Basic information

1997/2177(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) Estonia: membership application **Subject** 8.20.02 Enlargement 2004: new Member States **Geographical area** Estonia	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	CARLSSON Gunilla (PPE-DE)	07/11/2000

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	CARLSSON Gunilla (PPE-DE)	23/09/1999
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	DONNER Jörn Johan (PSE)	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
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	TITLEY Gary (PSE)	11/04/2001
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
RETT	Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism	POHJAMO Samuli (ELDR)	06/02/2001
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	HAUTALA Heidi (V/ALE)	20/03/2001

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2078	1998-03-30
General Affairs	1891	1995-12-04
Culture	2427	2002-05-23

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
17/12/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0705	Summary
08/03/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/03/1999	Vote in committee		Summary
24/03/1999	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A4-0149/1999	
14/04/1999	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	A5-0238/2000	
03/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0418/2000	Summary
09/07/2001	Vote in committee		Summary

09/07/2001	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0251/2001	
04/09/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/09/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0427/2001	Summary
05/09/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/03/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2177(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/5/13766 AFET/4/10899 AFET/4/09134

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0149/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0006	24/03/1999	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0330/1999 OJ C 219 30.07.1999, p. 0370-0437	15/04/1999	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0238/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0006	13/09/2000	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0418/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0070-0130	04/10/2000	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0251/2001	09/07/2001	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0427/2001 OJ C 072 21.03.2002, p. 0081-0166 E	05/09/2001	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)2006	15/07/1997	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1998)0705	17/12/1998	Summary
	COM(1998)0712		

Document attached to the procedure		17/12/1998	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0500	13/10/1999	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0504	13/10/1999	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2000)0700	08/11/2000	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0704	08/11/2000	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2001)0654	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0700	13/11/2001	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	SEC(2001)1747	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0700	09/10/2002	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2002)1403	09/10/2002	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	31999D0855 OJ L 335 28.12.1999, p. 0035	06/12/1999	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	32002D0086 OJ L 044 14.02.2002, p. 0029-0036	28/01/2002	

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(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.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 06/12/1999 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: presentation of the second 'accession partnership' for Estonia. CONTENT : Like its previous version, this partnership for the accession of Estonia 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 evaluation of the 1998 accession partnership described in the last regular report on Estonia (1999). The short-term priorities (end of 2000) concern the alignment of legislation concerning its language and international standards and the Europe Agreement, and the integration of Russian-speaking non-citizens. On the economic front, priorities concern the restructuring of the bitumen sector and the privatisation of the energy sector, the acceleration of the property ownership process and the reform of pensions. Other priorities relate to the internal market (basically continuing the harmonisation process) ; agriculture (veterinary inspections), transport, environment, social affairs and employment, justice and home affairs (reform of penal law) and the strengthening of administrative and judiciary capacity (in particular the management and control of EU funds). In the medium term, the measures will concern following up efforts to, integrate non-citizens and the achievement of land reform. In the area of the single market, the complete liberalisation of goods and capital, the introduction of competition rules and consumer protection are priorities. Further measures are awaited in the area of agriculture, fishing, energy (the liberalisation of the gas and electricity sectors) transport, environment (waste management, industrial pollution) and improvement in the operation of the legal sector. 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-Estonia 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.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(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.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 08/11/2000 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

This Regular Report on Estonia is largely similar to that of 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 Estonia's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of the 29 negotiating chapters covering the acquis. Secondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Estonia'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 Estonia in translating the acquis into its official language. This report takes into consideration progress since the 1999 regular report and looks at whether intended reforms have been carried out and it examines new initiatives. Furthermore, complementing the assessment of new developments since the last regular report, this report provides also an overall assessment of new developments since the last report and also provides an overall assessment of the global situation for each of the aspects under consideration, setting out for each of them the main steps which remain to be taken by Estonia in preparing for accession. The report draws on numerous sources of information. The candidate countries have been invited to provide information on progress made in preparations for membership since the publication of the last regular report. As regards the relations between the EU and Estonia, it should be noted that Estonia's trade with the EC decreased slightly in 1999, to recover again in the first half of 2000. A new regime for agricultural products entered into force on 1 July 2000 on an autonomous basis, pending the conclusion of an Additional Protocol to the Europe Agreement. In addition, negotiations on further mutual concessions for a number of processed agricultural products were also concluded between negotiators in May 2000. In July 2000, the Council mandated the Commission to open negotiations with the associated countries on new reciprocal concessions in the field of fish and fishery products. In May 2000, Estonia presented a revised National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA), in which outlines its strategy for accession including how to achieve the priorities of the Accession Partnership. In the years 200-2002 total financial assistance to Estonia will amount annually to EUR 24 million from Phare, EUR 12 million from SAPARD, and between EUR 21 and EUR 37 million from ISPA. Estonia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. It has addressed most of the short-term priorities of the 1999 Accession Partnership in this area. Estonia has made progress in the following areas: integration of minorities; market economy; macroeconomic stability; restructuring the enterprise and financial sectors; structuring reforms in the utilities and energy sectors; internal market; transport; agriculture; fisheries; social policy; regional policy; justice and home affairs; administrative capacity. On the other hand, although progress has been made andcontinues to be made, there are also areas in which further progress is needed such as: the containment of government expenditures, especially in the pension and health care reform area; local government expenditure: administrative structures; market surveillance system; industrial and intellectual property rights; customs; financial control; penal law and labour law. Lastly, it is emphasised that Estonia's main weakness is the weak administrative structures and enforcement bodies which are needed to ensure that the existing structures are fully capable of enforcing and implementing the acquis correctly.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(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. In the current state of affairs, the Commission considers that the following countries should be in the first line to start negotiations : Bulgaria, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. 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 closing 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 andinternal market rules should be reviewed, as well as that of the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 15/04/1999 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted its Resolution, drafted by Mr. Jörn Johan Donner (Finland, PES), which calls for the momentum of the accession process to be kept up if the broad political support for EU membership in Estonia is not to waver. An amendment supports the German Presidency's proposal to extend the scope of the Phare programme to the social field. Others stress the importance of anti-corruption measures and the need to draw up a specific timetable for the accession negotiations. The EP also stressed the need to ensure the rights of the Russian minority.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 05/09/2001 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament endorsed the resolution by Mrs Gunilla CARLSSON (EPP-ED, S) on Estonia's application for membership of the EU. The House stressed that the country was making good progress in its preparations for EU membership and has clearly emerged as one of the leaders among the candidate countries. It is urged to continue with the implementation of its programmes to integrate minorities, while the House also stress the need to take more steps to provide language training - particularly for the Russian speaking population. There is also applause for the progress in tackling corruption. Estonia receives praise for its economic progress, although there is concern over the high rate of unemployment and in particular the 'difficult situation' in the North-East of the country. Moreover, the resolution welcomes progress in adopting the 'acquis', although authorities are criticisd for allowing foreign works to be broadcast legally without permission and payment of any fee to the author. The resolution also looks forward to Estonia's full participation in the common foreign and security policy adn to becoming integrated into the Euro-Atlantic security structures. Finally, it looks forward to progress in adopting the environmental 'acquis' with Estonia's forthcoming accession to the European Environmental Agency.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 04/12/1995

Following the presentation on 28 November 1995 of Estonia's request for accession to the European Union, the Council decided to set in motion the procedures laid down in the Treaty and to invite the Commission to prepare its opinion on this request. The President of the Council will send a letter to the Prime Minister of Estonia informing him of this decision.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 15/07/1997 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Estonia's request for membership (24 November 1995). CONTENT: All the requests for membership are 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 stability of 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 these criteria, it is emerges that: - in political terms, Estonia 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 naturalisation of Russian speaking non-citizens to enable them to become better integrated into Estonian society; - in economic terms, Estonia can be regarded as a functioning market economy, and it should be able to make the progress necessary to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium term; - with regard to its capacity to assume the obligations of membership, Estonia has made considerable progress in transposing and implementing the acquis relating particularly to 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, including investment, will be needed to apply the acquis fully in sectors such as environment (where massive investments are expected). The Commission also notes that in the agricultural sector reforms must be made quickly. There is also a need to finance rising trade and current account deficits. Substantial progress is needed on public procurement, intellectual property, financial services, taxation and competition (especially the transparency of state aids). Efforts are also needed in the fields of statistics, fisheries, consumer protection and customs. Lastly, the administrative structure must be strengthened is Estonia 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 Estonia. The pre-accession strategy will help this country to prepare rapidly for the obligations of membership by concentrating on the shortcomings.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 17/12/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the regular report from the Commission on Estonia'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 the Estonia and the EU, particularly in the framework of the European Agreement; - the situation in respect of the political conditions set by the European Council (democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities); - Estonia's situation and prospects in respect of the economic conditions mentioned by the European Council (functioning market economy, capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union); - the question of Estonia's capacity to adopt the obligations of membership, that is, the acquis of the Union as expressed in the Treaty, the secondary legislation and the policies of the Union. The conclusion of the Commission's analysis reveals that the Commission considers Estonia's results to be satisfactory both in political and economic terms: Estonia's institutions continue to run smoothly even if problems remain regarding access to citizenship and Estonia can be regarded as a functioning market economy and should be able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. The land privatisation process needs to be accelerated and phytosanitary and veterinary rules implemented. Efforts are also needed in the financial sector. With regard to adoption of the acquis, Estonia has made general progress in the approximation process, although increased attention needs to be paid to the enforcement of internal market legislation (in particular intellectual property, standards and certification and state aids) and to the preparation of a strategy to introduce customs duties and the corresponding administration. Estonia has taken important steps to put legislation in place in the justice and home affairs area and is taking steps to ensure its effective implementation. At the same time, however, there are still shortcomings in the areas of control of financial markets and state aids, maritime transport, social and employment policy and regional development. In conclusion, Estonia continues to fulfil the political Copenhagen criteria, although decisions are needed on the naturalisation of stateless children. Estonia has dealt with all the aspects of short term priorities of the partnership for accession. The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis needs to be revised to ensure effective implementation of Community legislative acts. The Commission will take a position on the revised programme which it will communicate to the Council during the second semester of 1999 at the time of the re-examination of the Accession Partnership.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 17/12/1998

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. 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 candidacies. 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.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(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.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 13/10/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : To present the 1999 Regular Report on Estonia's progress towards accession. CONTENT : This report describes relations between Estonia and the Union, analyses the situation in respect of the Copenhagen criteria and addresses the question of its ability to take on the acquis. It also covers judicial and administrative capacity as required by the Madrid European Council. Relations between the EU and Estonia: Estonia's trade with the EU has continued to increase its share of total trade. Its main exports are machinery, equipment, wood and mineral products, while the most important imported products are machinery and electrical equipment, and agricultural products. With regard to pre-accession aid, total financial assistance in the years 2000-2002 will amount to between 168 and 213M EUR. (Phare 72M EUR, Sapard 36M EUR,and ISPA between 60M EUR and 105M EUR.) Political criteria: The Commission judges that Estonia fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. The adoption of the Language Law, however, which restricts the access of non-Estonian speakers to political and economic life, is a step backwards and should be amended. Economic criteria: Estonia is a functioning market economy where market forces play their full role. It should be able to cope with competitive pressures within the Union, provided it completes key remaining structural reforms. Privatisation is almost complete. All small and medium sized companies are privately owned. At this stage, it is envisaged that only the Port of Tallinn, the Airport of Tallinn and some utilities, including water and sewage companies, will remain in public ownership, although some minority stakes might be sold to private investors. Some sectors, notably agriculture, face difficulties in their access to finance. The absence of a functioning market for agricultural land is one of the reasons why the decline of agricultural activity is continuing, despite direct support granted to farmers. The increase in foreign direct investment inflows that has been recorded since June 1998 has been impressive. The vast majority comes from EU countries. In 1998, it was concentrated in the financial sector, and foreign capital controlled about two thirds of the total capital of the banking sector at the end of 1998. The Russian crisis has, however, revealed weaknesses, including a low level of productivity. Transparent restructuring of the oil-shale sector is required. Ability to assume the obligations of membership: In general terms, Estonia has continued its alignment in the single market area at a steady but slow pace, in particular as regards intellectual property and data protection, free movement of goods and state aid monitoring. Good progress has been made in the fields of energy and transport, where legislative alignment and liberalisation have been taken further. The capacity to enforce environment acquis remains an issue. Delays in the customs area are a matter of concern. Considerable efforts are needed on capacity building. It remains difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff, and priority should be given to this matter. Standards and certification require work, as do agriculture, andregional policy. Administrative capacity to apply the acquis: Progress has been limited in improving judicial and administrative capacity, where the short-term accession partnership priorities have only been partially met. Although some progress has been made in the agriculture, and fisheries sectors, significant efforts are required to build up the necessary institutional structures and to develop the capacity to manage funds.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(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 Estonia has addressed the Accession Partnership priorities. With regard to the pre-accession instruments (Phare, SAPARD, ISPA), these programmes concentrate 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 Estonia amounts annually to around EUR 30 million from Phare, EUR 12.1 million from SAPARD and around EUR 35 million from ISPA. Concerning the Copenhagen criteria, the main areas are as follows: 1) Political criteria : Estonia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. Progress has been made in the modernisation of the public administration by moving to a more results based system and improving public access to information. As regards the judicial system, Estonia needs to continue to improve the efficiency in dealing with court cases whilst at the same time improving the quality and enforcement of court decisions. There is also a need to further improve citizen's access to justice. Estonia should maintain the momentum of the integration process. This includes ensuring the efficiency of the naturalisation process, providing access to language training, and raising awareness of the issue across the entire spectrum of Estonian society. 2) Economic criteria : Estonia is a functioning market economy. Provided that it continues with and fully implements its reform programme, it should be able to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the near term. Estonia has returned to high growth and made further progress in strengthening its macroeconomic performance and stability, restructuring the enterprise sector, and in implementing structural reforms in the utilities and energy sectors. The pension reform has been adopted. The legal, institutional and regulatory framework is in place and enforcement is largely adequate. Nevertheless, the current account deficit remains high. The labour market is highly segmented leading to high unemployment combined with labour shortages. Initiatives to improve the response of the labour market to economic growth, with a focus on improving education, training and labour market mobility, need to be developed. 3) Alignment of Estonian legislation with the acquis : overall, Estonia has continued to make good progress in both adopting and implementing the acquis. - concerning the internal market : progress has been made in free movement of goods in aligning public procurement legislation and adopting standards although there is still a need to harmonise sectoral legislation. For free movement of persons, new legislation now ensures the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. In competition policy there has been furtheralignment of legislation which is now largely in line with the acquis in anti-trust and state aid; - concerning agriculture : important steps have been taken in preparing for the CAP, including the partial accreditation of the SAPARD agency. Progress has also been made in the phytosanitary sector. Considerable efforts still need to be made, particularly in the veterinary field. Raising food quality standards to EU levels is still a significant challenge; - transport and energy sectors : in transport policy, Estonia has continued to make progress in both aligning and implementing legislation. The necessary separation of accounts and the role of the railways regulatory body need to be clarified. In energy limited progress has been made. Efforts need to be made in this area particularly as regards the electricity market. Estonia also needs to further develop administrative structures and strengthen the energy market regulator; - for social policy and employment : Estonia has made good progress in terms of legal transposition. Further work is required on implementation. There is also a need to actively promote social dialogue; - environment sector : further progress has been made in relation to both alignment and implementation of environmental legislation. Estonia needs to continue these efforts and strengthen administrative capacity, particularly at local level. Also, enforcement of environmental legislation needs to be improved; - justice and home affairs : Estonia has made further progress in this area including the adoption of the new Penal Code. Work needs to be continued to ensure implementation of legislation, to improve internal coordination and to extend cooperation with external organisations. Particular attention should be paid to strengthening capacity to fight organised crime including drug trafficking. 4) Administrative Capacity : Estonia has continued to take steps to improve implementation and effectively enforce the acquis which should be recognised as often being more difficult, more expensive and time consuming than the transposition of legislation. Specific areas to which further attention should be paid include reorganisation of the market surveillance system and reinforcing the fight against piracy and counterfeit goods, in preparations for the Common Agricultural Policy and in raising the quality of food. There is also a need for investment in compliance and enforcement in the environment sector, preparing for EC structural funds. 5) Accession Partnership : Estonia has continued to address aspects of all the short-term 1999 Accession Partnership priorities. Estonia is now tackling many aspects of the medium term priorities including those priorities in the internal market, agriculture, fisheries, transport, employment and social affairs, environment and justice and home affairs.

Estonia: membership application

1997/2177(COS) - 04/10/2000 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the resolution from Mrs Gunilla CARLSSON (EPP/ED, Sw). It notes that Estonia fulfils the Copenhagen criteria and welcomes the amendments to the language law to align it with international standards and trusts that the Estonian authorities will implement the legal provisions as part of the comprehensive measures for the integration of non-citizens. The Parliament regards the forthcoming adoption of the State Integration Programme as an important development. The Estonian government is urged to enhance its efforts in the field of labour market policies and social security. Furthermore, the magnitude of the task of meeting EU environmental standards is highlighted while also pointing to the distortions of competition caused by the CAP to agricultual markets in the applicant countries. The Parliament urges the Estonian government to continue their efforts to curb drug trafficking and drug addiction, in particular through close collaboration between legal bodies, police forces and Europol. On the other hand, Estonia is congratulated on ratifying the 1999 Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.