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Enlargement

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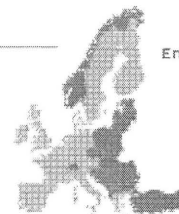
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Enlargement

WEEKLY
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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.

EU WEB SITE UPGRADED TO HELP YOU FIND INFORMATION ON ENLARGEMENT

Faced with an increase in demand for information on the enlargement process and the candidate countries, the European Commission launched its new web site on enlargement on Monday 6th October. The site can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/>, and has been radically revised in order to make it easier to locate the increasing amount of information available. The new site highlights the new products that have been launched, such as the weekly newsletter, the research bulletin, a press corner, with basic documents and reports, and new information on the communication strategy and public opinion.

The timing of the re-launch was designed to ensure that the Commission can meet the expected demand once the 2002 Regular Reports and Strategy Paper are released on Wednesday 9th October. The site has registered nearly 1.000.000 downloads of the 2001 reports since they were released in November last year.

MINISTERIAL NEGOTIATIONS TIGHTEN THE FOCUS ON ENLARGEMENT

The ministerial negotiating sessions with eleven of the candidate countries in Brussels on October 1st resulted in the provisional closure of some of the few chapters now outstanding. This focuses more clearly on the tasks still to be tackled if negotiations are to be closed with any of the candidates at the

Copenhagen summit.

President of the EU Council Per Stig Møller, EU member states ministers and senior diplomats, and European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen held talks successively with the foreign or European affairs ministers of the candidates with chapters ready to close. Much of the outcome was confirmation of the results already obtained at the level of chief negotiators and EU ambassadors on 28 June and 29 July. But there were also some new chapter closures, too, and nearly all the candidates edged closer to conclusion of the talks on the 30 chapters already opened with most of them.

Stig Møller said: "We closed four new chapters and confirmed the results, previously agreed at deputies level, in an additional twenty four chapters. Basically we have today cleared the table except for the finance related chapters, which await the European Council in Brussels, and competition policy with a number of candidates." And he said he was confident it will be possible to conclude the competition chapter before the October Brussels Summit. An additional negotiation session at deputy level is planned for mid October.

- With Joe Borg, Maltese minister for foreign affairs, three chapters were closed - fisheries, regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments, and environment - and negotiations were moved further ahead on agriculture and customs union. Malta now has 25 chapters provisionally closed.
- With Ioannis Kasoulides, minister for foreign affairs for Cyprus, it was possible to close the chapter on environment, and to make further progress with agriculture. Cyprus has now closed 28 chapters.
- For Poland, Danuta Hubner, the secretary of state in charge of negotiations, closed regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments and justice and home affairs, and held further talks on agriculture. Poland's total number of chapters provisionally closed now stands at 27.
- Romania was represented by Hildegard Puwak, minister for European integration, and managed to reach agreement on economic and monetary union and on industrial policy - bringing the total of chapters provisionally closed to 13. Further talks were also held on agriculture and financial control.
- Eduard Kukan, acting minister for foreign affairs pending the formation of the new government in Slovakia, closed regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments, and held further negotiations on agriculture. Slovakia has now closed 27 chapters.
- For Bulgaria, foreign affairs minister Solomon Passy discussed and closed the chapters on customs union and financial control, bringing Bulgaria's total number of chapters provisionally closed to 22.
- Hungary's László Kovács, minister for foreign affairs, closed the chapters on regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments and culture and audio-visual policy, bringing the number of chapters provisionally closed to 26. Further talks were also held on agriculture.
- With the Czech Republic the talks with foreign affairs minister and Deputy Prime Minister Cyril Svoboda, focused only on agriculture, and further discussions are needed. The Czech Republic has closed 25 chapters so far.
- Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia's minister for foreign affairs, closed regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments, and held further talks on agriculture. Slovenia has now closed 28 chapters.
- Latvia's state secretary Maris Riekstins negotiated further on agriculture, but more discussion will be needed before closure. Latvia's total of provisionally closed chapters therefore remains at 27.
- Kristiina Ojuland, Estonia's minister for foreign affairs, closed taxation and

energy, and held further talks on agriculture. Estonia has 28 chapters closed now.

- Lithuania, which has already closed 28 chapters, did not hold negotiations on October 1.

Access negotiations - State of play

EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS CONFIRM BRUSSELS SUMMIT PLANS

The September 30 General Affairs and External Relations Council confirmed the Danish Presidency plans for the 24-25 October summit in Brussels (see last issue of ENLARGEMENT WEEKLY). Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Per Stig Møller said EU foreign affairs ministers agreed to focus the European Council on two subjects: enlargement and Kaliningrad.

Ministers discussed the budgetary and institutional issues outstanding for enlargement. There was no agreement, the Presidency said, "but the discussion showed a broad support for the Presidency proposal and we will continue our work on that basis." The Presidency report of the meeting notes that the Council will have to decide on the candidates which fulfil the Copenhagen criteria and with which the negotiations can be concluded by the Copenhagen European Council in December. It will also have to decide on the open financial and budgetary issues (in the fields of agriculture, structural funds and cohesion funds, internal policies, as well as on the question of budgetary compensations) with a view to presenting the relevant common positions to the candidate countries in early November. And the Council should take a position on the institutional issues arising in connection with the enlargement of the EU to a Union of up to 25 members. All these issues will be revisited by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on October 21-22.

And on Kaliningrad, foreign affairs ministers agreed on basic principles on which a solution has to be based. Any agreement with Russia on movement of its citizens to and from Kaliningrad across the territory of EU member states should be consistent with the *acquis*, not create obstacles to the accession of the candidate countries to Schengen, and have the agreement of the candidate countries concerned.

The Presidency will now take contact with the Lithuanian authorities about when a feasibility study might be started on the proposal for a high-speed train crossing it from Kaliningrad to Belarus, and on how to ensure a smooth transition to the facilitated transit document that the Commission has proposed for Kaliningrad citizens. But, said Per Stig Møller, "Russian concerns must be addressed in a manner consistent with the enlargement process and with the political aim of creating a strategic partnership and enhancing co-operation not least on issues related to border management."

ROMANIA CLARIFIES ITS AGRICULTURE PLANS

Romania has submitted a new position paper to the EU on its approach to parts of the agriculture chapter of the enlargement negotiations, covering in particular the institutional framework for sanitary and veterinary questions, and phytosanitary issues including animal health, quality of seeds, plant hygiene and animal nutrition.

It sets out priorities such as drawing up a coherent agricultural and rural development policy, developing the institutional and administrative capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests to implement the EU's common agricultural policy and to manage the EU's rural development programmes. It also speaks of speeding up implementation of the EU *acquis*, adopting commercial and quality standards, boosting public health, creating market systems and veterinary and phytosanitary control, and developing the agricultural market and strengthening producers associations.

Other priorities include completing the privatisation of state farms and the restitution of agricultural lands and forests, and promoting the private sector in agriculture. An agricultural census will start in December, and will result in the creation of the Agricultural Exploitations Register. And a complete national system of animal identification will be implemented.

Among the transition periods and other requests being made by Romania in this area are three-year transition periods to implement the policy of non-vaccination against classic swine fever, to modernise the slaughtering and meat processing units, to modernise milk processing units and organise milk collection and standardisation, and to reach EU standards on dairy farms and quality of raw milk. It also wants recognition for its traditional cheese brands such as Nasal, Bradet, Homorod, and smoked cheese.

Romania predicts that legal harmonisation during the pre-accession period will be finalised about 85% in 2004. The veterinary legislation will be fully transposed in 2003 and its implementation will be assured gradually at the same time as the corresponding organisation of the veterinary control system and harmonisation of processing units are brought up to European standards.

POLAND MAKES JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS COMMITMENTS

Poland's closure of the justice and home affairs chapter of the accession negotiations (see separate story above, MINISTERIAL NEGOTIATIONS TIGHTEN THE FOCUS ON ENLARGEMENT) was the result of "difficulty and a lot of effort - both from the European Union and Poland", said Poland's Danuta Hubner at the Brussels negotiating session on October 1. "The successful closure of this chapter was only possible thanks to our determination and a considerable amount of work necessary to achieve this common objective. We appreciate very much co-operation with the European Union in this regard."

Poland has accepted the totality of the *acquis* in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, including the Schengen *acquis*, and the Polish government is currently undertaking the necessary measures for implementation and application. As a result of the negotiations it has accepted a special monitoring system, and in four months time will provide the EU with a report on progress.

So far, Hubner told the negotiating session, Poland has already moved ahead on a number of the areas the EU had signalled as priorities. On 30 July the Polish Council of Ministers adopted a new national drugs strategy for 2002-2004. A draft law on liability of legal persons has been adopted by the government and presented to the parliament. All implementing regulations foreseen in the aliens act have been adopted. In July the Prime Minister established an interagency group responsible for preparation of the Polish administration for co-operation with the Schengen Information System. In July Poland also ratified the co-operation agreement with Europol. And in September the Council of Ministers adopted an anti-corruption strategy.

The government has also established a special internal system to monitor the implementation of commitments undertaken in the area of justice and home affairs, said the Minister. And "the Polish authorities are continuing the necessary preparations to align Poland's policy with the *acquis* on visa requirements. The timetable adopted by Poland in this respect will be met. Poland continues enforcement of the Schengen Action Plan. Let me reiterate that Poland welcomed the EU decisions aimed at the gradual introduction of co-ordinated and integrated management of external borders. As a country that will be responsible for a considerable part of the future EU external border we fully accept our duties stemming from the proper control and protection of this border", she concluded.

Enlargement news in brief

Competition for enlargement

Although the EU enlargement exercise is - as the EU repeatedly points out - all about co-operation and win-win scenarios, intense rivalry is likely to gain the upper hand on Sunday 13 October, when the Europe United tournament kicks off in London's Docklands. The Europe United six-a-side competition will see players such as Bryan Robson, Ian Rush, Ian Wright and other veteran British stars taking on their contemporaries from the member states and candidate countries such as Marco Van Basten and Bontcho Guentchev. The competition is designed to raise awareness of the European countries in line to join the EU. Backed by UK Europe minister Peter Hain and former Tottenham captain and England international Gary Mabbutt, the competition is based on the close connections right across Europe through football.

Central European teams such as Sparta Prague, Rapid Bucharest and Skonta Riga "are at the heart of European football", said Hain, pointing out that top players from the EU candidate countries play throughout Europe. According to Chelsea fan, Hain: "It's time to end the Europe of two halves. Our European neighbours, once on the outside, are now coming home and back into the European family. The re-unification of Europe is no longer a distant pipe dream. People need to be on the ball as to what this means - more jobs and trade, and less crime and pollution. The re-unification of Europe will be an historic milestone. After 60 years of division, a united Europe will finally sign up to stability, security, peace and prosperity".

- Website: <http://www.yesconsultancy.com/eumf.html>

Preliminary Latvian election results

According to preliminary and provisional results of the October 5 election in Latvia, the New Time party of former central banker Einars Repse has come out top, with 26 seats in the 100-strong parliament. The leftist Alliance for Human Rights in a United Latvia came second, with 24 seats. The ruling party in the outgoing coalition, the People's Party, came in with just 21 seats, and the other coalition member, For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK, won 7 seats. The Greens' and Farmers' Union won 12 seats, and Latvia's First Party 10. Latvia's Central Election Commission says it will announce formal results - and the names of those elected to Latvia's new parliament - in two weeks. Voter turnout was 72.49%, and the International Election Observation Mission said the poll took place in line with international standards. Head of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly delegation, Lord Russell-Johnston, said on 6 October: "These elections are a nice affirmation of the democratic process development in Latvia". And the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights observer mission head, Gerald Mitchell, said the elections in general were characterised by healthy political pluralism and good transparency of election process.

Bringing the candidates into EU research programmes

New agreements are underway with the candidate countries for the EU's just agreed 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development, covering 2002-2006. But opening up the programmes also has its price. Each country will be required to make a financial contribution, currently estimated as follows: Turkey: 262 million; Cyprus: 16.55 million; Slovenia: 36.55 million; Romania: 77.24 million; Latvia: 14.79 million; Hungary: 100.75 million; Malta: 6.53 million; Poland: 312.99 million; Czech Republic: 109.40 million; Lithuania: 21.75 million; Bulgaria: 26.55 million; Slovakia : 39.86 million.

Czechs fighting through floods towards accession

The Czech Republic is still on course for completing EU accession negotiations this year, despite the additional problems created by the summer floods, according to the Danish Presidency of the EU. But nothing can yet be

taken for granted, minister for foreign affairs Per Stig Møller made clear after meeting Czech foreign minister Cyril Svoboda last week. "I am pleased to note that the Czech Republic has made great progress in its preparations for membership of the EU", said the Council of Ministers President. "The terrible floods that hit the Czech Republic during August have given the Czech Government a daunting task of rebuilding and restoring. However, this has not slowed down the country's preparations for EU membership". Reaffirming that the Danish EU Presidency remains determined to complete the negotiations with the first group of candidate countries before the end of the year, he added however that "We face some difficult negotiations before this goal is fulfilled". And he said his talks with Svoboda "confirmed that the Czech Republic will participate in these negotiations with a realistic and constructive approach."

Meanwhile, the European Union launched a call for proposals on 30 September for civil society organisations in the Czech Republic to help in reconstruction efforts following the floods. Non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations in the Jihocesky, Ustecky, Liberecky, Stredocesky, Plzensky, Jihomoravsky, Karlovarsky and Prague regions are being invited to submit proposals for reconstruction projects to be financed by the European Union. Up to 90% of project costs could be funded by the EU. The total budget of the scheme is 1 million, which will be financed under the EU's Phare Programme. Launching the scheme, the Head of the European Commission's Delegation in the Czech Republic, Ambassador Ramiro Cibrián, said: "Non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations play a very important role in the effort to remove damages caused by the devastating mid-August floods because they are close to citizens and they are familiar with their needs". It will cover renovation and reconstruction of flooded buildings; the organisation of volunteers to work in flooded areas; counselling services for employment, social and legal matters; and removal of flood debris and other activities to help communities affected.

"Most Maltese support EU membership"

Eddie Fenech-Adami, prime minister of Malta, said in Brussels last week that Malta was fully committed to embracing the EU acquis in its entirety, without ducking any of its new responsibilities. EU membership was a "natural and logical" next step for Malta, which shared the Union's aspirations, he said. And he claimed that the majority of Malta's 400,000 citizens were absolutely convinced that the nation's future rested with the Union and would vote "yes" in a referendum after entry negotiations were completed. Pointing out that he had been voted into power on a pro-EU ticket in 1988, he predicted that now the country had closed most of the negotiating chapters for membership, only a few people would seriously contest the desirability of membership. "We have a convincing case to make that the timing is now and that the time is right," said Fenech-Adami.

Candidates have divergent vocational training levels

A new Eurostat report shows some candidate countries are well placed in the ranking of participation in vocational training. The report puts Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway at the top: 50% or more of their employees take part. But candidates such as the Czech Republic and Slovenia do nearly as well as Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria, with participation rates of between 30-40%. By contrast, candidates such as Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Hungary have lower rates of participation - alongside Spain and Portugal - with fewer than 30%. At the bottom of the ranking are Lithuania and Romania, with less than 10% participation. The Danish Presidency has already announced a number of initiatives to help boost vocational training - including a meeting on November 29-30 in Copenhagen, when education ministers from member states and candidate countries are expected to sign a declaration on increased co-operation in the field of vocational education and training.

Now Mazovia opens a Brussels office

The latest candidate country initiative to forge closer links with the EU is Mazovia, the region around the Polish capital of Warsaw. Eneko Landaburu, the European Commission's Director General for Enlargement, Polish secretary of state for Europe Danuta Hübner and European Convention Vice-President Jean-Luc Dehaene took part in the opening ceremony on October 1. "Setting up a representative office in Brussels is a major step by Mazovia's regional authority to strengthen its ties with European integration and inter-regional co-operation", said Anna Burylo, director of the new office, which is part of a co-operation arrangement with Brussels Capital Region.

- The office is at Avenue d'Auderghem 63, 1040 Brussels, tel. (0032) 02 230-96-62, fax. (0032) 02 230-70-83, e-mail: a.burylo@region.mazovia.pl

Enlargement as a key to improving the environment in an enlarged EU

"At the start of the enlargement negotiations, many feared that the environment would be one of the most difficult issues to settle", recalled European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström, speaking at the UK Labour Party Conference in Blackpool last week. There were, she said, "real political difficulties", and the candidates and the EU have "faced sometimes the sheer practical impossibility of the task", and have had to agree to extend the implementation deadline of some of the EU's environment directives. But, she insisted, despite fears in the EU of environmental dumping - lower environmental standards giving companies in candidate countries competitive advantages - "this has not been the case", she insisted. "The EU defined already in the early stage of the negotiations that transitional periods for certain environmental directives would be out of question. For example, no transition periods should be accepted if they have a major effect on the Single Market. For example, that is why the EU has refused transition periods for the directives related to the product standards for fuel. On the other hand, transition periods on legislation requiring very heavy investments have been possible. They have been negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and accepted where they have been sufficiently limited in time and scope."

The commitments made by the candidates in the environment negotiations will bring a range of benefits, worth from 134 to 681 billion over the period 1999-2020 - or from 12 billion to 69 billion a year, said the Commissioner. She said up-grading the national environmental norms to match EU requirements will reduce air pollution, bring better quality drinking water to millions and improve waste management. It will eliminate the worst health hazards and improve people's living environment, for instance by reducing respiratory diseases. And the candidate countries will also make an important environmental contribution to the EU - ranging from their areas of outstanding natural beauty and wildlife habitats to their often greater use of public transport. "These benefits are very real. If we do not take them into account we will never have a complete understanding of the true effects of enlargement", said Wallström.

Candidate countries projects win Leonardo approval

Projects from the EU candidate countries have been included among the 279 projects selected for 2002 under the EU's Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme. Viviane Reding, European Commissioner in charge of Education and Culture, announced last week that nearly 90 million in grants will go to transnational vocational training projects aimed at fostering innovation and improving the quality of training. A call for proposals has also been published for the programme for 2003-2004, with a deadline of 4 November.

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.

Date	Event
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Autumn	
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Details tbc	Slovenia presidential and local elections
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October	
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Details tbc	Partial Senate elections, Czech Republic
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Details tbc	Local governmental elections, Hungary
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Tuesday 8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU ministers of economy and finance discuss the financial aspects of enlargement and the impact of enlargement on the European Central Bank, at the Ecofin Council, Luxembourg ■ EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels ■ European Parliament committee on industry, external trade, research and energy discusses a report by Jürgen Zimmerling (EPP-ED, D) on research in the candidate countries, and measures to ensure their full involvement in the framework programme, Brussels ■ European Parliament committee on regional policy, transport and tourism discusses a report by Elisabeth Schroedter (Greens/EFA, D) on economic and social cohesion and the consequences of enlargement, Brussels
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Wednesday 9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ European Commission to approve the 2002 regular reports on the progress of the candidate countries towards the EU and the strategy paper Strategy paper and recommendations ■ European Commission presents progress reports on candidate countries, Brussels - see the new web site at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/ ■ European Transport and Energy Commissioner Loyola de Palacio receives Hungarian transport and energy minister Istvan Csillag, Brussels
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Thursday 10th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament, meets Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda, Brussels ■ EU Council of Ministers working group on the Accession Treaty meets, Brussels ■ EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels
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Friday 11th	EU Council of Ministers working group on enlargement meets, Brussels
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Thursday 10th - Friday 11th	European Regional Affairs Commissioner Michel Barnier visits Romania
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Saturday 12th - Sunday 13th	Baltic Sea conference on Baltic Metropolises, Copenhagen
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Thursday 17th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enlargement and EU cohesion policy workshop, CEPS, Brussels ■ Monday 21st-Wednesday 23rd ■ Workshop with the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries on audit quality control, Gdansk
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- Thursday 17th - Friday 18th European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen visits Malta
- Friday 18th European Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Antonio Vitorino visits Poland
- Friday 18th - Sunday 20th European External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten and Competition Commissioner Mario Monti visit the Czech Republic
- Sunday 20 Estonian local elections
- Monday 21 Ministerial Conference on the guidelines for a new action plan for the Northern Dimension, Luxembourg
- Thursday 24th-Friday 25th ■ European Council, Brussels: the EU Presidency draft agenda currently envisages discussion of enlargement and of Kaliningrad. On enlargement, decisions are expected about which candidate countries negotiations can be concluded with by the Copenhagen European Council on 12-13 December, as well as about decisions to be taken at Copenhagen on updated pre-accession strategies and roadmaps for Bulgaria and Romania and on the next stage of Turkey's candidature; budgetary and financial issues, monitoring, and institutional arrangements will also be on the agenda.
- Sunday 27th Polish regional elections
- Monday 28th- Tuesday 29th ■ European Budget Commissioner Michael Schreyer visits Malta
■ European Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou visits Bulgaria and Romania.
- November**
- Monday 4th Danish Energy Agency conference on energy supply and demand in the Kaliningrad Region, Kaliningrad
- Monday 11th ■ EU-Russia summit in Copenhagen will discuss Kaliningrad
- 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

Tuesday 19th - Baltic Sea Regional Energy Co-operation ministerial conference, Vilnius

Wednesday 20th

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

- 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.
 - European Court of Auditors meeting with heads of the supreme audit institutions of the candidate countries, Bucharest
 - OECD conference on governance and partnerships in transition economies, Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

Sunday 22nd Presidential elections, Lithuania (second round on January 5, 2003)

January 2003

Details tbc Presidential elections, Czech Republic

February 2003

9th and 16th Presidential, elections, Cyprus

March 2003

Details tbc Parliamentary elections, Estonia

July/August 2003

Details tbc Presidential elections (elected by the parliament), Latvia

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