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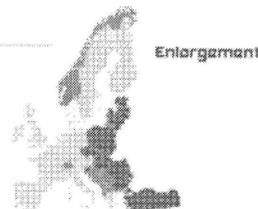
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Enlargement Weekly - 14 October 2003



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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.

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PRESS CORNER

PARLIAMENT SEES SUCCESSFUL ENLARGEMENT THE PRIORITY FOR 2004 EU BUDGET

The European Parliament budgets committee last week unanimously reasserted its view that the EU must have sufficient funding to make a success of enlargement. The committee was voting on the EU's 2004 budget.

"The 2004 budget faces major challenges", said the committee, including "the historic enlargement of the Union with 10 new member states", and the timing of enlargement, which does not coincide with the beginning of the financial year.

Enlargement is a "key priority for the 2004 budget", says the draft report. It reiterates that the main goal of the 2004 budget is to make provision for all the measures that will contribute to making enlargement a success. Integrating ten new member states "is an unprecedented challenge for the European Union's budget and the most important political priority at the moment". So it wants to ensure that the appropriate level of funding to cater for enlargement is entered in the 2004 budget, and to provide for the targeted topping-up of EU-10 budget allocations.

Pre-accession funds and completion of ongoing pre-accession projects in the new member states will play an important role in the early stages of membership, the committee believes, so it has decided to provide an appropriate level of payments for pre-accession funds. It endorses measures to improve the financial environment for smaller firms, with particular attention being paid to needs in the new member states: this, it says, will help in achieving more social and regional cohesion. Measures financed under the Phare programme's SME Finance Facility should be followed up, it urges.

It wants to revise upwards the existing budget ceilings for pilot projects and preparatory actions, because they do not take enlargement needs into consideration or cater sufficiently for the new member states.

In an accompanying declaration, the committee urges agreement on a procedure under which the European Parliament and the Council will reach an initial agreement on the basic budget for enlargement, and then try to

reach political agreement by the end of November on the amounts which should be added following enlargement. They will also both try to adopt the necessary legislation in time for the adapted figure to come into effect as from the date of entry into force of the Accession Treaty.

Meanwhile, the committee wants the funding earmarked for 272 new posts at the Commission to be placed in reserve, to be released only when guarantees are provided that all the posts will be filled - and will be used entirely to recruit staff from the acceding countries.

The budget committee also notes in its report that the Wider Europe Initiative/New Neighbours Initiative may entail additional budget needs. But "the proposals, so far, have been vague in budgetary terms". There will have to be adequate funds in the EU programmes for the regions covered - TACIS for the former USSR, CARDS for the Balkans, and MEDA for the Mediterranean - it says, and it takes a favourable view of launching a new Neighbourhood Instrument.

Parliament will hold a plenary debate on the budget on Tuesday 21 October in Strasbourg, and vote on Thursday 23 October.

YOUNG EUROPEANS HAVE SAME PASTIMES, DIFFERENT VIEWS

Television, listening to music and meeting up with friends are the leisure pursuits that unite young people in the EU and the future member states, according to a new Eurobarometer survey released last week.

The mobile phone is the most common form of technology, although only three-quarters of young people in the acceding countries use a mobile phone every week, compared to four-fifths in the EU15. But young people in the future member states spend even more time on the computer (63% at least once a week, compared with 56% in the EU15), regularly checking the Internet (50% against 37%), and using e-mail (34% against 31%).

Young people in the acceding and candidate countries go less often to the cinema, to concerts or to the theatre, but slightly more of them enjoy reading - and twice as many help with work around the house.

They know more foreign languages, too. A higher proportion of young people in the acceding and candidate countries than in the present Union know one, two or three foreign languages (two thirds can take part in a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue, and only 17% know no foreign language at all, as opposed to 32% in EU 15). As in the EU15, the main foreign language known by young people is English (47%, compared with 50% in EU 15). The next most common second languages are German (17%), Russian (8%) and French (7%).

Their social attitudes are noticeably different, the survey suggests. A higher proportion of young people in the acceding and candidate countries than in EU 15 think their generation favours compulsory AIDS testing (66% compared with 61%), compulsory medical treatment of paedophiles (74% compared with 62%), birth control for the poor (32% compared with 27%) and the death penalty (47% compared with 27%). At the same time, a lower proportion thinks that their generation favours euthanasia (39% compared with 50% in EU 15), homosexual marriages (38% compared with 59%) and child adoption by homosexual couples (19% compared with 40%). At the same time, 49% of young people in the acceding and candidate countries think there are not many foreigners in their country, compared with only 9% of respondents in the EU 15 survey, and 46% (compared with 27% in the EU) think that foreigners should have the same rights as their own country's nationals.

And young people in the acceding states have a more positive view of the European Union than their counterparts in the current member states. They see it chiefly as a hope of a better future (61% for the 13 countries and 47% for the 10 countries due to join in 2004, compared with 28% in EU 15). The

main reasons given are job opportunities, freedom to move, and a better quality of life and more money.

"Young people in the acceding and candidate countries share similar tastes and lifestyles to those of young people in the 15 existing EU Member States", concluded Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for Education and Culture, announcing the **results**. But they have "very high expectations of the Union, and these must be taken into account when preparing the next generation of European programmes for which I am responsible, and in which most of these countries are already participating," she said.

ENLARGEMENT LOOMS LARGE IN EU-UKRAINE SUMMIT

EU enlargement was the leitmotif of last week's meeting between Ukraine's president, Leonid Kuchma, and the EU's top foreign affairs figures - Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, European Commission President Romano Prodi, Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and European External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten. Not surprising, since Ukraine will become a direct neighbour of the EU from 1 May 2003, with borders with Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. A joint statement after their summit in Yalta noted "the background of the conclusion of a new wave of European Union enlargement" - and emphasised that "sharing common goals and values", there will be "new opportunities and responsibilities for assuring peace, stability and prosperity in an indivisible Europe".

Ukraine reiterated its long-term strategic goal to be fully integrated into the EU, and the EU acknowledged these European aspirations and welcomed its "European choice". And both sides reconfirmed their commitment - declared in the April 2003 European Conference in Athens - to promote policies of political and economic rapprochement and gradual integration of social and economic structures.

There was agreement too that the EU's "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood" initiative would help Ukraine's progressive participation in the EU's internal market and in EU policies and programmes. This initiative, to build new links with all the EU's new neighbours, from Russia in the north-east to Morocco in the south-west, has been carefully phrased by the EU as a separate exercise from EU enlargement - a distinction that Ukraine took note of during the summit.

The joint statement "welcomed the EU enlargement process and agreed that maintenance of traditionally close ties between Ukraine and the new EU member states is vital for regional stability, and will facilitate Ukraine's further integration with the EU." Discussions will continue on the impact of EU enlargement on all aspects of EU-Ukraine relations. And both sides endorsed the principle of co-operation on the integration of infrastructure networks between Ukraine and the EU in the context of EU enlargement - particularly in energy and transport.

Enlargement news in brief

Interpreting the enlarged Europe

So as to ease the passage to the use of many more languages in the European Union, the European Commission is upgrading its Joint INterpretation and CONference Service into a full Directorate General for Interpretation (to be known as DG INCO). Commission Vice-President for Reform Neil Kinnock proposed the move to ensure a smooth integration of the interpreters for the nine new languages as of the first day of enlargement. The change is also intended to reinforce management capacity to cope with the increase in the volume and complexity of the tasks to be carried out. It will also help cope with the increase staff, which will rise by roughly 40%, to 900 in total. The new DG will be organised around three Directorates, reflecting

the main areas of activity of the DG: the management of interpreters, who will be grouped into five interpretation departments within a single Interpretation Directorate ; the provision of services, responsible for programming of meetings and interpretation and improving performance ; and internal management of the DG, to implement internal controls, training, career development and the management of information technology. The reorganisation will be effective as of 15 October 2003.

EBRD checks out Baltics

Directors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have been visiting Estonia and Lithuania to learn more about the state of reforms and economic transition there. In Lithuania the delegation visited the Ignalina nuclear power station. Lithuania has agreed to shut down unit 1 of this station before 2005 and unit 2 by 2009. The EBRD manages the Ignalina International Decommissioning Support Fund (IIDSF), the lion's share of which is fed by the EU. This fund supports projects addressing the closure and the consequences of closure and decommissioning of the nuclear power plant. EBRD says it "stands ready" to continue its work in the fund and, in general in overcoming the remaining challenges of the transition process. It will focus on further expanding support to small and medium-sized enterprises through local and regional financial institutions, facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investment, and financing infrastructure investments and utilities at both the national and local levels. The Bank will also continue to promote the restructuring and improved corporate governance of enterprises. The current EBRD analysis of both countries is that they have managed to achieve impressive progress. In Lithuania, growth is forecast at 6.0 per cent this year, mainly driven by investments and exports. Successful privatisation projects helped lead to a net inflow of \$714 million in foreign direct investment last year. And in Estonia growth rates of 6.0 per cent in 2002 and an estimated 4.5 per cent this year were supported by strong domestic demand - even if the slowdown in the world economy has led to a drop in foreign direct investment recently, contributing to a wider current account deficit. At the end of 2002 the EBRD's portfolio in Estonia was €240 million, of which 91 per cent was in the private sector. And in Lithuania the portfolio was €270 million, of which 62 per cent was in the private sector.

Committee of Regions reviews the Northern Dimension

Co-operation on the Northern Dimension must be developed at local and regional level, because a bottom-up approach is essential for implementation of the EU acquis in the new member states in the region, according to a new report adopted last week by the EU's Committee of the Regions. The Committee welcomed the European Commission's recently-proposed Action Plan for 2004-2006 for the Northern Dimension - which aims to bring together the countries of the Baltic, Barents and Arctic seas. But it insisted that since local and regional authorities will have to be consulted in the practical planning of programmes and projects, increased decision-making power should be transferred to local and regional actors to ensure more equal participation. The report points out that enlargement will "dramatically change" the entire geography of the European Union, with Russia figuring even more prominently as the EU's neighbour in the east, and the Russian territory of Kaliningrad, which will become an enclave in the Union, "must be given particular attention in the development of the **Northern Dimension**", the Committee **says**. National governments, the Council of Baltic States, local and regional authorities, and organisations such as Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Co-operation and local and regional representatives from Russia should come together regularly in some new form of common forum to oversee the exercise, the report recommends.

Estonians look forward to easier travel

The Estonian border guard service says it is now ready for the changes that EU membership will bring. Border guard chief of staff Colonel Aare Evisalu says the new arrangements "will significantly simplify Estonian citizens' travel

in EU member countries". Border crossings will become faster for all EU citizens as border control procedures are simplified. "The border control of Estonian citizens leaving Estonia for an EU country will be reduced to the confirmation of identity on the basis of a travel document", he said. And going to Finland, just an hour or so away by fast ferry from Tallinn, "There will no longer be questions on the border as to whether the person is carrying enough money, why he or she is coming into the country and when he or she is going to leave it", said Evisalu. Full border and customs check-ups at Estonian borders will, however, only disappear after full application of the Schengen rules - which will not happen until 2007 at the earliest, he conceded.

Wallström urges a healthy environment on new member states

"In Poland, and the other nine acceding countries, accession to the EU will already help bring significant health improvements", European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström told a conference on environment and health strategy in Warsaw last week. "EU environmental legislation has always been health-driven, and full implementation of the environmental 'acquis' will result in cleaner air, purer water and better waste management", she said. She predicted that full implementation of the EU directives on air quality will lead to at least 15,000 fewer premature deaths from exposure to air pollution and to between 43,000 and 180,000 fewer cases of chronic bronchitis. The European Commission is currently working on a new strategy on environment and health, and is about to draft a detailed action plan for 2004-2010. "This action plan will be presented next spring, and it will be our major input for the Fourth Pan-European Environment and Health Ministerial Conference in Budapest in June 2004", said Wallström. "To come up with a good action plan, we depend on the full participation of all the stakeholders in the field of environment and health: the medical and research communities, professional associations, business, non-governmental organisations, local and regional authorities, EU member states, the accession countries, European institutions and international organisations", she said.

EIB loan for Latvia

The European Investment Bank last week signed a long-term loan of €30 million for financing of small- and medium-scale projects in Latvia. It will enable the Mortgage and Land Bank of Latvia to finance projects in industry, services and tourism as well as small- and medium-sized investments in environmental protection, energy savings, schools and hospitals in Latvia. The money will be channelled principally to smaller private companies. But it can also be made available to private or public promoters of any size and ownership for projects covering energy, environmental protection or infrastructure. According to Sauli Niinistö, the EIB's regional vice-president: "The EIB supports economic development of small and medium enterprises that encourage entrepreneurship, represent important economic drivers and source of job creation in the future member states. In Latvia, the EIB global loans have become a well-established and successful instrument for long-term funding of projects of smaller firms, which will have a catalytic effect on further investments in Latvia, including foreign direct investment. It will also help to improve international competitiveness and contribute to the development of term finance in Latvia, an important element for the further progress of the financial system in the country". The EIB, the European Union's long-term financing arm, has provided €371 million for projects in Latvia since 1994, including railways, ports, and airport, hydro-electric energy, telecommunications, and environmental and municipal infrastructure.

Bulgaria and the Czech Republic all set for 2004

Bulgaria has caught up with the Czech Republic - and overtaken all the other future member states. These are the only two of the candidate countries and acceding states which have automatically qualified for Europe's other big 2004 event - the EURO 2004 football championship. The Czech Republic confirmed its dominance over the other teams in its qualifying group with its

3-2 victory over Austria at the weekend. And although Bulgaria lost 0-1 to Croatia, it still finished at the top of its group, and will also therefore be in the final 16 for the tournament in Portugal next June.

Slovenia, Latvia and Turkey are still in with a chance of going to Portugal, since they each finished up with the second-place ranking in their respective groups. This means they can take part in a further set of play-offs next month. Slovenia's 2-2 draw against Cyprus put it firmly in the frame; Latvia's 0-1 victory over Sweden just squeezed it into eligibility; and Turkey's goalless draw against the UK left it at least with a consolation prize.

But Romania was just elbowed out of qualifying for the play-offs by Norway, which drew level on points by managing a 1-0 victory over Luxembourg at the weekend. Under the competition's rules, Norway now goes through because it beat Romania earlier in the qualifying round. Poland, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta, Lithuania, Slovakia and Estonia were already so far down the rankings in their respective groups that most of them were out of the running even before last weekend's matches. Slovakia's 2-0 defeat of Liechtenstein came too late to save it from elimination; Poland beat Hungary 2-1, but was still too far away from Latvia's position in its group ranking to survive into the next round. Lithuania suffered another defeat - 1-0 to Scotland. And Estonia went down 2-0 to Belgium.

Enlargement Mini-Briefs

- Speaking in Austria last week, David Byrne, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection said that the challenge of enlargement included the need to invest in health to ensure economic development. "The burden of ill-health on the economies of the acceding states will reflect on the overall economic performance of the entire enlarged European Union", he said. "This can be tackled by making full use of the EU Structural Funds and other instruments. But our new member states must request it, in their programming design. We can and must finance the investment in health as a driver of economic development. We cannot tolerate a situation in Europe, where geography would effectively become a health determinant. The original purpose of the enlargement process was to rewrite history. Now we can see that for our new citizens, we must also act to transform the accidents of geography."
- A Committee of the Regions report on Wider Europe adopted last week stresses that with enlargement, "relations with our new southern and eastern neighbours must be strengthened." This partnership is all the more essential as "glaring economic differences across national frontiers can only undermine social order in the affected regions and breed illegal immigration, trafficking, organised crime and other related problems", it says. These countries therefore represent essential partners for the European Union not only to ensure economic growth and the development of external trade, but also "to guarantee political stability and the rule of law over a wider area and encourage exchanges of human capital, ideas, knowledge and cultures." It **concludes**: "We must adopt a common approach to tackling the main threats: terrorism, crime, illegal immigration and environmental challenges".
- Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts has backed UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's insistence that tax and social policy matters should continue to be decided by unanimity under the new EU Treaty. He made his position clear at the opening of the Inter-Governmental Conference in Rome at the beginning of October. However, Estonia does welcome the use of qualified majority voting as a general rule for legislative proposals, he said. As with most of the other acceding states, Estonia is also in favour of having one Commissioner nominated by each member state. The EU should consider competition and diversity of member states an asset rather than a liability, Parts said. Meanwhile, Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha has spoken unreservedly in favour of the draft

- Treaty, and argued that the IGC should seek consensus without delay.
- Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, became the first Latvian head of state to address the European Parliament when she attended its plenary session in Brussels last week.
 - The Bureau of the ELDR Group in the European Parliament will hold meetings in Lithuania on 13-14 October with President Rolandas Paksas and with liberal democrat partners in the country, including Arturas Paulauskas, Chairman of the Seimas and of the New Union-Social Liberals party, Arturas Zuokas, Chairman of the Liberal Centre Union and Mayor of Vilnius, and Valdas Adamkus, the President of Lithuania until last year.
 - The EU-Malta joint parliamentary committee held its last meeting last week in St. Julians. The EU co-chairman, Luigi Cocilovo, told the meeting he was looking forward to working together with the Maltese in the European Parliament. "The JPC chapter may come to an end but it will certainly not be the last chapter of our co-operation", he said. And Malta's foreign affairs minister Joe Borg responded that Malta was adapting energetically to cope with EU membership - including setting up a Malta-EU steering and action committee to push through changes.
 - The latest in the series of dialogues between the Orthodox Church and the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament is to focus on the New Europe after 2004. The meeting will take place in Istanbul on 16-17 October, and will reflect on the construction of the New Europe after 2004, in the context of EU enlargement and the Intergovernmental Conference. Representatives from the Orthodox church, other churches and religions, as well as EPP-ED Members of the European Parliament, representatives from the Turkish government and the governing AKP Party will take part.

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 al 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
October 2003	
Monday 13- Tuesday 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Luxembourg ■ EU Agriculture Council, Luxembourg
Tuesday 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU-European Economic Area Council, Luxembourg
Wednesday 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Parliament President Pat Cox meets Turkish defence minister Vedci Gönül, Brussels
Thursday 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intergovernmental Conference at summit level, Brussels ■ European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen meets Poland's prime minister Leszek Miller, Brussels
Thursday 16 - Friday 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extraordinary European Council, Brussels ■ European Transport Commissioner Loyola de Palacio visits Turkey ■ EU summit will discuss relaunching the European economy and managing the EU's external borders, Brussels ■ <u>European Council</u> , focusing on the European

- economy, managing the EU's external frontiers, and immigration policy; Brussels
- Friday 17
- Franz Fischler, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries visits Prague, and meets the Czech agriculture minister Jaroslav Palas
 - European Commission President Romano Prodi meets the President of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, Brussels
- Sunday 19-
Monday 20
- European Budget Commissioner Michaela Schreyer visits Romania
- Sunday 19 -
Wednesday 22
- OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators Network training seminar for anti-fraud communicators in candidate countries, Bucharest
- Monday 20
- Viviane Reding, European Commissioner in charge of Education and Culture, visits Hungary
- Monday 20-
Tuesday 21
- Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Luxembourg
- Monday 20-
Thursday 23
- European Parliament plenary session, Strasbourg
- Tuesday 21
- European Parliament culture committee discusses enlargement and cultural diversity, Strasbourg
- Wednesday 22
- European Parliament foreign affairs committee discusses the "Wider Europe" dossier, Strasbourg
- Thursday 23 -
Friday 24
- European Economic and Social Committee-Bulgaria meets, Bulgaria
- Thursday 23-
Saturday 25
- European Regional Affairs Commissioner Michel Barnier visits Cyprus
- Monday 27
- Environment Council, Luxembourg
- Tuesday 28
- Member of the Commission responsible for Enlargement and the "Wider Europe", Günter Verheugen visits Russia
- November
2003**
- Monday 3 -
Tuesday 4
- European Economic and Social Committee-Turkey joint consultative committee, Brussels
- Tuesday 4th
- 10th EU-Slovenia Joint Parliamentary Committee, Ljubljana
 - Ecofin Council, Brussels
- Wednesday 5
- European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen presents monitoring reports on the acceding states and regular reports on Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, European Parliament, Brussels
 - European Economic and Social Committee-Poland/Lithuania/Estonia joint consultative committee meets, Brussels
- Thursday 6
- European Economic and Social Committee-Poland joint consultative committee, Brussels
 - European Economic and Social Committee-Estonia joint consultative committee meets, Brussels
 - Justice and home affairs Council, Brussels
- Monday 10
- Member of the Commission responsible for Enlargement and the "Wider Europe", Günter Verheugen and External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten visit Ukraine
- Monday 10 -
- 13th EU-Lithuania Joint Parliamentary Committee,

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Tuesday 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brussels ■ Competitiveness (internal market, industry and research) Council, Brussels |
| Thursday 13 -
Friday 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Pedro Solbes visits Slovenia |
| Monday 17 -
Tuesday 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Parliament plenary discusses the "Wider Europe" dossier, Brussels ■ European Economic and Social Committee-Romania joint consultative committee meets, Brussels ■ General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels ■ Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Brussels |
| Monday 17 -
Thursday 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Parliament plenary session, Strasbourg |
| Tuesday 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Parliament intergroup for regional or minority languages discusses the accession of the new countries and the situation with regard to minority languages and protection of minorities, Brussels |
| Thursday 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transport, Telecommunications et Energy Council, Brussels |
| Thursday 20 -
Friday 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Economic and Social Committee and European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions conference on "industrial change in Europe: current situation, prospects, responsibilities", Brussels ■ European Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Pedro Solbes visits Poland |
| Friday 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Franz Fischler, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries visits Bulgaria ■ Consumer policy informal Council, Rome |
| Monday 24 -
Tuesday 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 20th EU-Poland Joint Parliamentary Committee, Brussels ■ Ecofin Council, Brussels ■ Education, Youth and Culture Council, Brussels |
| Thursday 27 -
Friday 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 16th EU-Romania Joint Parliamentary Committee, Romania ■ European Economic and Social Committee-Slovakia joint consultative committee meets, Brussels ■ Justice and home affairs Council, Brussels |
| Thursday 27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 20th EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee, Romania ■ EU-European Economic Area joint parliamentary committee meets, Brussels ■ Competitiveness (internal market, industry and research) Council, Brussels |
| December 2003 | |
| Monday 1 -
Tuesday 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 12th EU-Estonia Joint Parliamentary Committee, Romania |
| Tuesday 2 -
Wednesday 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 51st EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, Romania |
| Thursday 4 -
Friday 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Economic and Social Committee-Slovenia joint consultative committee meets, Rome |
| Thursday 11 -
Friday 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Economic and Social Committee-Czech Republic joint consultative committee meets, Brussels |

2004**Spring 2004**

- European Economic and Social Committee-Hungary joint consultative committee meets, Brussels

February - March

- European Parliament debates Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey regular reports

March 1

- Designation of the Commissioners from the acceding states

April 2004

- European Parliament hearings of the Commissioners from the acceding states who will serve from May to November 2004
- European Commission Opinion on Croatia's accession

May 2004

Saturday 1st

- Entry into force of the accession treaty (according to conclusions of **General Affairs Council, 18.11.02**)
- Accession of the ten new member states (subject to ratification)

Monday 3 -
Thursday 6

- Extraordinary session of the EP, as the observers from the 10 new member states become full members
- Possible European Parliament informal vote of confirmation of the new Commissioners from the new member states

June 2004Thursday 10 -
Sunday 13

- Elections to the European Parliament in 25 member states.

July 2004

Sunday 20

- Constituent session of the new European Parliament
- Confirmation of the designated new President of the European Commission who will take up office from November 2004

September/October

- European Parliament hearings of the 25 designated Commissioners who will take up office from November 2004.

October 25-28

- European Parliament plenary session and confirmation of the new Commission, which will hold office from 1 November 2004 to October 31 2009.

ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY is prepared for the Information Unit of the Enlargement Directorate General of the European Commission. As part of its communication strategy on enlargement, the Commission makes this bulletin publicly available. Comments are welcome and should be addressed by e-mail to enlargement@cec.eu.int.

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