# 2004 enlargement: state of preparedness for Union membership of the 10 new countries. Comprehensive monitoring report

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The Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of its monitoring reports on the Accession States' preparations for membership of the EU and its strategy paper and regular reports on progress by Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey towards accession. The Council adopted the following conclusions: -The Council welcomes the presentation by the Commission in its reports and commends the progress achieved by the acceding States in reaching a high level of alignment in most areas of the acquis which demonstrates their commitment to EU membership. -Nonetheless, and in view of the short period remaining until accession, it considers that further enhanced efforts are still required in certain areas and there are some specific issues of serious concern as identified in the Commission's reports. The Council therefore reiterates the high importance it attaches to the smooth functioning of all EU policies upon and after accession, including the proper functioning of the internal market and of the area of freedom, security and justice, which is essential for the successful completion of the enlargement process. Achieving this goal will allow citizens throughout Europe to reap the full benefits of membership. It will also allow economic operators to take full advantage of the economic opportunities of the enlarged Union. -The Council therefore urges the acceding States as a matter of priority to tackle and effectively resolve the matters outstanding prior to accession. The Union will continue to assist the acceding States in their efforts within the existing framework, using all available tools and financial assistance to target the areas identified. Taking into account the Commission's role to safeguard the smooth functioning of all EU policies upon and after accession, the Council notes the Commission's determination to take, wherever necessary, all appropriate measures for this purpose and of the Commission's intention to keep it fully and regularly informed on any remaining concerns and on the appropriate measures that it will take in this regard.