# Enlargement: a European strategy to prepare the countries of Central and Eastern Europe CEECs for accession

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OBJECTIVE: this communication analyses the political and economic effects of the enlargement of the Community and sets out the main points to be considered with regard to the reforms to be implemented. SUBSTANCE: the enlargement of the Community to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (currently Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) will have a considerable impact on the Commission: . political effects: enlargement will help to ensure peace and security among all the people of Europe but guarantees will have to be provided with regard to respect for human rights and the protection of minorities; . economic effects: the main economic challenge of enlargement affects, first and foremost, the CEECs themselves, which must establish adequate regulatory and administrative frameworks whilst often implementing far-reaching reforms and making significant improvements to their macro-economic situation. To ensure that the countries' accession succeeds, the Commission lists three types of problems and proposes an initial response to each: - the pre-accession strategy must continue and may even need to be strengthened: exhaustive preparation is the key to enlargement. The Commission therefore believes that the CEECs must continue to introduce laws that are compatible with the Community system and progressively implement the measures to apply them. Measures to stabilise monetary policies must also be enhanced; - the transitional periods at the time of accession must be well-balanced: even for the countries that are "ready" for accession, significant transitional measures will be necessary to ensure progressive integration. Nonetheless, the Commission warns against any system of permanent derogations which would lead to a form of "à la carte" or "second-class" accession. The new members must accept the obligations and laws accompanying accession together with the constraints involved therein; - in certain areas such as the cohesion policy and the agricultural policy, which account for a significant proportion of the budget, it is still difficult to determine the acquis to be taken over by new members: . as regards economic and social cohesion: the Commission will have to reconsider the prospects and regulations relating to the Structural Funds for the period up to 1999, and in 1996 it will present an initial report outlining this policy incorporating the aspect of enlargment. In this respect, the Commission feels that the countries benefiting from support should be guaranteed a sustainable level of solidarity, but only in accordance with the results obtained and with the least-favoured regions continuing to receive priority. It also points out that a massive transfer of funds towards the new countries is not desirable given the state of their administrative systems and the fact that they would find it difficult to absorb all the funds; . as regards agriculture, the Commission feels that it would not be advisable to maintain the status quo with an enlarged Europe, as enlargement would entail less systematic recourse to aid for prices, the implementation of more environmental and social policies and the definition of an integrated rural policy.