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English

EUROPA > European Commission > Enlargement > Library > Enlargement Weekly

Contact | Search

What's new? | Site map | Index | FAQ

<< HOME

ALL ABOUT...

Enlargement

Candidate countries

Negotiations

Financial assistance

Communication strategy

USEFUL INFORMATION

Who does what?

Public opinion

Events

Library

Research Bulletin

Links

>> E.U in the world

PRESS CORNER

**Enlargement Weekly - 08 July 2003**

- ▣ [Now the Czechs start negotiating cohesion funding](#)
- ▣ [Applications pour in from acceding states for EU jobs](#)
- ▣ [Better transport links urged to new member states](#)
- ▣ [Enlargement news in brief](#)
- ▣ [Enlargement Mini-Briefs](#)
- ▣ [Enlargement agenda](#)



PRINT VE

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Newsletter arc  
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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.

**NOW THE CZECHS START NEGOTIATING COHESION FUNDING**

Following in the wake of Poland (see previous issue of ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY), the Czech Republic started last week to negotiate the details of its EU financial support for regional development for 2004-2006. The European Council in **Copenhagen** last December committed around €2.6 billion to the Czech Republic for the period 2004-2006: almost €1.7 billion under the EU Structural Funds, and some €0.9 billion under the Cohesion Fund. This makes the Czech Republic the third largest recipient of Structural and Cohesion Funds among the new member states (following Poland and Hungary).

The talks are focused on the documentation and plans that the Czech authorities have proposed. These include a Community Support Framework - which describes the socio-economic context, and presents development priorities and systems of financial management - and related Operational Programmes detailing the various priorities of the CSF. At beginning of March 2003, the Czech Republic handed over to the Commission its National Development Plan 2000-2006 and a first group of Operational Programmes, along with two Single Programming Documents for Prague. A second group of Operational Programmes was submitted in April.

Before the talks started last week, European Regional Affairs Commissioner Michel Barnier told Pavel Nemeč, Czech minister for **regional development**, the Commission's position on how Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund should be used in the Czech Republic. "The Plan represents a good basis for the negotiations that lie ahead", he wrote. "It is very important that the European programmes in the Czech Republic are a success. It therefore is all the more important that we reach an early agreement so that implementation on the ground can begin as soon as possible taking into account that eligibility of expenditure under these programmes starts on 1 January 2004".

The funding is aimed at helping sustainable development based on competitiveness. Through the Operational Programmes, the Structural Funds will concentrate on business infrastructure and business development, transport and environment infrastructure, multifunctional agriculture and rural development, and education, training and active labour market policies. The Single Programming Documents for Prague will focus on urban regeneration,

local and economic development and training measures. The Cohesion Fund will concentrate on transport infrastructures and environment.

The Czech Republic has eight regions, and seven of them are considered as lagging behind, and are consequently eligible for the EU's principal funding vehicle, known as Objective 1 assistance. Prague, which is more prosperous, is eligible for funding under secondary programmes known as Objective 2 (aimed at "regions with structural problems whose socio-economic conversion is to be supported") and Objective 3 (for "modernising systems of training and promoting employment").

- For background on regional development policy, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/intro/regions5\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/intro/regions5_en.htm)

**APPLICATIONS POUR IN FROM ACCEDING STATES FOR EU JOBS**

More than 37,000 applications have been received for the first round of recruitment of permanent EU officials from the ten future member states. The job opportunities were published in May, and by the closing date of June 24 the number of applications reached 37,908.

For the positions as assistant administrators, most applications came from Poland - nearly 8,000, followed by Hungary (around 5,000), the Czech Republic and Slovakia (around 3,000). The majority opted for the competition for European public administration; economics was the second most popular choice, followed by law, and auditing.

More than 5,000 applied for posts as assistant translators, with the number of applications roughly proportional to the size of the populations. And more than 7,000 applied for positions as secretaries - with the national breakdown again roughly in line with population size.

The details of the number of applications are as follows:

<b>Secretaries (C5/C4)</b>	
Cyprus	96
Czech Republic	1084
Estonia	412
Hungary	1792
Lithuania	268
Latvia	189
Malta	78
Poland	2511
Slovenia	441
Slovakia	795
<b>Total</b>	<b>7666</b>

<b>Assistant translators (LA8)</b>	
Language	Applications
CZ	691
ET	207
HU	1212
LT	278

LV	125
MT	94
PL	2155
SL	318
SK	769
<b>Total</b>	<b>5849</b>

Assistant administrators A8				
	European public administration	Law	Economics	Auditing
Cyprus	617	160	190	100
Czech Republic	1475	557	990	155
Estonia	320	133	226	47
Hungary	2151	1217	1855	240
Lithuania	435	235	262	51
Latvia	243	110	157	25
Malta	146	54	29	34
Poland	3216	1452	2737	576
Slovenia	517	207	314	43
Slovakia	1381	409	1179	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>10501</b>	<b>4534</b>	<b>7939</b>	<b>1419</b>

Announcing the figures, the Commission attributed the "significant amount of interest on behalf of the accession countries' citizens" to "the successful political completion of the enlargement negotiations as well as the positive outcome of the different referenda in the accession countries".

These are all entry-level positions, requiring no previous work experience. Further competitions for more senior posts will be launched at a later date. And there are already some staff from the acceding states working in temporary auxiliary positions within the EU institutions under an earlier competition.

- See <http://europa.eu.int/epso> for details of careers in the EU Institutions

### BETTER TRANSPORT LINKS URGED TO NEW MEMBER STATES

A high-level group of experts proposed last week that priorities should be shifted in the trans-European transport network - and one of its key findings is that links to the future member states should receive more attention and more funding. "The economic catching-up of numerous regions, in particular in the future new Member States, will depend on good access to the major European axes, efficient interconnections, and in particular good cross-border connections", the report says.

The group, chaired by former European Transport Commissioner Karel Van Miert, was set up earlier this year to advise the European Commission on how to adjust its planning for transport networks. The conclusions, handed over to European Commission Vice-President Loyola de Palacio on June 30, urge that by 2010, work should start on the selected links to the new member states in central and eastern Europe and beyond, with a target completion date of 2020.

The list includes eliminating bottlenecks on the Rhine-Main-Danube (including the Vienna-Bratislava section, and bottlenecks in Bulgaria and Romania), creating "motorways of the sea" from the Baltic Sea to western Europe, and linking the western Mediterranean with Malta), rail links between Lyon-Trieste and Koper-Ljubljana-Budapest, from the Greek/Bulgarian border running through Sofia-Budapest-Vienna-Prague-Nürnberg, from Gdansk-Warsaw to Brno-Zilina, and from Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart to Vienna-Bratislava, and motorways from the Greek/Bulgarian border linking Sofia, Nadlac, Budapest and Constanta, and on the Gdansk-Katowice-Brno/Zilina-Vienna route.

Further projects selected with a longer term time horizon include the Rail Baltica project to link Helsinki-Tallinn-Riga-Kaunas-Warsaw, a dedicated freight railway line Gdansk-Bydgoszcz-Katowice-Zwardon. Further down the list of priorities come multimodal logistic centres in Slawkow (Poland) with connections to the Russian gauge rail network, a Bari-Durres-Sofia-Varna/Bourgaz rail link to the Black Sea, improving port and road access at Limassol, Larnaka, Valletta and Marsaxlokk, a Dresden/Nürnberg-Prague-Linz motorway, a Prague/Linz rail link, a motorway linking Zilina-Bratislava-Vienna, a Maribor-Graz rail link, and a motorway linking Ljubljana-Maribor-Pince-Zamardi-Budapest.

The lists were compiled from some 100 projects submitted by member states and acceding countries. All selected projects are on a main trans-European axis of the enlarged Europe. And the group recommended that this initial identification should be completed by a more detailed analysis of traffic flows in a Union of 27 countries, so as to define and continuously refine a core network. The group also regretted what it called "serious under-investment and inadequate EU financial support" for transport networks so far.

## Enlargement news in brief

### *Bulgaria closes another chapter*

Bulgaria closed the **environment chapter** in its EU accession negotiations, right at the end of the Greek EU Presidency. At an extraordinary "deputy-level" session of the Accession Conference in the evening of June 30, Bulgaria negotiator Meglena Kuneva came to Brussels specially to meet the Presidency at permanent representative level. The outcome was a deal where the chapter is closed, and Bulgaria has been granted transitional periods for implementing some of the EU acquis even after accession. Altogether, eight transitional periods were granted by the EU, the longest being up until 2014 for full compliance with EU rules on urban waste water treatment, on landfilling of liquid waste for certain installations, and on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into air from large combustion plants. The transitional provisions Bulgaria has been granted are largely comparable to those granted to the ten acceding states in the negotiations they completed last year. This leaves Bulgaria with just five substantive chapters to close (in addition to the "catch-all" chapter of miscellaneous subjects). Three of the chapters have a significant money-related content - regional affairs (which includes arrangements for EU structural and cohesion funding), agriculture (which includes questions of quotas and direct payments to farmers), and financial and budgetary provisions (covering what Bulgaria will have to pay as a member state, and what it may receive from the EU). The two other chapters are justice and home affairs, and competition. Bulgaria is keen to complete all its negotiations during 2004 - which it sees as vital if it is to keep alive its hopes of joining the EU by its target date of 2007.

### *Polish agriculture and rural development reviewed by Committee of Regions*

Rural development was the focus of discussions when the EU's Committee of

the Regions held a meeting of its joint co-operation committee with Poland in Cracow at the end of June. The JCC examined a report on the approach of Polish local and regional authorities to EU policy on agriculture and rural development. How to encourage rural development, and how to decide which areas merit investment, were two of the key points of discussion - with an emphasis on finding the right balance between urban and rural areas, so as to maintain rural activity and stave off exodus to the towns. The report warned that rural areas "are seriously threatened by the reorganisation of the agricultural sector", and urged that "rural development must be made an EU priority".

The growing role of the acceding states in the work of the Committee of the Regions, and of the EU in general, was much in evidence. "A lot has changed since the last CoR-Poland consultative committee meeting", said Marek Nawara of the Malpolska region council, and Polish co-chair of the JCC. "The administrative reforms carried through by Poland to increase the powers of the local and regional authorities are complete. And the Polish people have confirmed their desire to join the Union in the June referendum". The Polish representatives on the JCC, who are now observers within the Committee of the Regions, can also now look forward to being fully fledged members within less than a year, he pointed out. Roger Kaliff, chairman of Kalmar Council in Sweden, and the JCC co-chair from the EU side, said: "Poland, a rural country par excellence, will have a major role to play" in EU discussions on agriculture. And Jan Truszczynski, under-secretary of state in the Polish ministry of foreign affairs, urged the Polish regional and local authorities "to make their voices heard".

#### *Slovenia claims it is well on the way to accession*

Slovenia says it is in the final stage of the alignment with the *acquis* and fulfilling the commitments it has undertaken in its accession negotiations, according to the June 2003 report its government has compiled on its progress towards joining the European Union. "Slovenia has already successfully transposed several chapters of the *acquis*, it has the administrative capacity to implement it, and it meets the criteria for EU membership", says the June report it has just submitted to the European Commission, as its contribution to the final report on the acceding states that the European Commission is due to produce in November. But Slovenia acknowledges that "in the period until the actual accession to the EU there is still work to be done in those areas where, due to the complexity and scope of the *acquis* involved and its ongoing developing, the alignment process has not been finished yet." The report contains details of acceleration of the handling of court cases (the number of pending court cases of major importance "has followed a constant downward trend ever since 1998" and now shows a decrease of 30% since then), privatisation (the government adopted in January this year a new quarterly time-plan on completing the denationalisation process, which is running close to schedule, and should be completed in the second half of 2004), and legislative and institutional measures aimed at combating corruption, improving public administration, employment policy, social security reform, and ensuring adequate administrative capacity across the full range of the *acquis*. It also highlights the amendment in February this year to the Slovenian Constitution, which will allow Slovenia to accede to, and subsequently to act within, the EU. And it notes that while economic growth in Slovenia was only slightly higher in 2002 than in 2001, "its structure changed considerably in favour of a higher domestic demand, in particular because of renewed increase in investments, which were largely oriented towards highway construction". Real growth in exports was also high, and Slovenia maintained "a relative stability of its economy". A gradual acceleration of economic growth is expected in 2005-2007 to reach 4.5% in 2007.

#### *Putting the EU social model into effect in Latvia*

Latvia's outstanding tasks in adopting the European model of economic and social progress were enumerated when the European Commission's Director-General for Employment and Social Affairs, Odile Quintin, visited the country

last month. In talks in Riga with government officials, employer organisations and trade unions she examined job creation, quality of work and social cohesion. Particular attention was given to Latvia's preparations for participation in the European Social Fund, the EU's financial tool for job creation, restructuring, training and social inclusion - since allocations are being decided as part of the negotiations on EU structural funds that are just starting now with the new member states. If Latvia is to benefit fully, it needs to ensure co-operation among relevant ministries, and to put in place a clear strategy and sufficient administrative capacity to deal with a pipeline of projects ready to be implemented starting from next year, it was stressed. And while Latvia is making progress towards taking on the EU's social legislation and preparing for full participation in EU employment and social policies and processes, there are still challenges to be met - notably in enhancing employment, developing social inclusion, and intensifying the fight against discrimination. Further efforts in combating poverty were urged for those suffering long term unemployment (in particular among the young), disadvantaged regions and groups, older workers, and child poverty - children in large and single parent families are exposed to a higher risk, according to the Commission. On pensions, a better financial footing is needed for future pensions, more employment incentives are required for older workers and improved portability of pensions between jobs is required. And bipartite social dialogue needs to be strengthened in Latvia, as just 25% of employees are covered by a collective agreement, at either sectoral or enterprise level.

*What will enlargement mean for defence industries?*

The impact of security policy on industry and civil society in the enlarged European Union is under study in the newly-constituted industrial change commission of the European Economic and Social Committee. Part of the objective is to anticipate problems linked with rapid integration of the acceding states into common European security and defence policy structures - and particularly into the internal market of the military equipment industry and related research. The opinion will assess how enlargement can help - or hinder - the achievement of the recognised EU aim of strengthening its industrial potential in this sector. It will look at the transition economies' achievements under the 1990s Konver programme for industrial restructuring and conversion to civilian uses of military industries, and the implications of NATO's enlargement to the east - particularly the effect on the military apparatus and equipment of the new EU member states.

## Enlargement Mini-Briefs

- Speaking in Paris on June 30, Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, said enlargement is not only an objective to attain: it is also already an everyday reality. "Since April, we have in fact been working as 25. Even if the formal decisions continue to be taken by the 15, the representatives of the ten new member states participate fully in our debates. So we are conducting a live test of how well our working methods function, and how we can reach consensus". Noting the widespread support for enlargement in the acceding states that have already held referendums he went on: "For the EU's common foreign and security policy, this enlargement represents a significant boost in legitimacy and credibility. It gives us new responsibilities in the world".
- Barbara Richstein, minister for justice and European affairs of Brandenburg, urged intensified co-operation between Polish and EU regional and local authorities in her remarks to the EU Committee of the Regions recent joint co-operation committee with Poland in Cracow. Such links can help new member states adapt to the acquis, and can promote cross-border regions and give them an identity, she said: "We must develop these exchanges, which could also involve co-operation in the area of justice or university education". But it would need EU financial support, she added.
- The big task facing the new Italian Presidency of the Council is to

complete the process of bringing ten new countries into the Union with the formal signing of the European Constitution. That in turn will advance both enlargement and deepening of the Union, according to EPP-ED Group chairman Hans-Gert Poettering, in the plenary debate in the European Parliament with the new President of the European Council, Silvio Berlusconi. Poettering promised that for its part, the EPP-ED Group would do all in its power to ensure this goal was reached.

- Delegates of the 15 European Union member states and the ten acceding states - as well as representatives from the European Environment Agency and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe - are taking part in a high-level workshop on enlargement and environment in Trieste this week. They will be analysing the challenge of integrating environmental policies into national economies. Linking environmental issues with the Structural Funds will be one of the key elements in the discussions.

## Agenda

See also the new "Enlargement events calendar" on the DG Enlargement web site at <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.

(note: now that acceding states take part in Council meetings and EP and ESC plenaries, these will from now on be listed in this calendar)

Date	Event
<b>July 2003</b>	
Tuesday 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Commission Vice-President Neil Kinnock visits Lithuania for discussions on recruitment of new EU officials, and meets the President, Rolandas Paksas, prime minister Algirdas Brazauskas, finance minister Dalia Grybauskaite, foreign affairs ministry under-secretary Rytis Martikonis</li> <li>■ European Parliament committee on employment and social affairs considers joint assessment papers on employment policies in candidate countries, Brussels</li> <li>■ European Parliament transport and tourism committee discussion with Karel Van Miert, chairman of the European trans-European networks high level group, Brussels</li> <li>■ European Parliament committee on culture, youth, education, media and sport on regional and lesser-used languages in Europe in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity, Brussels</li> <li>■ EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels</li> <li>■ EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels</li> </ul>
Tuesday 8- Friday 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Wilton Park Conference: How will enlargement change the European Union?, Warsaw</li> </ul>
Wednesday 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU Council of Ministers working group on the Western Balkans meets, Brussels</li> </ul>
10th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Commission President Romano Prodi visits Croatia</li> <li>■ European Commission Vice-President Neil Kinnock visits Latvia for discussions on recruitment of new EU officials, and meets Prime Minister Einars Repse, foreign affairs minister Sandra Kalniete, justice minister Aivars Aksenoks, finance Minister Valdis Dombrovskis.</li> </ul>

- 10th - 11th July
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Bulgaria
- Friday 11
  - European Parliament President Pat Cox meets ambassadors from the 15 member states and all 13 candidate countries at the Italian Embassy, Dublin
- 11-12 July
  - Informal employment and social affairs Council, Varese
  - Informal competition Council, Rome
- 10th - 12th July
  - European Commission-Italian Presidency conference on medicines discusses competition, regulation, access and availability in an enlarged European Union; Rome
- 15-16 July
  - Ecofin Council, Brussels
- July 17th
  - David Byrne, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection visits Poland
- July 18th
  - David Byrne, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection visits Hungary
- 18-20 July
  - Informal environment and energy Council, Montecatini
- July 22th
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Hungary
  - General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels
- 22-23 July
  - Agriculture Council, Brussels
- August 2003**
- Details tbc
  - Presidential elections (elected by the parliament), Latvia
- September 2003**
- Sunday 14th
  - **Referendum** in Estonia on EU accession
- Saturday 20th
  - **Referendum** in Latvia on EU accession
- 2004**
- May 2004**
- Saturday 1st
  - Entry into force of the accession treaty (according to conclusions of General Affairs Council, 18.11.02)

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TOP ↗