Basic information

1997/2178(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995 **Subject** 8.20.02 Enlargement 2004: new Member States **Geographical area** Lithuania	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	SOULADAKIS Ioannis (PSE)	20/03/2001

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	HOFF Magdalene (PSE)	23/09/1999
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	KRISTOFFERSEN Frode (PPE)	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	ETTL Harald (PSE)	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	KRATSA-TSAGAROPOULOU Rodi (PPE-DE)	20/03/2001

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2078	1998-03-30
General Affairs	1902	1996-01-29
Culture	2427	2002-05-23

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/01/1996	Debate in Council		Summary
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2007	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	A4-0431/1998	
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	A5-0240/2000	
03/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0420/2000	Summary
09/07/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
09/07/2001	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0253/2001	
04/09/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/09/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0429/2001	Summary

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

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2178(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/5/13765 AFET/4/09124 AFET/4/10604

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0431/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0003	18/11/1998	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0714/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0020-0054	03/12/1998	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0240/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0007	13/09/2000	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0420/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0070-0135	04/10/2000	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0253/2001	09/07/2001	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0429/2001 OJ C 072 21.03.2002, p. 0081-0173 E	05/09/2001	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)2007	15/07/1997	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(1998)0706	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)0507		

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)0707	08/11/2000	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2001)0657	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0700	13/11/2001	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	SEC(2001)1750	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0700	09/10/2002	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2002)1406	09/10/2002	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	31999D0856 OJ L 335 28.12.1999, p. 0041	06/12/1999	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	32002D0089 OJ L 044 14.02.2002, p. 0054-0063	28/01/2002	

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(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.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(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.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 29/01/1996

Following the application to join the European Union submitted by Lithuania (8 December 1995), 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 authorities of Lithuania, to inform them of this decision.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 04/10/2000 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the report drafted by Mrs Magdalene HOFF (PES, D) on Lithuania's application for membership of the EU and the state of negotiations. This resolution calls for negotiations to be conducted in such a way as to enable Lithuania to join the first wave of enlargement. The Parliament notes that Lithuania clearly satisfies the political criteria for EU membership, but calls on Lithuania to continue the fight against corruption and to adopt effective measures to combat trafficking in human beings. However, on the other hand, the Parliament welcomes in great strides that Lithuania has made in developing its border controls and considers that a simplified border crossing for local residents should be found. Furthermore, Lithuania is encouraged to gradually focus its economic policy on creating conditions that promote long-term growth. The Parliament also emphasises that the current timetable for the decommissioning of the two Chernobyl-type units of the Ignalina nuclear power plant must not be relaxed.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 13/10/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : To present the 1999 Regular Report on Lithuania's progress towards accession. CONTENT : The Report describes relations between Lithuania and the Union and analyses the situation in respect of the Copenhagen criteria. It assesses the country's ability to take on the acquis and looks at judicial and administrative capacity. Relations between the EU and Lithuania - The Report looks at developments under the Europe

Agreement, the Accession Partnership and the revised National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis. It outlines the allocation of Phare funds, which consisted of 328M EUR during the period 1992-1999. Twinning is foreseen for 14 projects under the 1999 programme. Copenhagen political criteria: Lithuania fulfils the political criteria. The fight against corruption, however, needs to be further strengthened. In particular, the definition of active and passive corruption should be reviewed in order to clarify that both material and immaterial advantages are covered by the legislation. Indirect payment in favour of a third party must be incorporated, as must promises accepted by public officials. Continued reform of the judiciary is also required. Copenhagen economic criteria: Lithuania has continued to make progress in establishing a functioning market economy and is on the way to being able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the medium term, provided it completes the remaining reform agenda. Macroeconomic stability was weakened due to the Russian crisis, when the government increased public expenditure to cushion the social and economic impact. The fiscal deficit must be reduced. Inflation is low and the role played by private ownership is increasing. Financial sector privatisation should be completed and the energy sector should be restructured. Ability to assume the obligations of membership: Whilst the country has taken steps to address some of the Accession Partnership short-term priorities, significant efforts are still needed to address priorities in the areas of energy and economic reform. With regard to nuclear energy, Lithuania has taken a welcome decision on the closure of the Ignalina plant. The Commission proposes its Euratom Loan financing facility and additional major Phare funding. Lithuania has made progress in most areas of the internal market, but more work must be done on free movement of goods in the field of standardisation and market surveillance. Enforcement capacity needs to be strengthened, in particular in the fight against piracy. State aid controls continue to be a matter of concern. Major efforts are required to bring taxation into line with the acquis. Customs administration is also a matter of concern. Significant progress has been made in the environment field, although the level of compliance is uneven. Administrative capacity to apply the acquis: Lithuania needs to strengthen implementation and administration capacity, particularly in the fields of state aid controls, environment, customs, regional policy, financial controls and social policy. There is a new public administation law, which is a welcomedevelopment, as is the continuing reform of the judiciary.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(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 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. In its general conclusion, the composite paper indicates that, whatever the place of the candidate countries in the accession process and in the negotiations, much remains to be done in order to fully conform to the Community acquis. In this respect, whether considering the "in" countries (those who will qualify for accession in the next wave) or the "pre-in" countries (those who have not been selected, of which Lithuania is one), the difference is not very important. 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.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 06/12/1999 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: presentation of the second 'accession partnership' for Lithuania. CONTENT : Like its previous version, this partnership for the accession of Lithuania 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 Lithuania (1999). The short-term priorities (end of 2000) concern economic criteria (reduction of the budget deficit, privatisation and land ownership) ; the internal market (basically continuing the harmonisation process) ; agriculture, transport, energy (launch of preparations for the definitive closure of unit 1 of the Ignalina nuclear plant), environment, social affairs and employment, justice and home affairs (control of frontier with Belarus, combat of money laundering) 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 the restructuring of the banking sector and fiscal reform. In the area of the single market, the complete liberalisation of public procurement is essential, as well as continuing alignmment and strengthening of customs controls. Further measures are awaited in the area of agriculture, fishing, energy (in particular, the nuclear sector), transport, environment and public administration. 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-Lithuania 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.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 05/09/2001 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament has adopted the report by Mr Ioannis SOULADAKIS (PES, Gr) on Lithuania's application for membership of the European Union. (Please refer to the previous text).

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 08/11/2000 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

This Regular Report for 2000 on Lithuania largely follows the same structure of the Commission's 1997 Opinion and the subsequent regular reports; however, it differs from that used in the previous years on three minor points. Firstly, part of the present report assessing Lithuania's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of 29 negotiating chapters covering the acquis. Seecondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Lithuania'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 Lithuania in translating the acquis into its official language. This report takes into consideration progress since 1999 and looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 1999 report have been carried and also it examines new initiatives. With regard to the relations between Lithuania and the EU, it should be said that Lithuania has continued to implement the European Agreement correctly and contributed to the smooth functioning of the various joint institutions. Lithuania's trade with the EC has continued to increase. In March 1999, the Council mandated the Commission to open negotiations with the associated countries in view of new reciprocal concessions for agricultural products. The negotiations with Lithuania were concluded between negotiators in June 2000. As a consequence of the new agreement approximately three quarters of the bilateral trade of agricultural products will benefit from preferences. Negotiations were also opened in July 2000 relating to new reciprocal concessions in the field of fish and fishery products. As regards anti-dumping proceedings concerning products originating, inter alia, in Lithuania, it was decided, during the report period not to impose provisional anti-dumping duties on imports of certain cathode-ray colour television picture tubes and on imports of ammonium nitrate, because the dumping margins found were de minimis. With regard to Community aid, in the years 2000-2002 total financial assistance to Lithuania will amount annually to EUR 126 million from Phare, EUR 90 million from SAPARD, and between EUR 120 million and EUR 180 million from ISPA. Furthermore, Lithuania continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. Lithuania has made good progress in the area of public administration and the civil service. However, in continuing this reform, further issues need to be addressed, namely, the level of renumeration, additional training and improved inter-ministerial coordination. The reform of the legal system has significantly progressed with the adoption of the Civil Code and the Criminal Code. Macroeconomic stability has been preserved and it has managed to reduce the fiscal and external imbalances and state interference. Progress has also been made in the restructuring and liberalisation of the energy market, internal market, in particular with regards the free movement of goods (standardisation and market surveillance); competition (with the adoption of State aid law); taxation; audiovisual and telecommunications sectors; agriculture; environment;transport; justice and home affairs. However, as Lithuania reaches a more advanced level of alignment, greater attention needs to be paid to strengthening administrative capacity as well as further progress in areas such as financial control and judicial reform.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 15/07/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Lithuania's request for membership (8 December 1995). CONTENT: All the requests for membership were 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 : 1) in political terms, Lithuania presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions, guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; 2) in economic terms, Lithuania has made considerable progress in the creation of a market economy but it would face serious difficulties in coping with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; 3) with regard to its capacity to assume the obligations of membership, Lithuania has made considerable progress in transposing and implementing the acquis relating particularly to the single market. If it makes additional efforts it should become able to participate fully in the single market in the medium term. Particular efforts, including investment, are still needed in the environment, agriculture and energy sectors. Lastly, strengthening of the administrative structures is indispensable if Lithuania is to have the structures to apply and enforce the acquis effectively. In conclusion, the Commission considers that negotiations for accession cannot be opened with Lithuania until this country has made sufficient progress in satisfying the conditions for membership (mainly economic criteria). Meanwhile the pre-accession strategy should be strengthened in order to help this country to prepare itself rapidly for the obligations of membership.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(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.

Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr Frode KRISTOFFERSEN (EPP, DK) on Lithuania's application for membership 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 Lithuania had made substantial progress in becoming a market economy and made great strides regarding the capacity to withstand competitive pressure. Nonetheless, Parliament noted that this country needed to pursue reform of the judiciary and make efforts to consolidate its capacity to implement and enforce the acquis communautaire. Welcoming the dynamic approach which the Commission had displayed in its assessments of progress in the candidate countries, Parliament reiterated that the progress already achieved should be assessed and fully taken into account in determining the date when concrete negotiations could be opened. It also reiterated that each applicant country had the right to be judged on the same basic criteria and on its own achievements. In the case of Lithuania, Parliament called for the accession process to be speeded up so that intensive negotiations with that country could begin shortly.

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1997/2178(COS) - 17/12/1998

PURPOSE: to present the regular report from the Commission on Lithuania'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 Lithuania 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); - Lithuania'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 Lithuania'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 Commission assesses Lithuania's results in political terms as satisfactory: Lithuania's institutions operate correctly, although continued efforts are necessary to fight corruption. From an economic perspective, the introduction of reforms in Lithuania should enable the country to establish a viable market economy and to be able to face up to competitive pressures and market forces within the Union. Priority needs to be given to achieving structural reforms and the viability of the external accounts. As far as legislative alignment is concerned, Lithuania has had a low rate of success, in particular in the area of the internal market. However, in other areas (environment), transposition is taking place at a satisfactory pace. Nevertheless, considerable efforts need to be made in fields such as energy (in particular in the nuclear sector, including Ignalina), the economy, administrative capacity, the internal market (public procurement, competition, state aids), justice and home affairs (border management). The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis is currently in the course of revision to place greater stress on the process of alignment with Community legislation. The fact that it is included in the accession process should, moreover, help Lithuania to rise to the various challenges that it faces. During the second half of 1999, the Commission will present to the Council its position regarding the revised version of this programme at the time of the re-examination of the Accession Partnership.

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1997/2178(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. 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 Lithuania 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 Lithuania amounts to around EUR 126 million from Phare, EUR 90 million from SAPARD and around EUR 155 million from ISPA. As regards the three main Copenhagen criteria : 1) Political Criteria : Lithuania continues to fulfil the political criteria. Lithuania has made some progress in reforming the public administration and the judiciary, where the administrative court system has been re-organised. The legal system has improved with the entry into force of the new Civil Code. The capacity to fight corruption has been strengthened. The active role of the ombudsman in the field of equal opportunities and, more recently, children's right is noteworthy. 2) Economic criteria : Lithuania is a functioning market economy. Provided that it makes further substantial efforts to continue with the vigorous implementation of its structural reform programme, it should be able to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the near term. Lithuania has preserved macroeconomic stability, improved the fiscal and external imbalances and reduced state interference. The privatisation of banking, other sectors and land is nearing completion. New bankruptcy and enterprise restructuring laws finally came into force. However, unemployment remains high and the structural problems on the labour markets will have to be addressed. While important laws to restructure and liberalise the energy market were adopted, further acts need to be adopted and effective implementation needs to be ensured. 3) Legislative alignment of the acquis : this has been accompanied by concerted efforts to strengthen administrative capacity, particularly in the financial services sector. - internal market : further progress has taken place in the area of free movement of capital, where Lithuania had already achieved a high degree of liberalisation. In the area of competition policy, the quality of the alignment achieved is reflected in an enforcement record of the Lithuanian Competition Council which has so far been reasonably successful. As regards company law, whereas good progress has been made notably in terms of legislative alignment on the protection of intellectual and industrial property rights, the effective enforcement of this legislation needs to be considerably improved. As regards taxation, Lithuania has made progress in the alignment with the acquis on indirect taxation and has improved the administrative capacity; - as regards agriculture : Lithuania has continued to make progress in reforming its structures in the agricultural field. However important measures remain to be taken in particularregarding the further strengthening of the land parcel identification system, the enforcement and practical application of the management mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy and the further preparations for the paying agency. Lithuania has continued to make progress as regards food safety and the veterinary and phyto-sanitary sectors but still needs to strengthen further the implementation structures. Limited progress has taken place as regards upgrading inspection

arrangements at the external border. As regards fisheries, progress has been made, in particular in terms of administrative capacity, but significant further work is needed in terms of preparation for the structural actions and market policy; - in the area of transport : Lithuania has made good progress notably as regards road transport safety, railways restructuring and civil aviation, including strengthening of the relevant administrative capacity; - as regards the energy sector : Lithuania has achieved a reasonable level of alignment, but needs to sustain its efforts, notably in the area of the Internal Energy Market. Further work is required also in the field of nuclear energy. Lithuania must confirm and implement its closure commitments and ensure a high level of nuclear safety; - in the field of social policy : Lithuania has made steady progress in transposition and implementation of the acquis. However, the new Labour Code and Law on Public Health still need to be adopted. Implementation and enforcement need to be given further attention. The social dialogue needs to be reinforced. Lithuania has made further progress in the field of environment, where most of the framework legislation is in place. Implementation remains a major challenge, in particular in areas which require heavy investments or investments by private enterprises; - in the field of Justice and Home Affairs : improvements have been made in strengthening the external border and addressing shortcomings in inter-agency co-ordination. These efforts need to be sustained. Lithuania has adopted a Schengen Action Plan. 4) Administrative Capacities : in the field of regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments, important decisions concerning the institutional structure for the management of Structural Funds have been recently taken. While continuing to pursue a prudent budgetary policy, Lithuania has made progress as regards the building of the administrative capacity which is necessary to implement and enforce the acquis. However, this capacity is still fragile and can easily be reduced if organisational structures are modified without careful attention. Sustained efforts are required to keep the administrative capacity acquired and to further develop it. 5) Accession Partnership : overall, Lithuania has made satisfactory progress in meeting the short-term and, to a lesser extent, the medium term priorities of the Accession Partnership. In particular Lithuania has largely met several short-term priorities concerning economic criteria, internal market, energy and environment. Some short-term priorities, notably in the field of agriculture, remain to be addressed in full. Lithuania has partially met most of the medium-term priorities, but further efforts remain to be made in particular as regards the management and control of EC funds.

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1997/2178(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.