with this amount foreign affiliates acquired 70% of the banking assets. To achieve a similar rate of control in the Slovak Republic US\$ 1.2 billion was necessary, and in the Czech Republic more than US\$ 4 billion.

For details of how to obtain the full report, see <http://www.wiiw.ac.at/datafdi.html>


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Enlargement news in brief

Parliament backs Danish focus on enlargement

Most of the European Parliament gave a warm welcome to the Danish Presidency plans, and particularly for the priority allocated to enlargement. EPP-ED group lead Hans-Gert Poettering said the programme could show how smaller member states could contribute effectively to the EU's greatest project - enlargement. He expressed support for the Presidency insistence that no candidate should have to wait for any other and that no new pre-conditions should be introduced at the last minute that would delay enlargement.

Enrique Baron Crespo saluted the ambition of the Danish Presidency and envisaged it as a prelude to "a historic achievement". Graham Watson for the ELDR group saw enlargement as the EU's greatest ever challenge, and criticised member states for squabbling over "less than 1% of GDP", the difference in contributions to the EU budget in the scenarios currently under discussion for financing enlargement. He also said he was concerned that the general public

was not sufficiently informed on enlargement, with Eurobarometer surveys showing less than 20% of people feeling that they were "well informed". UK Socialist Simon Murphy also warned against infighting over relatively small amounts of money that could delay enlargement. He wanted to see a clear separation between enlargement and reform of the CAP. Both would be essential but not conditional on each other.

For the GUE/NGL group, Pernille Frahm said financial disputes should not serve as an obstacle to enlargement. But Mogens Camre, for the UEN, asked whether, in the long-term, it might be better to postpone enlargement, to allay fears about job losses in the existing EU states likely to follow industrial relocation to cheaper areas. And Baroness Emma Nicholson made a plea for candidate countries to be obliged to ratify the UN Convention on the rights of the child during the accession negotiations.

Patten cites candidates as pattern for Yugoslavia

Offering encouragement to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its reform process, European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten cited the current candidate countries as a model when he spoke in Belgrade on 3 July. "Reform takes time. It cannot, we do not, produce results overnight. It requires patience and persistence. It is often painful. But over time, let me assure you, it works. Just look how the prospects of the countries of central and eastern Europe have been transformed in the last decade. Today those countries stand on the very threshold of EU membership. This country is now embarking on a similar transition. The example of central and eastern Europe and of your immediate neighbours Slovenia and Hungary, for example, shows that reform is worth it. The gain outweighs the pain. And of course, the sooner you start, and the faster you move, the sooner you get through it."

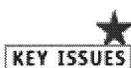
Poland raises stakes in agriculture debate

On July 3, the Polish deputy prime minister and agriculture minister Jaroslaw Kalinowski announced that Poland might retaliate against the EU if no acceptable deal could be struck in the current negotiations on agriculture. He spoke of imposing protective import duties on subsidised EU farm exports of wheat, milk and meat, and keeping them in place until Polish farmers received payments at exactly the same level as EU farmers. EU officials were quick to dismiss the suggestions as mere negotiating tactics. The resignation of finance minister Marek Belka last week has intensified the internal debate over how strict the Polish government is ready to be about its budget deficit (Belka had been arguing for tight fiscal policy). And the OECD report on Poland published on July 4 makes some trenchant criticisms of Polish economic policy and of delays in reform.

For details of how to obtain the full OECD report on Poland, see the OECD web site : <http://www.oecd.org/EN/document/0,,EN-document-0-nodirectorate-no-3-31844-0,FF.html>

Denmark's plans for the Northern Dimension

The EU's Northern Dimension - an initiative to boost co-operation among the countries bordering the Baltic and Barents Seas - is due for renewed attention during the Danish Presidency. Denmark has announced that guidelines will be established for a new action plan for 2003 to 2006, and a donors' conference has been scheduled for July 9 to help provide funding for the exercise. "In the light of enlargement, the new plan should highlight the importance of co-operation over the EU's new external border, the safeguarding of the effective functioning of the border and more generally the integration of north-western Russia into the positive developments in the Baltic region, which enlargement will promote yet further", says the Danish Presidency programme. It says the plan should also support economic development in the region, promoting conditions for private business and the abolition of obstacles to trade. A ministerial conference will be held in Greenland in August amongst other things on the Arctic aspects of the Northern Dimension. It will involve topics such as the Arctic environment and development in thinly populated areas. Denmark says that, as the plan will have to apply to an enlarged EU with new neighbours - Ukraine, Belarus and eventually Moldova - "it will be natural to see the Northern Dimension as part of a new over-



strategy towards the EU's neighbours to the east." The aim will be to promote democratic and economic reforms in neighbouring countries and strengthen cross-border co-operation with them.

Enlargement for young Europe

On the eve of the Danish Presidency, 99 young people between 18 and 25 years of age from the youth project on the EU's future, Youth 2002, met with Danish Prime Minister Anders Fog Rasmussen at his residence, Marienborg, north of Copenhagen. They told him about their thinking about Europe's future, and he told them "The greatest issue on the agenda for the Danish Presidency is the enlargement of the European Union. The enlargement goes to the heart of what the European Union is all about: freedom, peace and prosperity. Building a better future for all of us". And European Affairs Minister Bertel Haarder told them "Europe's future is the young people's future". 1,000 young people from 33 European countries - including the candidates - are spending their summer holiday in Danish high schools discussing the future structure of Europe.

Another Phare boost for Czech roads

New bridges on the E442 international road across the Czech Republic are being opened in early July. Supported with 2.1 million from the European Union's Phare programme, and with a loan from the European Investment Bank, the project will help make transport smoother and safer transport to and from Germany. It forms part of a high capacity four-lane connection of the Hradek nad Nisou border crossing to Germany. The dilapidated old three-lane bridge has been demolished and replaced without interruption of traffic over the last five years.

Eurobus tours Lithuania

On 25 June, Vilnius saw off the mobile information centre Eurobus for a tour around Lithuania. Over three months, the Eurobus will visit 157 Lithuanian towns and townships, providing information on the European Union and on Lithuania's readiness for EU membership. The mobile information centre carries written and video material on the EU and a group of scouts and students, who will be answering questions on EU integration. Every Thursday starting from 4 July, the Eurobus will stop in district centres, where local people will hold meetings and discussions with euro negotiators, parliamentarians and representatives of embassies of the EU states, ending with concerts and lotteries. The action will involve an informal referendum where about 25,000 people are expected to express their opinion on the EU membership. For more on Lithuania, see the web site of the delegation in Vilnius on : <http://www.eudel.lt/>

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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 public events related to the enlargement of the EU taking place in all current and future member states.

Date	Event
July	
Thursday 11th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament committee on culture, youth, education, media and sport discusses the report by Geneviève Fraisse (EUL/NGL, F) on the importance and dynamics of the theatre and the performing arts in an

	<p>enlarged Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate country representatives take part in European Convention, Brussels • EU Council of Ministers working group on the drafting of the EU Treaty meets, Brussels • European Competition Commissioner Mario Monti and Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Pedro Solbes receive the deputy prime minister of Slovakia, Ivan Miklos
Thursday 11th-Friday 12th	<p>European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Poland</p> <p>Economic and Social Committee Joint Consultative Committee with Turkey, Erzerum</p>
Friday 12th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels • Candidate countries take part in EU Council of Ministers troika meeting with the countries of eastern Europe and central Asia, Brussels
Monday 15th-Tuesday 16th	<p>European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Hungary</p>
Thursday 18th-Friday 19th	<p>European Commission President Romano Prodi and Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visit Turkey</p>
August	
Friday 16th - Monday 19th	<p>Pope John Paul II visits Poland</p>
September	
Details tbc	<p>European Court of Auditors workshop with the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries on audit of internal control systems</p>
Friday 20th - Saturday 21st	<p>Parliamentary elections, Slovakia</p>
Autumn	
Details tbc	<p>Slovenia presidential and local elections</p>
September/October	

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Details tbc	Self-governmental elections, Poland
October	
Details tbc	European Court of Auditors workshop with the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries on audit quality control, Warsaw
Wednesday 2nd-Thursday 3rd	Meeting of liaison officers from supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors, Luxembourg
Saturday 5th	Parliament elections, Latvia
Details tbc	Partial Senate elections, Czech Republic
Details tbc	Local governmental elections, Hungary
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

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Wendsday 27th and Thursday 28th	Meeting of the Presidents of the supreme audit institutions of the member states and the candidate countries in Luxembourg
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
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.
Thursday 12th, Friday 13th	European Court of Auditors meeting with heads of the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries, Bucharest
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

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