2004 enlargement: preparation of the CEECs for integration into the internal market. White paper

1995/2064(COS) - 25/09/1996 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

This Opinion is intended to have a broad political thrust. First and foremost, the Commission's White Paper must be recognized as being of key importance in that it amounts to a genuine "European compendium", which analyzes all the intricacies of the internal market, both from the more specifically legal angle and from the angle of the institutional and administrative structure built up in recent decades. The Committee sees the White Paper as a major blueprint for speeding up integration of the CEECs into the EU and facilitating their internal cooperation. In the long term integration will benefit both the Eastern and Western European countries and it remains the ultimate aim of EU-CEEC relations. To promote economic growth and convergence in the CEECs, efforts must be made to encourage the restructuring and modernization of their economies (especially in industry and the public administration) and to stimulate domestic and foreign investment. These changes must improve living and working conditions as quickly as is feasible, this being the fundamental aim of European integration. However, the main problem is that alignment of legislation is not sufficient per se; the requisite structures, and hence resources, are also necessary. The technical and financial assistance that the EU can provide under PHARE and other aid programmes will therefore be of key importance in facilitating standardized implementation of internal market legislation. While recognizing that the Commission has drawn up a blueprint of key importance for both the CEEC accession process and the framing of future Community policies, attention should be drawn to a number of shortcomings that could detract from the objective value of the White Paper.