Basic information

1997/2176(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995 **Subject** 8.20.02 Enlargement 2004: new Member States **Geographical area** Latvia	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET	Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	SCHROEDTER Elisabeth (V/ALE)	07/11/2000

Former committee responsible		Former rapporteur	Appointed
AFET	Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	SCHROEDTER Elisabeth (V/ALE)	23/09/1999
AFET	Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	CACCAVALE Ernesto (UPE)	23/06/1997

Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG	Budgets	BÖGE Reimer (PPE-DE)	24/04/2001
CONT	Budgetary Control	BÖSCH Herbert (PSE)	29/05/2001
LIBE	Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	OOSTLANDER Arie M. (PPE-DE) BERGER Maria (PSE)	29/05/2001 29/05/2001
ITRE	Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	GLANTE Norbert (PSE)	21/03/2001
EMPL	Employment and Social Affairs	SMET Miet (PPE-DE)	12/04/2000

AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development	GÖRLACH Willi (PSE)	27/03/2001
CULT	Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	ANDREASEN Ole (ELDR)	11/04/2001
AFCO	Constitutional Affairs	RACK Reinhard (PPE-DE)	24/01/2001
FEMM	Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	DYBKJÆR Lone (ELDR)	27/03/2001

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	1878	1995-10-31
General Affairs	2078	1998-03-30
Culture	2427	2002-05-23

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
31/10/1995	Debate in Council		Summary
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2005	Summary
18/07/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/11/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
18/11/1998	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A4-0430/1998	
02/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
23/05/2000	Additional information		Summary
13/09/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
13/09/2000	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0239/2000	
03/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0419/2000	Summary
09/07/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
09/07/2001	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0252/2001	
04/09/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/09/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0428/2001	Summary

05/09/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/03/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2176(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/13759 AFET/4/10606 AFET/4/09123

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0430/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0003	18/11/1998	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0711/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0019-0048	03/12/1998	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0239/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0007	13/09/2000	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0419/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0070-0133	04/10/2000	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0252/2001	09/07/2001	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0428/2001 OJ C 072 21.03.2002, p. 0081-0169 E	05/09/2001	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)2005	15/07/1997	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(1998)0704	17/12/1998	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(1998)0712	17/12/1998	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0500	13/10/1999	Summary
	COM(1999)0506		

Supplementary non-legislative basic document		13/10/1999	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2000)0700	08/11/2000	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0706	08/11/2000	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2001)0656	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0700	13/11/2001	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	SEC(2001)1749	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0700	09/10/2002	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2002)1405	09/10/2002	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	31999D0854 OJ L 335 28.12.1999, p. 0029	06/12/1999	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	32002D0088 OJ L 044 14.02.2002, p. 0045-0053	28/01/2002	

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 17/12/1998

OBJECTIVE: to present the 1998 regular report from the Commission on Latvia's progress towards accession. CONTENT: in line with the timetable of Agenda 2000 and the direction given by the European Council in Cardiff, the Commission presents a report in the form of an appraisal of the progress made by this country with regard to accession. The report examines: - the relations between Latvia and the EU, particularly in the framework of the Europe Agreement; - the situation in respect of the political conditions set by the European Council (democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities); - the question of Latvia's capacity to assume the obligations of membership, (in particular, the Community acquis). In concluding its report, the Commission considers Latvia's results to be positive in political terms: considerable progress has been made to alleviate the weaknesses identified in the 1997 opinion and to integrate non-citizens. Continued attention needs to be paid to promoting the learning of the Latvian language by non-citizens, to the reform of public administration, to strengthening the judiciary and to fighting corruption. On the economic front, Latvia has continued to make progress in developing a market economy and is on the road, in the medium term, to being able to withstand competitive pressures and market forces in the Union. The country's macro-economic situation has improved significantly and the privatization process has gathered pace. The Latvian authorities should now focus on reviewing in depth the financial sector and maintaining the country's macro-economic stability. As far as legislative alignment is concerned, Latvia has made considerable progress in sectors such as competition, banking services, transport, standards and certification. It now needs to strengthen its implementing and control capacities. Furthermore, Latvia has broached in a satisfactory manner the majority of the short-term priorities of the pre-accession partnership. The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis is currently undergoing revision in order to place greater emphasis on the process of alignment with Community legislation. During the second half of 1999, the Commission will present its position on the revised version of this programme to the Council at the time when the Accession Partnership is being re-examined.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 31/10/1995

Following the presentation on 27 October to the President of the Council of Latvia's request for accession to the European Union, the Council decided to implement the procedure provided for in the Treaty and ask the Commission to draw up its opinion on this application. The President of the Council will write to the Latvian authorities to inform them of this decision.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 15/07/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Latvia's request for membership (27 October 1995). 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, Latvia presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. However, measures need to be taken to accelerate the rate of naturalization of Russian-speaking non-citizens to enable them to become better integrated into Latvian society; 2) in economic terms, Latvia has made considerable progress in the creation of a market economy, but would face serious difficulties in coping with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union; 3) with regard to the capacity to take on the obligations of membership, Latvia has made some progress in transposing and implementing the acquis, particularly on the single market. If it continues its efforts, it should become able to participate fully in the single market in the medium term. Particular efforts are still needed with regard to investment and in the environmental and agricultural sectors. Lastly, strengthening of the administrative structure is vital if Latvia 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 Latvia only when this country has made sufficient progress in satisfying fully the conditions of membership (mainly economic criteria). The pre-accession strategy should be reinforced in order to help this country to prepare itself rapidly for the obligations of membership.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 13/10/1999

This second composite document, like the first in the series, provides a resumé of the regular reports prepared for all accession candidate countries. Although the main areas covered, the methodology and the analysis of the progress made by all the candidate countries remain the same, the Commission's formal conclusions on a country by country basis differ from those in the 1998 report. Firstly, the Commission recalls that the enlargement process is a complex one which is not simply confined to pure and simple integration of new countries in the Union. Besides the difficulties associated with integration both for the Union and the countries themselves, the Commission considers that the new configuration of 25-30 countries will require not only internal but also external changes. In particular, it considers that the development of Europe has inevitable consequences with respect to the Eastern countries that are not yet on the 'candidate list' (ex-Yugoslavian countries, Albania, in the first instance), but also further East with Russia and the Ukraine, with which relations will have to be accorded a new dimension. The Commission considers that the new configuration envisaged also implies a modification in Europe's approach with respect to the South and in particular the countries of North Africa in respect of which new responsibilities are developing. On another level, the Commission considers that the enlargement negotiations should be started with all the candidate countries (thus abandoning the 'in'and 'non-in' idea) that satisfy the political Copenhagen criteria and can prove that they are ready to take the necessary measures to satisfy the economic criteria. Negotiations will continue with those countries with which negotiations have been under way since 31 March 1998 (Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus and the Czech Republic) but will commence in 2000 with Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and, if certain conditions are fulfilled, with Romania and Bulgaria. In this document, the Commission also outlines the method that it intends to apply to open negotiations with each of the countries concerned. In taking account of the progress made by each candidate country in its preparation for membership, the Commission will open one (or several) chapters for negotiation based on the principle of differentiation (certain chapters for certain countries in function of progress in given fields of the acquis). The chapters left in suspense in the framework of the negotiations under way, will be reviewed afterwards taking into account the progress of the country in these fields. The provisional closure of certain chapters will also depend on the extent to which the candidate country has undertaken its commitments in preparing for membership. Furthermore, the Commission considers that membership can only take place if the institutional reform has taken place by the end of 2002. The Commission also considers that the Union should undertake to be in a position to decide by that date on the eventual membership of candidates that fulfil the required criteria. Lastly, during 2000, the situation of all candidates from the point of view of the application of the competition regime and internal market rules should be reviewed, as well as that ofthe liberalisation of trade in agricultural products.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 06/12/1999 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: presentation of the second accession partnership for Latvia. CONTENT : Like its previous version, this partnership for the accession of Latvia resembles a work programme proposing priorities and objectives to be attained by the country in the short and the medium-term in order to become a member of the Union. These objectives take into account the regular report on Latvia (1999). The short-term priorities (end of 2000) concern political criteria (alignment of legislation concerning language with international standards and the Europe Agreement and better integration of non-citizens) and economic criteria (restructuring of companies using a market-oriented logic, further privatisation and property reform); the internal market (principally, further alignment); agriculture; transport; environment (introduction of framework legislation); social affairs and employment; justice and home affairs (improved border surveillance and information infrastructures) and the strengthening of administrative and judicial capacity (in particular in the management and control of EU funds). In the medium term, the measures will concern the integration of the non-citizens and further restructuring of companies. In the area of the single market, intellectual property protection is considered essential, as well as further alignment and the strengthening of border controls. Other measures are awaited in the area of agriculture, fisheries, energy (transposition of the main Community Gas and Electricity Directives), transport, environment and justice and home affairs (cooperation with EUROPOL). With regard to the programming of

financial resources, the partnership confirms aid granted in line with AGENDA 2000 and the various instruments provided therein (Phare, SAPARD and ISPA) in accordance with the rules already foreseen. It should be noted that assistance is only granted if the country respects the provisions of the EC-Latvia Association Agreement, makes progress towards satisfying the Copenhagen criteria and assures in the year 2000 the achievement of the specific priorities of this accession partnership.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 04/10/2000 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mrs Elisabeth SCHROEDTER (Greens/EFA, D). It welcomes the opening of negotiations on EU membership with Latvia and calls for these negotiations to be conducted in such a way as to enable Latvia to join the first wave of enlargement. The resolution welcomes the fact that Latvia has decided to abandon the practice of showing in residents' passports and identity documents the ethnic group to which they belong and instead to introduce identity documents in which only citizenship is indicated. The resolution adds that a campaign should be launched to encourage non-citizens to apply for citizenship. Furthermore, economic and social cohesion is seen as an another area which needs to be strengthened and the resolution calls for the acquis communautaire on the environment to be incorporated more rapidly. Finally, the Parliament calls for improved treatment of persons whose requests for refugee status have been turned down and for humane treatment of immigrants without appropriate legal documents.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 13/11/2001 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

The Commission has prepared this fourth series of Regular Reports with a view to the Laeken European Council in December 2001. The structure followed for this Regular Report is the same as that used for the 2000 Regular Report. This Report takes into consideration progress since the 2000 Regular Report. It looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 2000 Regular Report have been carried out, and examines new initiatives. The Report contains a separate section examining the extent to which Latvia has addressed the Accession Partnership priorities. With regard to the pre-accession instruments (Phare, SAPARD and ISPA), these programmes have concentrated their support on the Accession Partnership priorities that help the candidate countries to fulfil the criteria for membership. For the years 2000-2002 total financial assistance to Latvia amounts annually to at least EUR 30 million from Phare, EUR 22.2 million from SAPARD and between EUR 36.4 and 57.2 million from ISPA. Firstly, Latvia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria, the three main criteria are as follows: 1) Political Criteria : During the last year, the government remained committed to reforming the Public Administration and the judiciary, as well as to fighting against corruption. In parallel, the reform of the judicial system must be carried on, with particular attention to the legal framework, speeding up and enforcing court decisions, and addressing the issue of pre-trial detention. Measures to combat corruption need to continue. Further important steps were taken to promote the integration of non-citizens into Latvian society. The effectiveness of the Naturalisation process needs to be maintained and Latvian language training needs to continue. 2) Economic Criteria : Latvia is a functioning market economy. Provided that it makes further substantial efforts in maintaining the pace of, and completing, its structural reforms, it should be able to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the near term. Latvia has preserved macroeconomic stability. Further progress has been made on structural reform, the last steps of the pension reform, a new framework for financial supervision and a new regulatory authority for public utilities have been introduced. However, the authorities must continue a policy of fiscal discipline, within a medium term fiscal framework, in order to keep the budget deficit and the current account deficit sustainable over the medium term. 3) Aligning its legislation with the acquis : in most areas, Latvia has kept up a steady pace in aligning its legislation with the acquis. - in the area of the internal market : whether it be in the field of the free movement of goods, services or capital, the country is nearly ready. However, delays in the entry into force of the Commercial Code and the effective protection of intellectual and industrial property rights constitute a serious challenge. The adoption of legislation related to state aid represents an important step. Latvia's enforcement record in this area has also developed but efforts to ensure the full implementation of anti-trust and state aids rules should continue; - in the agricultural sector : encouraging efforts were undertaken in the area of agriculture, in particular concerningveterinary and phytosanitary matters, as well as food safety. Important challenges still lie ahead, both in completing alignment and in introducing and upgrading the necessary structures and mechanisms; - for the area of energy : further alignment was achieved in this area. This needs to continue with special emphasis on the electricity and gas directives, as well as oil stocks; - for the area of environment, alignment needs to be completed as concerns access to environmental information, waste management and chemicals. Further efforts to upgrade the administrative structures are needed; - for justice and home affairs, progress could be noted on data protection, visas and border control, including also the adoption of a Schengen Action Plan. These efforts need to be maintained, and alignment in the areas of migration and asylum completed. Upgrading the capacity and infrastructure for border management also remains a priority. The fight against organised crime, drug trafficking, money laundering, fraud and corruption also needs to be reinforced. 4) Administrative capacity : preparing its administration for EU membership remains one of the greatest challenges Latvia faces. With a view to the responsibilities Latvia will have to assume in managing and enforcing the acquis upon accession, a substantial portion of the necessary institutions and bodies have been re-structured or created. This process needs to continue, including the setting up of further new bodies and mechanisms. 5) Accession Partnership : Latvia has made progress on all the short-term Accession Partnership priorities. All medium-term priorities have been addressed. Attention should be paid to those areas where important legislation still needs to be adopted such as energy, telecommunications and economic and social cohesion or the administrative structures strengthened, such as agriculture, fisheries and the control of EC funds.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 17/12/1998 - Document attached to the procedure

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 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. Overall, the Commission's analysis of the progress achieved by each of the candidate countries since June 1997 has not persuaded it to amend its general assessment of the candidates. Therefore, it does not consider it necessary, on the basis of the reports being presented, to make new recommendations "on the conduct or extension of the negotiations", as envisaged by the European Council. Nonetheless, the Commission stresses the increasing importance of revising the national programmes for adoption of the acquis in order to further accelerate the process of alignment with European legislation and strengthen the administrative capacity of the candidate countries, with a view to efficiently implementing all the regulations necessary for admission to the Union. The document ends by specifying that the preparatory measures undertaken must determine for now, the assistance of the Union to these countries and, subsequently, the timetable for the first accessions. For this reason, the Commission intends to submit further progress reports to the Council at the end of 1999 to allow it, if appropriate, to take decisions on the conduct or extension of the negotiations.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 13/11/2001 - Document attached to the procedure

In line with the previous strategy papers from the Commission which aim to set out the steps to be followed for the next enlargement, the Commission has puslished a new general document which sets out the progress made by all of the candidate countries with regard to accession to the European Union. If, on the one hand, certain countries have made substantial progress, considerable efforts still have to be made in order to ensure the effective application of EU legislation and standards ("acquis communautaire") before their accession. This is why the Commission announces that it shall present an important action plan in order to help the candidate countries strengthen their institution building capacities. The negotiations are conducted on the basis of the existing acquis, applying the principles of own merits and catching-up. It shall continue to follow the road map (please refer to the previous Commission working document for the year 2000) and the calendar approved by the European Council, which foresees the conclusion of the negotiations with the better prepared candidate countries before the end of 2002. In this context, the Union does not create new conditions for accession, which signifies that for all the subjects to come (in particular those which bare important financial implications such as agriculture, regional policy and the budget, shall be dealt with throughout the first semester of 2002), the Commission shall present negotiation proposals based on the acquis and the existing budgetary framework. The Commission considers that this framework provides a sufficient basis for the accession of up to 10 new Member States in 2004. The accession negotiations can be concluded independently of decisions for financing the EU after 2006. Given the present pace of negotiations and the progress made so far, the Commission should be able to make recommendations on those candidate countries ready for accession on the basis of its 2002 Regular Reports. It should also be noted that the countries which should be ready for accession on this date may be able to participate as Members of the Union in the 2004 European Parliament elections. In addition, it should be noted that the Commission's important action plan aiming to reinforce institution building should mobilise EUR 1 billion for the year 2002 alone (drawn mostly from the PHARE programme). In conclusion, the Commission announced that from November 2002, the Regular Reports that it presents shall identify which candidate countries are ready to become full Members of the European Union. The countries which do not conclude the negotiations in 2002 shall become subject to a new updated road map and eventually, a revised pre-accession strategy.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 08/11/2000 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

This Regular Report for 2000 on Latvia largely follows the same structure as the Commission's 1997 Opinion and of the subsequent regular reports; however, it differs from that used in previous years on three minor points. Firstly, the part of the present report assessing Latvia's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of 29 negotiating chapters covering the acquis. Secondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Latvia's administrative capacity to apply the acquis under each of the negotiating chapters (previously discussed in a separate section of the report). Thirdly, the report includes, for the first time, a section assessing the progress made by Latvia in translating the acquis into its offical language. This report takes into consideration progress since the 1999 regular report and looks at whether the intended reforms referred to in the 1999 report have been carried out and it also examines new initiatives. With regard to the relations between the EU and Latvia, it should be highlighted that Latvia has continued to implement the Europe Agreement and contributed to the smooth functioning of the various joint institutions. Latvia's trade with the EC has continued to increase. The negotiations which were opened in March 1999 were concluded in May 2000. As a consequence of the new agreement, approximately 75% of the bilateral trade in agricultural products will benefit from preferences. The new regime entered into force in July 2000. Also in July 2000, the Commission opened negotiations with Latvia with the view to new reciprocal concessions in the fields of fish and fishery products. In the area of conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products, a Framework Agreement for a Protocol on European Conformity Assessment (PECA) was intialled in July 2000. In the years 2000-2002 total financial assistance to Latvia will amount to t annually to EUR 30 million from Phare, EUR 22.2 million from SAPARD, and between EUR 36.4 and EUR 57.2 million from ISPA. It should be noted that Latvia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. The last year saw progress in carrying forward the Public Administration Reform process, including the adoption of a new Civil Service Law; in improving the functioning of the judicial system; and in designating the framework for the fight against corruption. It will be necessary to continue and accelerate the Public Administrative Reform process, in particular with the adoption of key legislation; to further strengthen the judicial system; and to continue the fight against corruption on a broad scale. As regards the Copenhagen economic criteria, Latvia can be regarded as a functioning market economy and it has also preserved macroeconomic stability. However, the current-account deficit must be kept under control. Enterprise privatisation has not yet been completed. The authorities must continue a policy of fiscal discipline and fiscal consolidation should be pursued. Progress has also been noted in the areas of internal market, customs and taxation, agriculture, transport, environment, consumers and health protection, justice and home affairs, financial control. Whereas, in certain areas progress in alignment has been lessforthcoming, for example, in the area of free movement of persons and telecommunications and information technologies, social policy and employment, and regional policy. In general, the strengthening of the Latvian administration needs to continue in all areas in parallel and complementary to the general public administration reform process.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr Ernesto CACCAVALE (UPI, I) on Latvia's application for membership of the European Union, Parliament reaffirmed a position already expressed in its resolution of 4 December 1997 according to which all countries should be placed on the same footing even if it was logical to open negotiations with the most advanced countries. It stressed the need for the advancing accession process to cover all the countries with which the European Union had signed a Europe Agreement and underlined again its firm conviction that there should be no closed groups of accession candidates. It also stressed that the opportunity for a smooth transition to the phase of intensive negotiations should remain open at all times. Considering, in general terms, that the integration of the candidate countries into the Union would substantially contribute to security in Europe, Parliament noted that Latvia's bid to join the Union now had the firm support of the majority of the country's political parties and society in general. Welcoming the outcome of the referendum of 3 October 1998, in which the Latvian people voted to amend the nationality law (abolition of the much criticized 'windows' system and automatic granting of Latvian nationality to the children of stateless persons born in Latvia since independence), Parliament consider that this move could help to dissipate tension in Russia and remove one of the major barriers to accession. It hoped that the border agreement, which had been repeatedly called for and approved by Latvia, could also be signed by Russia. While Parliament welcomed the encouraging results obtained by Latvia as regards the principal macro-economic indicators (progress in the privatization process and stability of the national currency), it stressed the need to deepen and step up the process of administrative and judicial reform. There was a need to implement without delay pre-accession aid programmes to assist in the training of judges and lawyers and to protect the local culture. Lastly, considering that the economic trends and the political and institutional developments pointed to accession of this country, Parliament urged the Council to adopt a flexible approach to Latvia so that the decision to start negotiations could be taken before the end of the German presidency.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 13/10/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present the 1999 Regular Report on Latvia's progress towards accession. CONTENT : The Report describes Latvia's relations with the Union and analyses the situation in terms of the Copenhagen criteria. It also covers its judicial and administrative capacity to implement the acquis. Relations with the Union: the report looks at developments under the Europe Agreement, and the implementation of the Accession Partnership. The allocation of Phare funding is also examined. Eight projects have been selected for twinning, focused mainly in the priority sectors of agriculture, environment, public finance and preparatory measures for the Structural Funds. Copenhagen political criteria: In general terms, Latvia fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. There were concerns about the proposed Language Law, which had yet to be adopted at the time of writing the report. Since about 43% of the population has a language other than Latvian as a first language, language training will remain one of the key instruments for the integration of the ethnic minorities in the years to come. This area still needs much effort as does the strengthening of the judiciary and the fight against corruption. Copenhagen economic criteria: Latvia can be regarded as a functioning market economy, capable of coping with competitive pressures. Macroeconomic stability has been preserved despite the external shock of the Russian crisis, due to an appropriate mix of policies. Nevertheless, the fiscal deficit will need careful handling. Price stability has been achieved as inflation and wage developments have been relatively subdued. Latvia has been successful in attracting large inflows of foreign direct investment and investment in infrastructure, and developing labour force skills should continue so as to sustain this and encourage the long-term growth of productivity. Ability to assume the obligations of membership: Progress has been made on the internal market, although further work needs to be done on intellectual and industrial property protection and on data protection and company law. Progress on financial control is also needed as are substantial efforts in telecommunications, agriculture, fisheries and regional policy, where structures need to be adapted to the requirements of the acquis. Administrative capacity to apply the acquis: Attention needs to be paid to developing the capacity to implement the social and environmental acquis and to ensuring a well-functioning customs administration. Police capacity and the co-ordination in the fight against organised crime have to be strengthened. Delays in implementing general public administration reform have weakened Latvia's capacity to implement the legislation it has passed in order to align with the acquis. Implementation and enforcement needs to be addressed in a more systematic manner, especially in the fields of telecommunications, agriculture, customs, tax, and financial control.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 08/11/2000

The Commission has presented for the first time a 'strategy document for enlargement' which seeks to be more analytical and forward-looking than its previous versions issued in 1998 and 1999. In the first part, the Commission recalls the challenges of the future enlargement, in particular in geopolitical and strategic terms, which go far beyond those faced in previous enlargements: Europe's improved security, stability and prosperity will be top priority in the complex negotiations which will result in the membership of between 10 and 13 new member states. The Commission also discusses the new potential candidates for membership from the Balkans area which will be declared in the relatively near future. A process in parallel to that started in 1989 for the current candidates from Central and Eastern Europe is under way in this region so as to prepare the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania for future membership: this involves a stabilisation and association process coupling financial and technical support, as well as strengthening the political dialogue between the parties. In recalling the various elements that comprise the pre-accession strategy (accession partnerships; national programmes for the adoption of the acquis communautaire; more than 3 billion euros per year of financial assistance with PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD; association agreements that set the institutional framework and the structural objectives of pre-accession; involvement of the candidate countries in the various Community programmes and agencies), the Commission presents a state of play sector-by-sector of the progress made by the candidates on the path to accession. The Copenhagen criteria (political, economic, adoption of the acquis) are reviewed in the second part of the document in order to determine for each country concerned the work that remains to be done before becoming a member of the Union. The Commission describes, in a third and important part of the section, the negotiation strategy that it intends to implement in the course of the next two years (2001-2002). In this regard, the Commission stresses the need to respect the timetable for the negotiations, considering that it is not in the interests of either the Union or the candidate countries to see the enlargement process get bogged down indefinitely. This is why a strategy in stages is proposed in order both to encourage the candidate countries to intensify their preparation efforts and to give them greater confidence in the process under way. This strategy involves the following stages: 1) the drawing up of a lists of candidate countries' requests for transitional measures and negotiation of these measures by making, on the EU side, a clear distinction between measures considered acceptable (basically transitional

measures in the short term of a technical nature that do not pose a particular problem), negotiable (measures having an effect on competition or the internal market and a longer duration), and unacceptable (posing very fundamental problems in the context of membership); 2) the drawing up of a detailed 'road map'for each country laying down clearly the order in which pending questions should be dealt with in 2001-2002. The road map is, without doubt, the most innovative aspect of the planned negotiation method since it involves for all the parties an undertaking to finishnegotiations within a realistic timescale. The approach favoured by the Commission is one in two phases: 2001 will see the majority of the pending questions raised (mainly, the internal market, social questions, environment) with the exception of those which have the most important financial implications; these latter will be dealt with in the course of the first six months of 2002, with the 'institutional questions' chapter and the other unresolved matters (agriculture, in particular). A clear list of chapters for negotiation that must be tackled is presented in the Commission's document, breaking down the most important questions to be resolved into 3 semesters (up to June 2002); 3) the opening of negotiating chapters: it is up to the candidate countries to open negotiating chapters as a function of the timing proposed by the Commission in its road map. Certain countries that are already well advanced would be able, by virtue of the principle of differentiation, to pursue their negotiations at a more sustained rhythm and hope to be part of the first cluster of new member states. However, where the number of remaining problems is very limited, these can be put aside provisionally to be revisted in order to find a solution to the few remaining issues at the appropriate moment. In conclusion, and in virtue of the method proposed in this working document, the Commission considers that Union should be in a position to welcome new Member States from the end of 2002.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 09/10/2002

The European Commission has published its last Strategy Paper which highlights the processes to be accomplished before the integration of 10 new Member States. The Commission considers that Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia fulfil the political criteria and will have fulfilled the economic and acquis criteria within the timeframe foreseen for accession by the European Council. These countries will be ready for membership from the beginning of 2004. The Commission recommends concluding the accession negotiations with these countries by the end of this year with the aim of signing the Accession Treaty in Spring 2003. As for Bulgaria and Romania, the Commission will strongly support these two countries in achieving their objective to join in 2007. In addition to assessing progress made by each candidate, the Regular Reports and the Strategy Paper also evaluate to what extent the candidates will fulfil the Copenhagen criteria by accession, taking into account the envisaged timeframe for enlargement defined by the European Council. - Concerning the accession negotiations : the Commission therefore recommends to conclude the accession negotiations with these countries by the end of this year. The Regular Reports point to a number of areas where further improvements need to be made in the context of the political and economic criteria and in relationship to the adoption, implementation and enforcement of the acquis. These should be vigorously pursued. For all ten acceding countries, negotiations on both the chapters "agriculture" and "financial and budgetary matters" are not yet provisionally closed, although most issues in these chapters which are not linked to the financial framework to be proposed by the Union have been dealt with. Moreover, even if the chapters "regional policy" and "institutions" have been provisionally closed, specific questions linked respectively to the budgetary allocations and to institutional matters have been reserved for the last stretch of negotiations. In principle and in line with a practice followed in previous enlargements, it will not be possible to go beyond a certain point in time when considering new acquis in the negotiations. The Commission therefore has proposed to limit the scope of the negotiations as such to all acquis adopted and published up until 1 November 2002. - Overcoming difficulties : the 2002 Regular Reports show that, overall, candidate countries have generally reached a high degree of alignment in many areas, as a result of the considerable progress in transposing the acquis over the last years. Moreover, commitments made in the negotiations are generally being fulfilled. However, some difficulties are still apparent in areas such as customs, agriculture (very few candidate countries are at an advanced stage regarding the setting up of the integrated administration and control scheme (IACS)), regional policy (reinforce their administrative capacities) and financial management and control. The Commission's assessment of candidate countries in this year's Regular Reports carries three important messages: the Union's pre-accession strategy has proved a success. The transformation process in the candidate countries has been considerably accelerated by the prospect of enlargement; the accession negotiations, which have been based on theprinciples of own merits, differentiation and catching up, can be concluded with most candidates by the end of 2002. Preparations for enlargement will continue; and enlargement is an inclusive process which is not yet completed with the first accessions. The European Union continues to give its full support to current candidates that will not be in a position to participate in the next wave of enlargement. - With regard to the process of reinforcing administrative and judicial capacity : the Commission attaches the greatest importance to ensuring that the candidates further reinforce their administrative and judicial capacity. It is an essential requirement for creating mutual trust among Member States, indispensable for membership. The Commission has prepared in the first quarter of 2002 jointly with each negotiating country an Action Plan to reinforce their administrative and judicial capacity. Based on the 2002 Accession Partnership priorities, the Action Plans identify the concrete measures that remain to be taken for each country to achieve an adequate level of administrative capacity by the time of accession. The Action Plans identify targeted assistance required to support the countries in their efforts. For that purpose, the Commission has mobilised additional financial assistance of up to EUR 250 million in 2002 to accompany these efforts, bringing the Community's total support to strengthen the administrative and judicial capacity of the negotiating countries in 2002 to around EUR 1 billion. - Regarding transitional arrangements : the process of building up administrative and judicial capacity will need to continue after enlargement. A number of transitional arrangements agreed in the negotiations also demonstrate that in certain areas candidate countries need to continue efforts until they are in a position to apply fully the Community acquis. While accession negotiations are based on the principle that candidate countries effectively apply the acquis upon accession, a number of well-justified transitional measures have been agreed in the negotiations, in line with the principles laid down for transitional measures. These principles state that any transitional measure has to be limited in time and scope and be accompanied by a plan clearly defining stages for the application of the acquis. In addition, transitional measures must not involve amendments to the rules and policies of the Union, disrupt their proper functioning, or lead to significant distortions of competition. Transitional measures have been agreed, upon request of both the candidate countries (some 190 requests accepted so far) and the Union (some 28 requests accepted so far). - As regards the safeguard clauses : the general economic safeguard clause applies to situations where "difficulties arise which are serious and liable to persist in any sector of the economy or which could bring about serious deterioration in the economic situation of a given area". The safeguard clause would allow the Commission to determine the necessary protective measures. Both, new and current Member States would be able to make use of this safeguard clause. In order to ensure a smooth phasing in of an unprecedented number of new Member States in EU policies, the Commission considers, that for a limited time, the Accession Treaty should envisage the introduction of a specific safeguard clause for the internal market (including food safety)and also in the area of justice and home affairs, allowing to react more flexibly to possible problems associated with the initial period of membership. Moreover, the particular situation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs deserves a special mention.

There is now a considerable acquis in this area. It covers difficult and politically sensitive subjects, in particular where the freedom of movement of people and the consequences of the suppression of internal frontiers are concerned. The implementation of these Schengen-based objectives is subject to a two-stage process, which eliminates the need for any separate safeguard mechanism. There are, however, other non-Schengen components in the area of freedom, security and justice (for instance regarding the implementation of judicial cooperation, in particular mutual recognition) which are still causing problems. - Concerning the abolition of border controls and free movement : the EU has made clear that full application of the Schengen acquis necessitates a process in two stages. In the first stage (2004) the countries will need to have achieved a high level of border control, even though certain special arrangements such as shared infrastructure and equipment or joint patrols could be envisaged with other Member States. The lifting of internal border controls will only occur some time after accession and will be subject to a separate decision making process for each new Member State separately. - With regard to the EMU and the Euro : the new Member States cannot immediately adopt the Euro upon accession. However, as for all Member States, economic policies become a matter of common concern and hence are subject to policy co-ordination and multilateral surveillance procedures. Until that time, the Treaty obliges Member States to pursue the high degree of sustainable convergence required for the adoption of the euro, but does not specify the timetable to attain this. - Concerning the timetable : six months before the envisaged date of accession the Commission will produce a comprehensive monitoring report for the Council and the European Parliament which will look at the advancement of the implementation of necessary reforms and all commitments in the field of the Community acquis by each of the acceding countries. The Commission should adopt its Opinion on the applications for accession of the concerned countries. The European Parliament should then be asked to give its assent, followed by a decision of the Council on the admission of new Member States. Provided that the Commission can issue its Opinion in February 2003, and allowing sufficient time for the decision making process in Parliament and Council, the Accession Treaty can be expected to be signed in spring 2003. Thereafter, the Treaty, drawn up in all present and future Community languages, will be signed by the parties. - With regard to the financial framework : the Commission has proposed a common financial framework for the accession negotiations. This framework was based on the overall Berlin financial framework and on the assumption that ten new Member States would join the European Union (refer to INI /2002/2045). The Commission's proposals remain valid. In particular, the Commission considers that in the field of agriculture, the objective of gradually introducing direct payments for farmers in the new Member States from the year 2004 should be maintained.Structural actions should be based on a share of one third for the cohesion fund and be based on the overall volume proposed in January 2002. Also a temporary budgetary compensation, through a lump sum payment, should be envisaged for each new Member State which would find itself in a net budgetary position which is worse in comparison with its situation in the year before accession as beneficiary of pre-accession funds. Lastly, the Commission reiterates the need to earmark additional funds for the northern part of Cyprus in order to back a political settlement.

Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 05/09/2001 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted, without amendment, this resolution drafted by Mrs Elisabeth SCHROEDTER (Greens/EFA, D) on Latvia's application for membership of the European Union. (Please refer to the previous text).