# Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

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OBJECTIVE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Slovakia's request for membership (27 June 1995). CONTENT: All the requests for membership were assessed 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). In the light of all these criteria it emerges that Slovakia does not fulfil in a satisfactory manner the political conditions set out by the Copenhagen European Council because of the instability of its institutions and the shortcomings in the functioning of its democracy (in particular, its disregard for the rights of the opposition, use made by the government of the secret services, corruption, etc.). There are also problems with regard to the respect for minorities (the Hungarian minority, in particular).This situation is all the more regrettable since Slovakia could satisfy the economic criteria in the medium term and is firmly committed to take on the acquis with regard to the internal market. Considerable progress is still required to ensure the effective application of the acquis. In conclusion, the Commission considers that accession negotiations can be opened with this country only when Slovakia has made significant progress in the political area and with the implementation of the acquis. The first objective will therefore be to strengthen the pre-accession strategy and to concentrate on dealing with these two key problems.