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## Enlargement

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### Enlargement Weekly - 09 December 2003

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Enlargement

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WEEKLY NEWS

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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 acceding states and the candidate countries, and how the main challenges are being met.

### NOW THE NEW ADMINISTRATORS ENTER THE FRAY

December 11 and 12 will mark another crucial milestone in making a reality out of EU enlargement, for people as well as politics. Some 23,000 candidates from the acceding states will be sitting the first tests for European Union administrators.

It is the second major recruitment exercise of its type - just weeks ago the first batch of candidates for posts as translators and secretaries sat similar competitive exams.

This time it is the turn of "assistant administrators" - at the EU's starting grade of A8. The people sitting the exam have been selected from the thousands who applied earlier this year in a pre-selection round. And as a result of these written tests, the EU aims to select around 1,340 new officials to fill posts opened up for citizens of the acceding states in all the EU institutions.

Candidates have applied in one of four areas: European public administration, law, economics and auditing. The tests are being held at centres in each of the acceding states, as well as in Brussels. Candidates at all test centres will take the same tests, which will include questions in verbal and numerical reasoning and European knowledge as well as in their specialist field.

The biggest EU demand is for public administrators - there are 505 posts earmarked for this. Some 375 lawyers are needed, 260 economists, and 200 auditors. And applications show a corresponding bias - in each of the acceding states the vast majority of applicants are taking the test as public administrators.

The competitions are run by the European Personnel Selection Office, set up by the EU to centralise all recruitment activities. According to its acting director Erik Halskov, "These enlargement competitions are a top priority for EPSO, and indeed for all EU institutions. All possible steps have been taken

to ensure that they run smoothly and efficiently and we have had excellent co-operation from the national missions to the EU and from the national authorities."

The EU recruitment exercise is more of a challenge than in any previous enlargement, because in the past the EU has welcomed only two or three new members at any one time. On this occasion, with ten new member states, the EU has had to create new streamline procedures to be able to deal efficiently with the volume of applications. Candidates for these competitions have been able to apply on-line, and to track the progress of their application via a dedicated EU website. Altogether, the EU is aiming to recruit some 5,140 new staff from the acceding states for next year - interpreters, translators, secretaries and administrators.

### **MAKING ENLARGEMENT WORK FOR RUSSIA, TOO**

The run-up to this round of EU enlargement "is a very challenging moment not only for the current and new member states, but also for our partners", said Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society, when he addressed the EU-Russia Industrialists' Round Table in Moscow last week. Speaking specifically on the impact of enlargement on EU-Russia bilateral cooperation, he openly recognised that among all EU partners, "the prospect of enlargement raises hopes and concerns."

And, he went on, it was no surprise that Russia has strongly expressed its concerns over enlargement: it is the EU's biggest neighbour. "This new architecture of Europe worries some of our partners. People are afraid that new barriers will be created". But, he asserted, fears about new dividing lines in Europe will be proven wrong in 2004 and beyond.

If the challenges of enlargement are formidable, so too are the potential rewards, both political and economic, the Commissioner insisted. "In the midst of the everyday wrangling of EU business, it is all too easy to lose sight of how successful the EU has been in promoting peace and stability in Europe. Expanding this area of stability to cover another ten countries is a historic achievement. A Common Treaty and common institutions bind 25 countries together. And economically, enlargement will surely bring about new dynamism in Europe. The new members are hungry to catch up with the existing members and will promote social and economic reform and restructuring."

The merits of enlargement for current and future member states are also advantages for EU neighbours, Liikanen maintained. "A Russian product that duly enters Estonia can be sold in Lisbon or Athens without further testing or certification" once enlargement takes place. And the enhanced growth rate of new members - double the level of current members - is expected to continue following enlargement: "The enhanced prosperity will constitute an opportunity also for neighbouring regions, through the expansion of business and investment." Liikanen predicted that trade flows of the enlarged EU with Russia will continue to increase.

Similarly, "promoting peace and prosperity cannot stop at the EU's external border", said the Commissioner. The European Commission's proposed Wider Europe initiative is intended both to avoid new barriers, and to extend the stability and prosperity of the Union to the EU's neighbours - creating "a ring of stability" around the European Union.

But if Russia is to fully benefit from enlargement, it will need to promote economic reform, economic integration with the EU, and trade liberalisation, urged Liikanen. The traditional linkages that Russia enjoys with some new EU member states will positively affect trade flows: if the EU now accounts for 38% of the Russian exports, the enlarged Union will account for more than

50%. Enlargement will mean that the new members will be part of the EU customs union. The overall level of tariffs in the EU will decrease after enlargement (since the current average tariff in the EU is around 4%, while the average tariff in the ten acceding countries is around 9 %). Russia will benefit from this.

### NEW EBRD STRATEGY FOR ROMANIA

Romania's accelerated drive to join the European Union was, and still is, the indispensable framework for the implementation of its economic and social reform programme, according to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In a new strategy paper released last week on the EU candidate country, EBRD says the government has succeeded in ensuring political stability, an improved regional stability has led to the bilateral free trade agreements with most of Romania's neighbours, and the planning of a regional energy market.

But the new strategy notes that Romania's bid to join the EU in 2007 hangs heavily on making "significant progress" - notably in implementation of civil service and judiciary reform, and in the fight against corruption.

Romania's macroeconomic performance has been favourable in spite of the worsening of the world economic outlook. Exports have performed well despite the slowdown in the EU, and the competitiveness of Romanian manufactured goods on the international markets has increased. However, the country's poor investment climate and the high level of bureaucracy and other administrative barriers remain major obstacles to further private sector development and higher net foreign direct investment inflows, says the Bank's analysis.

There is "much less impressive progress in privatisations and structural reforms", the Bank goes on. Financial discipline in state-owned enterprises remains weak and the privatisation process of targeted enterprises has faced delays. To its credit, the government agreed to implement corrective measures in the energy sector, where there is a large quasi-fiscal deficit, to address the problem of low collection rates by utilities, and to accelerate the restructuring and privatisation process. And after the second failure to privatise the largest state-owned bank, Banca Comerciala Romana, in November 2002, EBRD itself has stepped in to take a pre-privatisation equity participation of 25%, along with another international financial institution, so as to allow for a sale to a strategic investor in three to four years.

The coming two years will be "crucial" to Romania's determination to accelerate the privatisation process, push ahead with institutional and structural reforms that are needed to support the EU negotiation process and sustain long-term growth, says the Bank. The key transition challenges for Romania are, it says, to:

- Improve the country's investment climate and implement reforms in the public sector administration and the judiciary, to accelerate private sector development and to attract higher net FDI inflows.
- Complete the privatisation and accelerate the implementation of the structural reform agenda, especially in the energy sector.
- Strengthen financial and commercial discipline in state-owned enterprises and public utilities, by controlling public wage increases and improving collection rates, in order to reduce tax and inter-companies arrears and thus the government's quasi fiscal deficit.
- Promote institution building to increase the public administration's absorption and implementation capacity, to be able to fully utilise EU pre-accession funds.

### FOCUS ON POLAND

Continuing ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY's easy-to-read snapshots of the European Commission's assessment of the acceding states in its monitoring reports last month, we look this week at Poland.

#### ***economic context***

Poland has maintained a stable macroeconomic situation and is experiencing a gradual recovery, mainly driven by external demand, but the reform path has nearly come to a halt, with reluctance to tackle the needed fiscal adjustment. Deep restructuring and reduction of public expenditure are crucial to improve the policy mix, reverse the rapid rise in public debt, and prepare Poland's public finances for accession. Any decision on the use of the revaluation reserve should not undermine the financial independence of the central bank.

Progress in restructuring heavy industries, energy distribution and agriculture has been modest, and considerable efforts are needed to advance the reform agenda in this area. Little progress has been achieved as regards the functioning of the land registry, and the system still needs modernising.

#### ***administrative and judicial capacity***

As regards overall administrative and judicial capacity, sufficient conditions for the implementation of the *acquis* are in place, but there is room for further improvements. In the field of public administration, the number of civil servants appointed from open competitions should increase, while coordination across the civil service should be improved and structures dealing with European integration need strengthening. Efforts are still needed to improve the efficiency and transparency of the judiciary, particularly in developing legal aid. The fight against corruption should continue to receive high priority, in particular through strengthening co-ordination structures and administrative support to ensure an effective implementation of the anticorruption strategy.

#### ***meeting EU rules***

A high level of alignment with the EU *acquis* has been reached, and Poland is expected to be in a position to implement the *acquis* as required in most policy areas by the date of accession. But it needs to make enhanced efforts to complete preparations in a number of areas:

- in free movement of goods, old approach sectoral legislation, the non-harmonised area, and public procurement;
- in free movement of services, on the right of establishment and freedom to provide non-financial services, as well as banking, insurance, investment services and securities markets;
- in free movement of capital, reinforcement of the fight against money laundering;
- in company law, the protection of intellectual and industrial property rights; in the state aid area of competition policy;
- in agriculture, trade mechanisms, common market organisations for milk, beefmeat, and eggs and poultry, rural development, trade in live animals and animal products, common measures, animal welfare and animal nutrition;
- in fisheries policy, international fisheries agreements;
- maritime transport;
- in taxation, VAT and excise duties;
- in economic and monetary union, the independence of the national central bank; in labour law;
- in social policy and employment, health and safety at work, public health, the European Social Fund and anti-discrimination;
- in industrial policy, privatisation and restructuring;
- in telecommunications and information technologies, the postal services sector; in audio-visual policy;

- in regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments, the legislative framework, institutional structures, and financial management and control;
- in environment, industrial pollution and nature protection areas;
- in consumer and health protection, market surveillance and non-safety measures;
- in justice and home affairs, the Schengen Action Plan, visa policy, external borders, the fight against fraud and corruption, the fight against drugs, and money laundering;
- in external relations, bilateral agreements with third countries;
- in financial control, public internal control, control over structural action expenditure, and the protection of EU financial interests.

#### ***urgent action***

Poland must take "immediate and decisive action" to be ready by the date of accession in:

- free movement of persons, on mutual recognition of qualifications in the healthcare sector;
- agriculture, on setting up Paying Agencies, implementing the Integrated Administration and Control System, upgrading agri-food establishments in line with public health requirements, veterinary control measures on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and animal by-products, movement controls of animals, and phytosanitary controls on potato ring rot and wart disease.
- in fisheries, on resource management, inspection and control, and market policy.

### **Enlargement news in brief**

#### ***More EIB support for smaller Czech firms***

The European Investment Bank is lending a total of €50 million to Czech banks to boost smaller firms there. €30 million will go to Československá Obchodní Banka and €20 million to CSOB Leasing. The money will be used to back investment projects in environmental protection, energy savings, infrastructure, industry, services, tourism and projects to help development a knowledge based economy. Projects can range from a total cost of as low as €40,000 to as high as €25 million. Local and foreign entrepreneurs can qualify, as well as municipalities wanting to improve their population's overall quality of life. The funding is being complemented by the EU's finance facility for smaller firms, a special scheme under the PHARE Programme, supporting term financing for smallest firms and offering incentives to banks to help develop a strong and smaller firm sector in the Accession Countries. The EU has put €30 million into this facility - and the EIB is in turn allocating up to €300 million for it.

#### ***French support for Bulgaria***

The French government fully supports Bulgaria in its ambition to sign an accession treaty with the European Union in 2005 and to join the Union in 2007, according to a letter from French President Jacques Chirac to Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. The letter was delivered by French European affairs minister Noelle Lenoir, who visited the country last week. Lenoir herself added, after holding talks with Bulgaria's European affairs minister, Meglena Kuneva, "France supports Bulgaria for completion of its accession negotiations with the EU on optimum terms." She said she saw no reason for delaying Bulgaria's negotiating process, and that France would support moves at the upcoming EU summit to fix 2004 as the date for concluding negotiations: "Europe must encourage Bulgaria and Romania to join in 2007", she said. However, Lenoir did insist on the need for further moves on justice and home affairs and on administrative reform, and



she ruled out the possibility of reopening the energy chapter in the negotiations so as to postpone the closure of the two units of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant scheduled for closure in 2006: "The concept of the two reactors does not conform to EU safety standards," the French minister noted. "It would be irresponsible on the part of Europe to expose its population to risk."

#### *Turkey plans for Eurovision*

Turkey will also be at the centre of European attention in May 2004, as the first wave of this enlargement takes effect. Because even if Turkey is not yet one of the states due to accede, it will be hosting the Eurovision song contest in Istanbul that month. A record 36 countries will take part, and the Turkish television station TRT is organising its own pre-accession approach to the contest, with two live televised contests in one week - a qualifying round on May 12, and a grand final on May 15, broadcast live over the European Broadcasting Union's digital Eurovision network. Countries competing in the qualifying round include acceding states Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovenia - as well as Balkan hopefuls Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia & Montenegro. But top scoring countries from the previous competition have been automatically given a place in the grand final - including acceding state Poland, and two of the candidate countries - Romania and Turkey.

### **Enlargement Mini-Briefs**

- Hungarian prime minister Péter Medgyessy visited the European Investment Bank's headquarters in Luxembourg last week for talks on developing Hungary's infrastructure, especially extending the motorway network and upgrading the Budapest metro.
- Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society, remarked in Moscow last week that while "enlargement will affect the EU's role in the world", giving the EU additional weight on the international scene, nevertheless, "the bigger the Union is, the greater will be the diversity of interests and approaches among member states - as the Iraqi crisis has well demonstrated".
- The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has been receiving a series of visits from judges from the supreme courts of the acceding states. Last week the ECJ was visited by judges from the supreme courts of Cyprus and Lithuania. This is part of the ECJ's ongoing programme of building closer links with the judicial systems of the acceding states. The visits are not merely ceremonial - they include working sessions on the organisation and powers of the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance, and on the cooperation between national courts and the Court of Justice in references for preliminary rulings.
- Lithuania's minister of the interior, Virgilijus Bulovas, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Union which permits his country to take part in the Community programme on electronic interchange of data between administrations. Lithuania will pay nearly €69,000 for its involvement in 2003, and nearly €76,000 for 2004 - but can use Phare funding to help meet the costs. The presidents of the 35 leading industrial and employers' confederations of Europe - working together within UNICE - are sending a message to EU leaders at the Brussels summit this week on their expectations, including on EU enlargement. They say: "Acceding countries have already achieved a high level of alignment of their legislation and preparations are well under way. Some problems identified by the Commission remain and should be tackled before May. The short-term macroeconomic impact of the enlargement should be limited, whereas longer-term benefits from an enlarged market and increased competition are expected. The Lisbon Strategy must be pursued with all the more vigour."
- The lower chamber of the Belgian Parliament ratified the Accession

Treaty last week. The Belgian upper house has already ratified the Treaty, but it still needs to be approved by all Belgium's regional parliaments.

- Roger Briesch, the European Economic and Social Committee President, visited Slovakia last week, for talks with President Rudolf Schuster, foreign affairs minister Eduard Kukan, Miroslav Beblavý, state secretary in the ministry of labour, social affairs and family, Monika Benová, chair of the European Integration Committee of the Slovak National Council, and representatives of civil society.
- Alojz Peterle, a Slovenian observer in the European Parliament, expressed his regret last week that the intergovernmental conference "was not following sufficiently the spirit of the text put forward by the Convention on the Future of Europe" - in which he took part. "The debate which is taking place at the moment is aimed in the first place at maintaining the possibility of blocking decisions rather than seeking appropriate formula for the efficient leadership of the Europe of 25", he remarked. "We have to use all our forces to achieve a result which will ensure efficient and effective decision making processes in tomorrow's Europe."
- European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström urged Estonia to bring its waste, packaging, environmental, air and water protection laws into line with EU legislation on a recent visit to Estonian environment minister Villu Reiljan in Tallin. The Commissioner is on a tour of acceding countries to get an overview of their preparedness for accession and to offer assistance if necessary so that all the members-to-be can meet the EU's stringent environmental requirements. "We want to be absolutely sure that we're fully ready for enlargement," she stressed.

## 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>December 2003</b>	
Tuesday 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU-Bulgaria Association Council and ministerial accession conference, Brussels</li> <li>■ EU-Romania ministerial accession conference, Brussels</li> <li>■ David Byrne, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, meets Romanian agriculture minister Ilie Sarbu, Brussels</li> <li>■ European Parliament President Pat Cox gives speech at conference on "Responsibilities of new generations in the construction of the future of the European Union", Lisbon</li> <li>■ First meeting of foreign affairs ministers of the Western Balkans in the EU-Western Balkans Forum, Brussels</li> </ul>
Tuesday 9 - Wednesday 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Presidents of the supreme audit institutions of the European Union and the acceding states and candidate countries and the European Court of Auditors meet, Prague</li> </ul>
Wednesday 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Czech prime minister Vladimir Spidla visits the European Commission, Brussels</li> </ul>

- European Commission President Romano Prodi, Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen and Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Antonio Vitorino meet Dutch prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende, Brussels
- Wednesday 10 - Thursday 11
  - European External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten visits the Western Balkans
- Thursday 11
  - European Budget Commissioner Michaela Schreyer attends the opening of the new Hungarian mission to the EU by Hungarian premier minister Peter Medgyessy, Brussels
  - EU Council of Ministers working group on the Western Balkans meets, Brussels
- Thursday 11 - Friday 12
  - European Economic and Social Committee-Czech Republic joint consultative committee meets, Brussels
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Morocco
- Monday 15
  - Czech Mission to EU conference on safety and quality in the Czech food and drink industries before accession, Brussels
  - Energy Council, Brussels
- Monday 15-Thursday 18
  - European Parliament plenary session, Strasbourg
- Tuesday 16
  - Economic and Finance Council, Brussels
- Tuesday 16-Wednesday 17
  - Agriculture and fish Council, Brussels
- Thursday 18-Friday 19
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Jordan
- Friday 19
  - Justice and home affairs Council, Brussels
- Monday 22
  - Environment Council, Brussels

## 2004

### Spring 2004

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

### January 2004

- Thursday 15-Friday 16
  - European Commission President Romano Prodi visits Hungary and Turkey
- Sunday 18-Monday 19
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Jordan
- Thursday 22-Friday 23
  - European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Tunisia

### 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 2004**

Thursday 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](mailto:enlargement@cec.eu.int).

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