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Enlargement Weekly

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Welcome to Enlargement Weekly. This weekly bulletin provides an overview of what 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]

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VERHEUGEN URGES POLES TO SHAPE THEIR OWN FUTURE

In a robust attack on what he perceived as misconceptions in Warsaw last week, European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen rebutted many of the arguments repeatedly heard in Poland, and spelled out just how much Poland was already benefiting - and stood to benefit even further - from the accession process.

Poland is already getting unprecedented financial assistance from the EU. He dismissed a "quite ludicrous" speculation that Poland might become a net contributor, and was equally scornful of complaints about "so-called second-class treatment". Between 2000 and 2006 Poland will receive €4 billion from the EU - "a tangible and far from negligible gesture of solidarity by West European taxpayers to the Polish nation", he pointed out: "Never before in the history of the EU has any non-member country received such a substantial amount". After accession it will receive something approaching €20 billion over three years.

In agriculture, incomes will rise significantly as an immediate consequence of Poland

accession to the EU, he said. The biggest and most efficient farms will be integrated into the EU's agricultural policy from the start and will earn higher incomes straightaway. The many small and extremely small farms whose owners produce only for their own needs will for the very first time have a stable income, which will encourage them to take the restructuring measures they need and that are unavoidable, he said, "with or without the EU". Direct income support will make the change socially tolerable, he insisted.

He rejected suggestions that Polish farmers are treated worse than their counterparts in the EU. "On the contrary: the same conditions will apply to the organisation of markets from day one. Poland gets more money for rural development than the current member states. Polish farmers' direct income support will rise from 25% to 100% in the space of ten years. The average allocation to Polish farmers over that period will be 60% of the EU average. If you see this figure of 60% against the background of the significantly lower costs in Poland and the significantly higher purchasing power of the euro in Poland compared with, say, Denmark, Polish farmers are actually better off than their opposite numbers in today's European Union. That is the so-called unequal treatment."

Verheugen's reality check bypassed the more habitual diplomatic language of such occasions. "Does anyone think new generations of young Poles will put up with the wretched living conditions on the country's tiny farms?", he asked. And he went on to list the benefits that would flow from the EU's approach to agricultural assistance: new opportunities in the countryside, improved infrastructure, education and training, and job-creating investment.

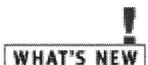
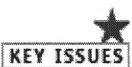
He said he did not understand why Polish farmers "are not told the truth about what joining the EU really means for them. I do not understand why such fears are not assuaged but deliberately played on". And tackling the opponents of enlargement head-on, he spoke of Poles "being lied to", and insisted that "Poland must confront the Lepper phenomenon and the other populist and nationalistic voices". He spoke of the need to "to corner the anti-democrats and the anti-Europeans. Their arguments are weak. Their persuasiveness deteriorates rapidly when they are contradicted. They are not usually capable of conducting a genuine debate based on facts and real situations."

To drive home his point, the Commissioner sketched in a scenario of the alternative - Poland not joining the EU. "The foreseeable outcome would be a serious economic crisis which - even if things went well - could be tackled with massive aid from outside, but only on conditions dictated from outside. But if things were to go badly, democracy would collapse along with the economy. What then would have been the point of struggling so long, so tenaciously and so courageously?"

Evoking many of the harsh historical realities that have conditioned Poland's - and Europe's recent past, and still condition its future, he warned: "Nobody would seriously claim that there can be lasting co-existence in conditions of peace and security in Europe if the very people who suffered most from the division of the continent, and courageously brought that division to an end, were excluded from integration on purely selfish grounds."

He offered no blank-cheque guarantees of a successful outcome. Poland has to get one thing quite clear, he said: "Its integration into the EU is not a political favour, it is based on the country's performance. This means that where there are shortcomings Poland should work openly and energetically to overcome them. Poland owes this to itself and also to a strong Europe. And let me say in all frankness, there is still a lot to be done in Poland."

But in a bid to ease tensions over the upcoming final phase of negotiations, Verheugen reminded his audience in Poland that there is agreement between the EU and the candidate countries, including Poland, on a number of fundamental points in the final package: Agency 2000 remains valid and an agreement must be reached within the ceiling of that financial framework; new member states should not enter as net contributors but should receive at least the same net amount as they were getting before accession; and both sides agree that it is full integration that is being negotiated, and not part-membership - which, he said, is recognised by both sides as meaning that transitional rules will be required for individual countries. "With



sufficient flexibility and political pragmatism, reasonable solutions will be found", he concluded

- See the web site of the European Commission in Poland on <http://www.europa.delpol.pl/>
- For the full text of Mr. Verheugen's speech in Warsaw on 11th July, see http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=SPEECH/02/334|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

SLOVAK PLAYERS TO SCORE NEW VICTORY IN EU COMPETITION?

To judge from the preliminary views of the European Union's Court of Justice, candidate country players can look forward to rapidly increased access to Europe's top teams. The 1 July Opinion of Advocate General Stix-Hackl on a dispute over how many Slovaks can play for German handball teams says they deserve a better deal. Advocate Generals' Opinions in the ECJ are not final judgements - a definitive ruling from the Court should appear in the following months - but they usually indicate the way the Court will rule.

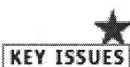
This case arose from the refusal by the German handball association, Deutscher Handballbund, to allow a Slovak player what he claimed was due access to championship matches. Maros Kolpak has been playing handball as goalkeeper for TSV Östringen, German second division team, since March 1997. He is resident in Germany and has a valid residence permit, but has been playing under a special licence from Deutscher Handballbund on account of his foreign nationality. This limits his possibilities for playing in championship matches, because the German association permits only two such players per team in championship and cup matches in Germany. When Kolpak applied for an unrestricted licence, Deutscher Handballbund refused - and he took them to court in Germany, claiming that this was in breach of the prohibition of discrimination contained in the EU-Slovakia Agreement. The German court has asked the ECJ whether the requirement in the Agreement that Slovak workers lawfully employed in a member state be treated the same as that state's own nationals should take precedence over a rule by a sports association under which clubs may only use a limited number of players from non-EU states in particular matches. The Advocate General believes that the Association Agreement overrules the handball association rules.

The Advocate General says the Agreement's prohibition of discrimination against Slovak workers is clear and unconditional, and Slovak nationals may rely on it. Citing ECJ case law, she points out that freedom of movement for workers applies not only to the action of public authorities but also to rules of any other nature aimed at regulating gainful employment and the provision of services in a collective manner, such as rules of a sports association. Kolpak is covered by the Agreement, because he is residing lawfully in Germany on the basis of his residence permit and is a worker. And she maintains that the limitation on the numbers of players from non-EU states represents a barrier to the freedom of movement for such workers: "It is precisely participation in championship and cup matches of the Federal and Regional leagues which is an essential aim of a professional sportsman's employment", she says. Nor, she adds, in a reference to the famous Bosman judgement, can the rule be justified on sporting grounds.

BIRDS, BEARS AND BUTTERFLIES IN CANDIDATE COUNTRIES WIN EU FUNDING

The European Commission last week approved € 72 million funding for conservation including thirteen projects in five candidate countries, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia - under the LIFE-nature scheme for protecting and restoring habitats and conserving flora and fauna. The projects will help conserve birds, bears and butterflies, as well as plants and people. The extension of the LIFE programme to candidate countries allows them to prepare for practical implementation of the EU's Birds and Habitats Directives through LIFE Nature projects.

In Estonia, one project will focus on the rich forestry resources, which harbour a significant proportion of the country's Priority Habitats, as they are classed under the Habitats Directive.



Conservation measures will be taken across 20 sites covering over 500 square kilometre. Actions relate to land purchase, management planning, visitor facilities and raising awareness amongst the local population and visitors. Another project, in the Karula National Park, will work towards maintaining traditional farming practices that are compatible with nature conservation. This is in anticipation of agri-environmental measures to be introduced in Estonia under the EU Rural Development Regulation.

In Hungary, two projects involve large-scale restoration schemes in the Hortobágy national park (in the east Hungarian steppe plains). The first will restore a 6,650 hectare section of the park through the removal of old dykes and irrigation channels, which had been constructed to create paddy fields. The second project will combine organic farming and nature conservation through managed grazing for traditional breeds of beef cattle, sheep and pigs on 2,000 hectares of steppe and wetlands. Another Hungarian project targets the conservation of angelica (*Angelica palustris*), a threatened plant species found on continental floodplains. The project, covering 2,600 hectares, includes land purchase and habitat restoration to secure 10 good quality sites for the species. Another project deals with the conservation of the Carpathian imperial eagle. This large bird of prey is threatened by changes in use of agricultural land. The project includes measures to halt their decline in numbers. Designation of areas of importance for the species will be prepared and management guidelines will be developed for eagle sites. Immediate threats will be reduced, for instance through insulation of power lines.

Two projects in Latvia, which hosts large areas of valuable habitats and numerous species that are limited to small and isolated areas in the EU, will help it prepare for participation in Natura 2000. A survey of the entire coast to determine its nature conservation value will include substantial management works on the dunes, to prevent damage from the rapidly increasing number of visitors. Another project aims to secure long-term conservation of the various priority habitats and species in the Kemeris National Park. It includes restoration of one of the largest raised bogs left in Europe.

In Romania, LIFE Nature will finance the conservation, management and re-establishment of viable populations of brown bear, wolf and European lynx in Vrancea County, through the preparation and implementation of a local management plan for these species. Two other projects aim at restoring and managing two wetlands, Comana, the largest in southern Romania, and the Satchinez marshes - the continuation of a previous LIFE-Nature project. Both areas are very important for birds, hosting several endangered species such as the ferruginous duck, corncrake and bittern.

The first Slovenian proposal accepted for funding is directed at the conservation of one of the largest brown bear populations in Europe. The beneficiary will work with the whole range of authorities' stakeholders in order to protect the bear over the entire national territory. A second project, in the Karst region of south-west Slovenia, aims to safeguard four habitats, five amphibian species and seven butterfly species listed in the Habitats Directive and/or the Bern Convention. It is based on a similar Life-Nature project successfully implemented in Spain and includes the preparation of a management plan for each of the 50 project sites. The Slovenian Ministry of the Environment will co-finance both projects.

Enlargement news in brief

Commission visit to Turkey postponed

European Commission President Romano Prodi and Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen have postponed their visit to Turkey, scheduled for 18-19 July, in the light of volatility in the government - which has seen the resignation of key coalition ministers over recent days. Prodi says he "has been following events in Turkey closely and notes that the political situation is evolving rapidly". He has told the Turkish authorities he is confident that the country will continue on the path of



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political and economic reform, in keeping with its status as an EU candidate, and that these reforms are strongly supported by the European Union. He was going there to discuss these reforms, and, in a common decision with the Turkish authorities, the visit will now be rescheduled as soon as possible.

EU Presidency timetable for negotiations

The Danish Presidency envisages accession negotiations at deputy level (that is candidates' chief negotiators and EU permanent representatives) on 29-30 July, and at ministerial level in the margins of the meetings of EU foreign ministers in the General Affairs and External Relations Councils in September, November - and for the final negotiations - December. And to ensure close contact with European Parliament, the Danish Prime Minister - in his role as President of the European Council - will take part in the special debate with the European Parliament and representatives of the candidate countries on 19 November, to provide the latest information on the final phase of the negotiations.

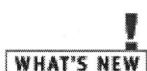
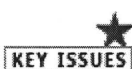
See the Presidency web site at <http://www.eu2002.dk/main/>

Regional and agricultural policy on the agenda as Director General Landabur visits Slovenia.

During a two-day visit to Slovenia, Director General for Enlargement, Enek Landaburu met Slovene EU Minister Potocnik and Agriculture Minister But. He also visited one of the Slovenia's poorest agricultural regions, Prekmurje, to see the results of EU spending in the region and, to talk to farmers' representatives, mayors, and the local population. During his visit to Prekmurje, Landaburu stressed that the Commission is to consider Slovenia's specific situation in agriculture in membership negotiations, but the final decision on direct payments will not be known until December. The mayors present in the talks expressed their concerns that after Slovenia becomes member of the EU, it might not be entitled to benefit from EU structural and cohesion funds. Landaburu pointed out that the EU would help Slovenia by any available means, although the country will have to solve its internal problems, and notably the question of the territorial division of Slovenia.

Candidates environment ministers in Brussels

Environment ministers from candidate countries came to Brussels on July 12 for talks on sustainable development with the European Commission and the Danish Presidency of the EU. With European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström and Har Christian Schmidt, President-in-office of the EU Environment Council, they examined the global aspects of the EU strategy for sustainable development - including the preparations for the World Summit in Johannesburg in August-September. And they reviewed internal matters such as the preparations for including candidate countries for the first time - in the synthesis report on the link between sustainable development and the Lisbon process ("to make the EU the most competitive, knowledge based society in the world"); this report will be presented to the March 2003 European Council. Other agenda items included ratification of the Kyoto protocol (Romania, the Czech Republic, Malta, Cyprus and Slovakia have already ratified), and the reviews of candidate countries' administrative capacity in the area of environment. "Well before



accession the candidate countries are already closely involved in discussions about future EU environment policy. These meetings enable us to work together and align our policy making process so as to ensure a smooth transition in the future", Wallström said.

Rasmussen promises success in meeting with Medgyessy

In the first of what will doubtless be a long series of such meetings during this EU Presidency, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen met his opposite number from one of the candidate countries last week: Hungarian Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy. The talks focused inevitably on the enlargement of the EU, and according to Rasmussen, confirmed that "Hungary has come a long way in its preparation for membership of the European Union. I am impressed by the progress achieved. Only a few outstanding problems remain. Hungary is in a good position for concluding negotiations during our Presidency. I sincerely hope we will succeed." Rasmussen added: "We must stick to the timetable and conclude by the end of this year. It's a historic opportunity for Europe. I am confident that we will succeed."

Candidates talking to next Presidency, too

The next European Union Presidency - Greece - is already discussing its plans with the candidate countries too. Greek deputy foreign affairs minister Anastassios Giannitsis who is in charge of EU affairs, held talks with Latvian foreign affairs minister Indulis Berzins when visiting Latvia on July 1. They talked of negotiations on agriculture and the priorities of the Greek Presidency, which starts on January 1 2003. Giannitsis said Greece supports concluding the accession negotiations with the candidate countries by the end of this year, and stressed that Greece supports "a balanced solution" on agricultural issues. He said he expects that during the Greek Presidency the Accession Treaty will be signed.



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Convention opens to young ideas

The July session of the European Convention was billed as the final stage in the Convention's "listening phase". It had two key themes. First, the meeting marked the end of the week-long Youth Convention, with 210 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 coming together to debate the future of Europe. With a participant chosen by each of the Convention members - and Hana Sedláčková, from the Czech Republic as one of the four Commission choices - there was a strong participation from the candidate countries. The conclusions of the Youth Convention showed a desire for a vigorous and effective Union with strong institutions at the EU level. There was, however, one note of discord, when a group of 50 of the young participants posted a protest at what they considered to be the lack of real representativity of the youth convention, and at the "old ideas" being circulated.

The rest of the session was given over to a discussion on foreign and security policy and defence. Two new working groups will start work on these issues in September alongside other new groups on justice and home affairs, and simplification. A detailed debate illustrated a strong desire for the EU to play a stronger role in the world; but different attitudes towards how to make this a reality. Some candidate country representatives like Alojz Peterle and Juraj Migaš backed moves to bring foreign

policy formulation under traditional EU decision-making, but others like Danu Hübner looked towards a mix of inter-governmental and community styles. The same themes emerged on the subject of defence, but there was also much interest in more co-ordination for the arms industry. The Convention now takes a break until September, but many of the Working Groups will be meeting in the meantime.

Visegrad Four look to Ukraine co-operation after enlargement

The Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia - the "Visegrad Four", named after the town where they formed an informal co-operation alliance in the 1990s - are already looking ahead to how they can work with neighbouring Ukraine after they join the EU. A meeting last week of senior officials from all five countries (and from the EU) in Kosice, close to Slovak's border with Ukraine, pledged support to future co-operation. A working group is to be set up to cover justice and internal affairs. The participants assessed how links between Visegrad Four members and Ukraine could be a part of the joint European strategy towards Ukraine, and how to avoid the future border between the Schengen area and Ukraine turning into a new dividing line in Europe. Ukraine accepts the existence and inevitability of the Schengen agreement and the requirement for new EU members to implement Schengen rules, Ukrainian foreign ministry state secretary Olexander Calyj stated. But he added that Ukraine expects "flexibility" for "cheap and accessible" visas for Ukrainians and special treatment for residents of cross-border regions.

EP President Cox addresses the Slovak Parliament

Addressing the Slovak Parliament on 13 July, President of the European Parliament (EP) Pat Cox was enthusiastic about the progress that Slovakia has achieved over the past couple of years. He focused on the historical importance of the European unification process and the importance of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Slovakia. "The coming election will not be about words but the essence and stubborn reality. It will be a vote between being engaged and being isolated", he said. He appreciated the stabilisation of the institutions, macro-economy and restructuring of the banking sector along with the new European spirit being brought to the question of the rights of national minorities, symbolised by the establishment of an ombudsman. Aside from the historic address to the Parliament, the president met with President Schuster, Prime Minister Dzurinda and members of the opposition parties.

New EU-Estonia committee meets

The EU-Estonia joint consultative committee held its inaugural meeting on 4-5 July in Tallinn. The committee, with members from the EU's Economic and Social Committee and from comparable organisations in Estonia, is intended to help prepare the ground for the enlargement of the EU by promoting dialogue between socio-professional organisations and other interest groups. It will meet twice a year, and is jointly chaired by Kadi Pärnits, President of the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions and Filip Hamro-Drotz, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee and Senior Advisor to the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers. The first meeting focused on Estonia's preparations for accession to the EU. It examined the regional disparities in Estonia, in particular the environmental sensitivities and employment needs of its north-eastern region, and highlighted the urgent need for Estonia to make full use of pre-accession funds in the time available, and then of the EU's structural



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and cohesion funds. It was essential to step up Estonian readiness to provide an obtain co-financing. Training and consultation needed to be improved and a positive bottom-up attitude and culture developed for the effective planning and use of such funds at local level. The committee also noted the importance of finalising the reform of Estonia's local authority structures as soon as possible. ESC President Göke Frerich praised the "very good progress made by Estonia in the negotiating process". But he encouraged committee members to consider how to organised civil society could be more involved in the debate in Estonia on the future of Europe. The Estonian member also expressed concern that the potential offered by civil society organisations was not being adequately used.


EIB funds water for towns in Turkey

€ 40 million will be poured into water sector works in Sivas, Siirt, Batman and other medium-sized Turkish towns, by the European Investment Bank, the European Union long-term lending institution. The EIB loan is part of the Special Action Program Mandate for Turkey for 2001-2004, which is intended to assist Turkey to upgrade its infrastructure, and to meet the EU's environmental acquis, in particular the Urban Wastewater Directive. The loan covers investments in water supply (mainly leak detection programmes), wastewater collection and treatment (mainly rehabilitation and extension of collection networks and the construction of sewerage treatment plants) and stormwater drainage (construction of storm-water channels).

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.


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Date	Event
July	
Monday 15th - Tuesday 16th	European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visit Hungary
Tuesday 16th	EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets Brussels
Tuesday 17th	Candidate countries participate in EU Council of Ministers working group on the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Brussels
Thursday 18th	European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström receive Bulgarian European affairs minister Meglena Kuneva EU Council of Ministers working group on the Accession Treaty meets, Brussels
Friday 19th	EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets Brussels Candidate countries take part in EU Council of Ministers working

	groups on disarmament and the United Nations (CODUN) and nuclear non-proliferation (CONOP), Brussels
Monday 22nd	EU foreign ministers meet as General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels EU Council of Ministers working group on central Europe meets, Brussels EU Council of Ministers working group on the Accession Treaty meets, Brussels
August	
Friday 16th - Monday 19th	Pope John Paul II visits Poland
September	
Details tbc	European Court of Auditors workshop with the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries on audit of internal control systems
Friday 20th - Saturday 21st	Parliamentary elections, Slovakia
Autumn	
Details tbc	Slovenia presidential and local elections
September/October	
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



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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
Wednesday 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



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July/August 2003	
Details tbc	Presidential elections (elected by the parliament), Latvia

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