# Poland: membership application and partnership, 8 April 1994

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PURPOSE : to present the Commission's regular report for 1999 on Poland's progress towards accession.
CONTENT : this Regular Report for 1999 on Poland follows the same structure as the Commission's 1997 Opinion. The Commission is still continuing to follow the method adopted by Agenda 2000 in evaluating candidate States' ability to meet the economic criteria and fulfil the obligations deriving from accession. In addition, the report takes into consideration progress since the 1998 Regular Report and whether intended reforms have been carried out. It also examines new initiatives, including those directly related to addressing Accession Partnership priorities. The report contains a separate section which examines the extent to which Poland has addressed the short term priorities and started to address the medium term priorities set out in the Accession Partnership. Furthermore, this report draws on numerous sources of information. The candidate countries were invited to provide information on progress made in preparations for membership since the publication of the last Regular Report. Their presentations at the meetings held under the auspices of the European Agreement, their National Programmes for the adoption of the Acquis, the information provided in context of the analytical examination of the acquis (screening) and in the negotiations were additional sources of information. It should be noted that a range of difficulties in the implementation of the Europe Agreement by Poland remain, from complex long-standing issues, such as steel restructuring and certification, to more recent issues such as trade in agriculture. However, some issues have been resolved through the operation of the various joint institutions such as the elimination of tariffs on steel products by 2000. Although the Europe Agreement provides for entry into its second stage since February 1999, a number of legal requirements have yet to be fulilled to permit this transition. With regards the Phare programme, 1999 was the main instrument providing financial assistance to support Poland's pre-accession strategy. The Phare programme allocated EUR 2,050 million to Poland during the period 1990-1999. An additional EUR 32 million have been allocated for cross-border co-operation (CBC) programme with Germany, EUR 3 million for the co-operation with the Czech Republic, and EUR 3 million for co-operation within the Baltic Sea region. Poland also participates in and benefits from Phare funded multi-country and horizontal programmes such as TAIEX, the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises programme and the Large scale infrastructure Facility. More importantly, during the period 2000-2006, pre-accession aid to the candidate countries will be more than doubled. Alongside the Phare programme, it will, as from the year 2000, comprise aid for agricultural and rural development (SAPARD) and a structural instrument (ISPA), which will give priority to measures similar to those of the Cohesion Fund in environment and transport. In the years 2000-2002, total financial assisatnce available will amount annually EUR 398 million for Phare, EUR 168 million for SAPARD and between EUR300 and EUR 370 million for ISPA. In conclusion, Poland has to accelerate its transposition of the environmental acquis. It has made moderate progress on issues such as employment law transport, SMEs, energy, agriculture, taxation, etc. Poland needs to introduce or extend its capacities in terms of intellectual property protection, certification, state aids, agricultural and regional policy, customs, justice and home affairs and in the social area.