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

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This Commission White Paper deals with preparation of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe for integration into the internal market and forms part of the pre-accession strategy adopted by the Essen European Council in December 1994. Its aim is to help these countries to prepare to run their economies in line with the rules of the internal market. Alignment with the internal market is a separate issue from accession to the Union, with its implied acceptance of Community acquis in its entirety. This White Paper outlines the key measures in each sector of the internal market and proposes the order in which legislation should be harmonized. Nonetheless, purely formal transposition of Community legislation will not bring about the desired economic effect, nor will it guarantee the proper working of the internal market following further enlargement. Particular importance is therefore attached to implementing structures which will allow legislation to be implemented and ensure that it is complied with. Including legislation under social policy, competition and the environment will ensure a balanced approach. According to this paper, primary responsibility for aligning with the internal market lies with the associated countries themselves, as does responsibility for setting their own sectoral priorities. The Union already provides assistance with harmonizing legislation, mainly under PHARE. This assistance now needs to be strengthened and adapted to the recommendations in the White Paper. Approach and structure of the White Paper: The White Paper is directed at countries already associated with the Union and CEECs preparing for associate status (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Baltic Republics and Slovenia). Each country will set its own priorities and timetable in line with its own economic, social and political situation. The White Paper is structured as follows: . The first section analyses the objective and the nature of this exercise in political terms: - Chapter 1: description of the context, scope and approach of the White Paper. - Chapter 2: general framework for the exercise, highlighting the main features of the internal market and the methods used to dismantle obstacles to free movement and examining the basic function of competition. - Chapter 3: description of the legislative measures needed in order to create and preserve the internal market. - Chapter 4: presentation of the CEECs (legislation, structure, specific difficulties of each country in applying Community rules and practices). - Chapter 5: this deals with Union aid and outlines a new type of approach which would allow current Community measures to be strengthened. - Chapter 6: presentation of the benefits of applying the recommendations in the White Paper and the measures which the Commission, the CEECs and the Member States should take if these benefits are to be felt in practice. . The second section contains: - an analysis sector by sector of the key elements of the Community legislation in question; - an explanation of the objectives and development of the legislation in each sector; - a description of the structures needed in order to implement and apply the internal market rules effectively; - the order in which the measures required in each sector need to be adopted.