Cyprus: accession to the European Union and progress in negotiations

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This composite paper presents an outline of the progress made towards accession by all of the candidate countries in relation to the Copenhagen criteria since the publication of the Commission's opinions in June of 1997. These regular reports for each of the candidate countries concentrate on all aspects of the adoption of the Community acquis and establish a precise assessment of the capacity of each of the candidates to fulfil the political and economic criteria required for accession. The case of Cyprus differs from the other candidate countries, in particular the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), in that the main obstacle of the progress of negotiations is not the level of economic progress or the adoption of the acquis, but the islands political situation. In this document, the Commission indicates that it has not been possible to establish a complete summary of measures taken by Cyprus in the context of accession. Effectively, the invitation by the Cypriot government to include representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community in the accession negotiations was not accepted. As a result, the Commission's analysis only covers one part of the island (the South). Essentially, the report on Cyprus confirms the 1993 analysis as regards economic disparities between the two parts of the island (the North of Cyprus continues to lag behind the South in terms of economic performance). As regards the adoption of the acquis, the Commission considers that there are no major problems. However, the fact remains that without a speedy resolution of the Cypriot question, progress towards accession will remain slow and uncertain.