Hungary: membership application and partnership, 1st April 1994

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OBJECTIVE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Hungary's request for membership (31 March 1994). CONTENT: all the requests for membership were assessed by the European Commission using a single method based on the criteria established at the Copenhagen European Council (June 1993). These criteria are as follows: - political criteria: the candidate countries must have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, human rights and respect for minorities, - economic criteria: these countries must have a functioning market economy, as well as the ability to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union, - criteria relating to the ability of the countries to take on the obligations of membership (in particular integration of the acquis, to a greater or lesser extent, and respect for the criteria concerning economic and monetary union). With regard to all these criteria it emerges that: 1) in political terms, Hungary presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; 2) in economic terms, Hungary can be regarded as a functioning market economy and it should be able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium-term; 3) with regard to the capacity to take on the obligations of membership, this country should continue its efforts on transposition of the acquis and intensify its work on its implementation. The Commission considers that Hungary would be capable in the medium term of applying the acquis on the single market. Particular efforts are needed on investment and in sectors such as the environment, customs control and energy. With regard to social affairs, reform of pensions and social security must continue. Major efforts must be made to avoid the occurrence of unsustainable budgetary or external deficits. Substantial progress is also required with regard to standardization, consumer protection and customs controls. Generally speaking, administrative reform is indispensable if this country is to have the structures to apply and enforce the acquis effectively. In conclusion: the Commission considers that negotiations for accession can be opened with Hungary. The pre-accession strategy will allow this country to prepare rapidly for the obligations of membership.