Basic information

1997/2179(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995 **Subject** 8.20.01 Candidate countries **Geographical area** Bulgaria	Procedure completed

Key players

European Parliament

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

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	VAN ORDEN Geoffrey (PPE-DE)	23/09/1999
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	AELVOET Magda G.H. (V)	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	SÖRENSEN Patsy (V/ALE)	20/03/2001

Council of the European Union

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

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/01/1996	Debate in Council		Summary
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2008	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	A4-0429/1998	
02/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
23/05/2000	Additional information		Summary
14/09/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
14/09/2000	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0241/2000	
03/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0425/2000	Summary
09/07/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
09/07/2001	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0258/2001	
04/09/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/09/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0434/2001	Summary
05/09/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		

21/03/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2179(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/5/13764 AFET/4/10605 AFET/4/09125

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0429/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0003	18/11/1998	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0715/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0020-0055	03/12/1998	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0241/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0007	14/09/2000	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0425/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0072-0149	04/10/2000	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0258/2001	09/07/2001	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0434/2001 OJ C 072 21.03.2002, p. 0083-0194 E	05/09/2001	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)2008	15/07/1997	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(1998)0707	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
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0501	13/10/1999	Summary

Document attached to the procedure	COM(2000)0700	08/11/2000	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0701	08/11/2000	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2001)0651	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0700	13/11/2001	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	SEC(2001)1744	13/11/2001	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0700	09/10/2002	
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2002)1400	09/10/2002	
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2002)0624	13/11/2002	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(03)0142	26/03/2003	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EU	Document attached to the procedure	31999D0857 OJ L 335 28.12.1999, p. 0048	06/12/1999	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0931/2001 OJ C 260 17.09.2001, p. 0062	11/07/2001	
EU	Document attached to the procedure	32002D0083 OJ L 044 14.02.2002, p. 0001-0011	28/01/2002	

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 26/03/2003 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : to propose a revised Accession Partnership with Bulgaria. CONTENT : to recall, the Accession Partnerships are policy documents adopted by the Council of the European Union, on a proposal by the Commission, which identify priorities on which the candidate countries should focus their efforts in order to comply with the EU accession criteria. The pre-accession financial assistance provided by the EU supports the efforts of the candidates to meet these objectives. The first Accession Partnership for Bulgaria was decided in March 1998 with updates approved in December 1999 and January 2002. On announcing the Roadmap for Bulgaria's accession to the EU at the end of 2002, the Commission stated that it would propose a revised Accession Partnership in light of the findings of the 2002 Regular Report and the contents of the Roadmap. The revised Accession Partnership develops in more detail the short and medium term issues identified in the Roadmap. The main priorities it highlights include continuing reform of the judicial system and public administration, and pursuit of economic reform. The priorities as identified are developed within the Accession Partnership and short and medium term issues are detailed in order to provide a revised basis for the programming of pre-accession assistance to Bulgaria.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(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.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 13/10/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : To present the 1999 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession. CONTENT : The report describes the relations between Bulgaria and the Union. It analyses the situation in respect of the Copenhagen criteria and assesses Bulgaria's capacity to take on theobligations of membership. It also covers judicial and administrative capacity as requested by the Madrid European Council. Relations with the Union: the report looks at developments under the Europe Agreement and the Phare programme. It describes the twinning projects undertaken. In the years 2000-2002, indicative figures for total financial assistance available will amount to around 300M EUR for Phare (including CBC),156.3M EUR for Sapard and 249M EUR to 375M EUR for ISPA. Copenhagen political criteria: the report notes that Bulgaria's commitment to integration was underlined during the Kosovo conflict. Bulgaria projected the image of a stable country respecting the principles of democracy and the market economy, and was firmly supportive of EU actions. Bulgaria fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. Further efforts are needed to protect human and minority rights, particularly of the Roma population, which makes up about 5% of the total. The government has adopted decisions which reflect a political commitment to combating discrimination, but these need to be followed by measures with sufficient resources behind them. The judicial system and the fight against corruption must also be reinforced. Copenhagen economic criteria: Bulgaria has continued to make progress in establishing a functioning market economy but further steps are needed and it is not yet in a position to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the medium term. Macroeconomic stability has been maintained thanks to implementation of sound fiscal and incomes policies. Priority should now be given to completing privatisation and speeding up restructuring of the enterprises and banking sectors. A transparent legal framework is needed for business. Ability to assume the obligations of membership: Bulgaria has made efforts in the past year to put in place the key elements of internal market legislation, such as legislation on public procurement and standardisation. State aid continues to be a problem area. There are problems on the implementation of agricultural alignment, partly due to lack of funding. There has been little progress in the social sector where there is widespread poverty and cause for concern in terms of public health. There is no progress on the closure of units at Kosloduy nuclear power plant, despite the fact that this was a short-term priority of the Accession Partnership. Administrative capacity to apply the acquis: Bulgaria has adopted a Civil Service law and made progress in setting up a legal framework for institutions responsible for the application of the acquis. A shortage of resources, both human and financial, has prevented these institutions from implementing legislation. Financial control mechanisms and transparent public procurement systems need to be established, particularly in order to absorb increased EU financial resources. Border management must be improved.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(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 by this Regular Report is the same as that used for the 2000 Regular Report. It takes into consideration progress since the 2000 Report. It looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 2000 Regular Report have been carried out, and examines new initiatives. In addition, this Report 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 Bulgaria in preparing for accession. In accordance with this approach, the assessment of progress in meeting the political and acquis criteria focuses on what has been accomplished since the last Regular Report. The Report contains a separate section examining the extent to which Bulgaria has addressed the Accession Partnership priorities. Firstly, with regard to the pre-accession instruments, for the years 2000-2002 total indicative financial allocations to Bulgaria amount annually to EUR 100 million from Phare, EUR 53 million from SAPARD and between EUR 83 and EUR 125 million from ISPA. In addition to its annual Phare allocation, Bulgaria receives additional Phare funding in the context of the understanding reached in November 1999 on early closure dates for units 1-4 of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. The agreement foresaw additional Phare funding of EUR 200 million over the period 2000-2007 subject to certain conditions being met. With regard to the Copenhagen criteria for membership: 1) Political Criteria : Bulgaria continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. It has made progress in adopting the secondary legislation necessary to implement the Civil Service Law and also to implement this. The adoption of the Child Protection Act in June 2000, which creates a State Agency for Child Protection, is another positive step. However, little has been done to upgrade the judiciary, which remain weak. Also corruption continues to be a very serious problem and a global, transparent anti-corruption strategy with overt backing from government and parliament would be of benefit. Since the adoption of the framework programme for the integration of Roma last year, some progress has been made but the administrative capacity of the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues to implement the programme remains low, and the limited financial means allocated for implementation make effective performance of its task difficult. 2) Economic Criteria : Bulgaria has clearly made further progress towards becoming a

functioning market economy. It is not yet able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium term. Economic growth has accelerated largely as a result of past economic reforms supported by an improved external environment. Macroeconomic stability has been preserved. However, inflation rose substantially, mainly due to one off factors, while unemployment slightly moved down from its high level. Private investment has remained low but rising slowly, while foreign direct greenfield investments are high and rising. 3) Legislative alignment of the acquis : Bulgaria has continued a good pace of alignment of legislation with the acquis but stillneeds to pay more attention to how this will be implemented and enforced. Progress on public administration reform has continued and is a positive sign; - internal Market : concerning public procurement, Bulgaria has taken some steps towards ensuring transparent public procurement procedures at central and regional level. For Intellectual and industrial property rights, further efforts are needed to complete alignment and implement industrial property rights (trade marks, geographical destinations and industrial designs), and in particular to introduce effective border control measures. On data protection, legislation has still not been adopted therefore cannot be implemented; on Free movement of goods, further work on transposition is needed before work can start on implementation of new approach legislation. More work is needed to pursue alignment of traditional technical legislation. Major efforts are needed to implement market surveillance system. This priority has been partially met; - agriculture : detailed feasibility studies on Common Agricultural Policy management mechanisms under some of the key common market regulations (milk and dairy, fruit and vegetables and grain) are underway or complete. Bulgaria has continued to restructure the agri-food sector and close enterprises that do not meet the hygiene requirements. Monitoring programmes to check the residues of harmful substances are in place. This priority has been partially met; - Energy : nothing has yet been done to align oil stock requirements and insufficient importance is given to improving energy efficiency. To prepare for the internal energy market, notably the electricity and gas directives (including adaptation of energy prices to cost levels), Bulgaria should speed up substantially the path of adopting legal amendments and to develop an appropriate and efficient regulatory mechanism able to carry out the functions defined in the internal energy market directives. It is too early to assess whether Bulgaria will implement commitments on the phased closure and decommissioning of units 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Kozloduy NPP and to maintain a high level of nuclear safety for Kozloduy units 5-6; - transport : a start has been made to align road transport (market access, road safety and taxation), railways; maritime transport, inland waterways (technical requirements for vessels) and air transport (in particular air safety and air traffic management), but there is still much more to do; - employment and social affairs : concerning equal treatment for women and men, Bulgaria needs for further changes in legislation and the legal framework for enforcement of equal treatment, including proper complaint procedure, monitoring and control mechanisms. Transposition in other areas has begun (occupational health and safety, labour law); - environment : significant further efforts will be needed to complete transposition and implementation of framework and sectoral legislation according to pre-defined timetable; and to integrate sustainable development principles into the definition and implementation of all other sectoral policies. This priority has not yet been met; - justice and home affairs : work needs to be pursued to further up-grade facilities for asylum seekers and refugees, and to further intensify international co-operation in the field of combating trans-border crime; 4) Administrative Capacity : while some progress can be noted on establishment of the institutions necessary to implement the acquis and on public administration reform, the capacity of the Bulgarian administration remains limited. Further efforts are required in establishing the necessary administrative capacity to ensure sound, efficient and controllable management of EC funds. 5) Accession Partnership : Bulgaria has fulfilled partially and made progress since last year on all of the short-term Accession Partnership priorities relating to the acquis. Concerning the administrative capacity, Bulgaria has moved forward on priorities, with the exception of that of strengthening the judiciary, where little progress has been made. The implementation of the recently adopted strategy for judicial reform should make a difference.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 05/09/2001 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Geoffrey VAN ORDEN (EPP-ED, UK) on Bulgaria's application for membership of the European Union. (Please refer to the previous text). In addition, the Parliament calls upon the Bulgarian government to eliminate provisions in the penal code that discriminate against homosexual men and lesbian women, notably Article 157, a provision that has been declared contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights by the European Commission of Human Rights. It stresses that retention of this Article in the penal code would mean a failure to comply with with the political Copenhagen criteria.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(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.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 06/12/1999 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: presentation of the second 'accession partnership' for Bulgaria. CONTENT : Like its previous version, this partnership for the accession of Bulgaria 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 Bulgaria (1999). The short-term priorities (end of 2000) concern political criteria (introduction of a framework programme for the Roma people), economic criteria (restructuring of companies, improvement of bankruptcy procedures and the restructuring of the steel sector) ; the internal market (basically continuing the harmonisation process) ; agriculture, transport, energy (closure of units 1 to 4 of the Kozloduy plant), environment, social affairs and employment, justice and home affairs (implementation of the Schengen agreement) 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 implementation of the framework programme to resolve the Roma question and maintaining overall macro-financial stability. In the area of the single market, the complete liberalisation of public procurement is essential, as are alignment and the strengthening of customs controls. Further measures are envisaged in the area of agriculture, fishing, energy (in particular, the nuclear sector), transport and the environment, and the improved operation of the legal system. 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-Bulgaria 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.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 13/10/1999

This second composite document, like the first in the series, provides a resumé of the regular reports prepared for allaccession candidate countries. Although the main areas covered, the methodology and the analysis of the progress made by all the candidate countries remain the same, the Commission's formal conclusions on a country by country basis differ from those in the 1998 report. Firstly, the Commission recalls that the enlargement process is a complex one which is not simply confined to pure and simple integration of new countries in the Union. Besides the difficulties associated with integration both for the Union and the countries themselves, the Commission considers that the new configuration of 25-30 countries will require not only internal but also external changes. In particular, it considers that the development of Europe has inevitable consequences with respect to the Eastern countries that are not yet on the 'candidate list' (ex-Yugoslavian countries, Albania, in the first instance), but also further East with Russia and the Ukraine, with which relations will have to be accorded a new dimension. The Commission considers that the new configuration envisaged also implies a modification in Europe's approach with respect to the South and in particular the countries of North Africa in respect of which new responsibilities are developing. On another level, the Commission considers that the enlargement negotiations should be started with all the candidate countries (thus abandoning the 'in' and 'non-in' idea) that satisfy the political Copenhagen criteria and can prove that they are ready to take the necessary measures to satisfy the economic criteria. Negotiations will continue with those countries with which negotiations have been under way since 31 March 1998 (Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus and the Czech Republic) but will commence in 2000 with Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and, if certain conditions are fulfilled, with Romania and Bulgaria (in particular, if the obligation on the Bulgarian authorities to take measures concerning the Kozloduy nuclear plant is honoured and there is confirmation of significant progress in the economic domain). 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 and internal market rules should be reviewed, as well as that of the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 13/11/2002 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : to present the roadmaps to help Bulgaria and Romania on their way to EU membership. CONTENT : as it had proposed on 9 October in its Strategy Paper and as requested by the European Council in Brussels on 24-25 October, the European Commission today presented roadmaps for Bulgaria and Romania to support the efforts of these two candidate countries to achieve their objective of joining the European Union in 2007. The purpose of the roadmaps is to indicate the main steps that they need to take to be ready for membership. They identify in detail the tasks ahead, with a particular emphasis on administrative and judicial capacity necessary to implement the acquis and on economic reform. To support these efforts, the Commission is also proposing a considerable progressive increase in the European Union's financial assistance. The roadmaps will be submitted to the Council of Ministers and to the European Council in Copenhagen on 12-13 December. In the Strategy Paper 'Towards the Enlarged Union', of 9 October 2002, the Commission announced that it would propose, on the basis of the analysis in the 2002 Regular Reports, detailed roadmaps for Bulgaria and Romania before the Copenhagen European Council. In the Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 24-25 October 2002, the Member States agreed with the Commission's evaluation of the progress achieved by Bulgaria and Romania. In the light of the inclusive and irreversible nature of the enlargement process, the Council and the Commission were invited to prepare, in close consultations with Bulgaria and Romania, the necessary decisions at the European Council in Copenhagen concerning detailed roadmaps and increased pre-accession assistance in order to advance the accession process with these countries. The European Council expressed its support for Bulgaria and Romania in their efforts to achieve the objective of membership in 2007. - A useful guide on the way to accession : The roadmaps for Bulgaria and Romania cover the period up to accession. Their purpose is to indicate in detail the main steps that they need to take to be ready for membership. They are based on the commitments made in the negotiations and on what needs to be done to fulfil the criteria for membership. They also follow the of principles that have guided the accession process from the outset, namely equality of treatment, own merits and differentiation, without introducing any new criteria or conditions. The roadmaps put a particular emphasis on administrative and judicial capacity necessary to implement the acquis and on economic reform. Short and medium term issues are identified in the roadmaps and will be further developed next year. The roadmaps will be updated periodically in view of developments in the countries and progress in negotiations. - Financial assistance : The Commission proposes a considerable and progressive increase in financial assistance for Bulgaria and Romania from the date of the first round of accessions. This increase will amount to an additional 20% in 2004, 30% in 2005 and 40% in 2006 compared to the average assistance received by the two countries in the period 2001-2003. Additional assistance will be conditional onmaking progress in line with the roadmaps and on improving significantly capacity to manage and use funds effectively. Bulgaria and Romania have begun to develop capacities to make improved use of existing funds. If preparations are continued and intensified they should be ready to receive and use additional funds effectively from 2004 onwards. - Observer status : Bulgaria and Romania already participate in a number of Community committees and agencies. As regards the situation after the signature of the Accession Treaty, the Commission proposes the same treatment for Bulgaria and Romania as for the other negotiating states. After the signature of the Accession Treaty, Bulgaria and Romania should therefore be given the possibility to further participate, wherever legally possible, as observers in all committees set up by the comitology procedure and all other committees. They should also be able to participate at least as observers in the relevant structures of all Community agencies. The general principles and details of this participation will be defined at a later stage. - Monitoring : Bulgaria and Romania have provisionally closed a considerable number of chapters on the basis of their own indicative date for membership of 1 January 2007. It is particularly important for the candidate countries and the EU to monitor closely the implementation of these commitments. The Europe Agreement structures, which are used to review progress on all priorities and on the Action Plans on administrative and judicial capacity, should be used systematically for this purpose. Peer reviews have proved a useful mechanism in some areas and could be further developed. The Commission will continue to issue Regular Reports, until Bulgaria and Romania have fulfilled the criteria for accession. Future Regular Reports will include an assessment of the implementation of the roadmaps.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mrs Magda AELVOET (Green, B) on Bulgaria'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 European 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 welcomed the efforts made by Bulgaria to meet the Copenhagen criteria. The Commission's November progress report was on the whole positive, such that the implementation of the pre-accession strategy could be considered to have been successful. Parliament therefore considered that in view of its general economic and political progress Bulgaria was capable of membership of the Union. However, in expressing the hope that this country would be able to keep up the momentum of the reform process and increase its capacity to implement and enforce the acquis, Parliament stressed the need to continue reforms helping to improve the conditions of work and life of its population and to bring about a transparent, efficient and independent public administration in order to ensure a democraticsociety. It hoped that the government would quickly implement the administrative reform as soon as the parliament adopted the law. Bulgaria was also called on to complete the media reform, to speed up the privatisation process, structural adjustment and reforms in the agricultural sector. With a view to the equal treatment of the candidate countries, Parliament also called for the removal of the visa requirements for Bulgarian nationals travelling to European Union countries. It also attached particular importance to the energy sector and urged the Sofia government to abide by its commitments for the closure of the Kozoloduy nuclear power plant. Lastly, Parliament stressed the need to strengthen all forms of regional and interregional cooperation to make good the damage suffered as a result of the war in former Yugoslavia but also to make full use of existing instruments such as the European Agreement and the Pre- accession Partnership. The European Conference should be the forum in which the Union and Bulgaria could together discuss common pre-accession problems.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 29/01/1996

Following the application to join the European Union submitted by Bulgaria (14 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 Bulgaria to inform them of this decision.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 08/11/2000 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

The Regular Report for 2000 on Bulgaria follows the same structure as the Commission's 1997 Opinion and of the subsequent regular reports; however, it differs from that used in the previous years on three major points . Firstly, the part of the present report assessing Bulgaria's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of 29 negotiating chapters covering the acquis. Secondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Bulgaria'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 Bulgaria in translating the acquis into its offical language. This report takes into consideration progress since the 1999 Regular Report and looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 1999 regular report have been carried out and it also examines new initiatives. With regard to the relations between the EC and Bulgaria, in July 2000, the Council mandated the Commission to open negotiations with the associated countries with a view to new reciprocal concessions in the field of fish and fisheries products. In the steel sector an anti-dumping complaint against Bulgaria (amongst others), relating to imports of hot-rolled coils, which was lodged in December 1998, the investigation was concluded and a price undertaking reached earlier this year. It should also be noted that in November 1999, agreement was reached on the early closure of Units 1-4 of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant. Under the Understanding signed between the Bulgarian Government and the European Commission, the former committed to the definitive closure of Units 1 and 2 before 2003, and to early closure of units 3 and 4; the precise closure date for the latter two units, which the Commission understands will be 2006 at the latest, will be decided in 2002 in agreement with the Commission. The Commission for its part offered a substantial multi-annual aid package to Bulgaria's energy sector, including grants and a Euratom loan. As far as Community aid is concerned, there are, since January 2000, three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Community to assist the applicant countries of Central Europe in their pre-accession preparations: the Phare programme; ISPA finances large-scale infrastructure projects in the fields of environment and transport; SAPARD supports agricultural and rural development. In the years 2000-2002, the indicative annual financial allocations for Bulgaria are EUR 100 million from Phare, EUR 52 million from SAPARD, and between EUR 83 and 125 million from ISPA. The Report states that Bulgaria has made progress in adopting secondary legislation necessary to implement the Civil Service Law, and also to implement this. The adoption of the Child Protection Act in June 2000, which creates a State Agency for Child Protection, is another positive step forward. However, little has been done to upgrade the judiciary, which remains weak. Also corruption continues to be a very serious problem and a global, transparent anti-corruption strategy with overt backing from government and parliament would be of benefit. Moreover, although Bulgaria has clearly made progresstowards becoming a functioning market economy, it is not yet able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium term. Although Bulgaria has made progress in privatisation, especially regarding banks, and a major reform of health and pension systems has begun, structural reforms still need to be taken further. In addition, measures to address the weaknesses in the implementation and enforcement of the legal and regulatory framework need to be taken to improve the business climate. Since the last Regular Report, Bulgaria has maintained a good pace of alignement of legislation with the acquis but needs to pay more attention to how this will be implemented and enforced. Regarding the internal market, Bulgaria has made further progress in most areas. In particular in the free movement of good, progress has been made in standardisation to introduce the New and Global Approach principles. It has also made good progress in liberalsation of movement of capital with the adopton of laws on foreign exchange and securities. Progress has also been made in the following areas: the legal alignment of industrial property rights, consumer protection, transport, energy, environment, the audio-visual, justice and home affairs. On the other hand, further progress needs to be made in the following areas: data protection, veterinary inspection. In general, the capacity of the Bulgarian administration and judicial systems to ensure application of the acquis is still very limited. Efforts are focused on preparation and adoption of legislation with insufficient attention on how this will be implemented and enforced. Bulgaria has fulfilled partially the large majority of short-term Accession Partnership priorities relating to the acquis. Concerning administrative capacity, Bulgaria has advanced on priorities with the exception of those on building the capacity to assess the financial and institutional impact of new legislation and on strengthening the judiciary, where little progress has been made.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 15/07/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Bulgaria's request for membership (14 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, the situation has been stable since the establishment of the new government (including respect for the rights of minorities); 2) in economic terms, Bulgaria's progress in the creation of a market economy has been limited by the absence of a commitment to market-oriented economic policies. The Commission does not consider that this country will be able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; 3) with regard to the capacity to take on the obligations of membership and despite the progress made towards implementation of the acquis, Bulgaria has neither transposed nor taken on the essential elements of the Community legislation on the single market. It is uncertain whether this country will be in a position to implement the acquis in the medium term. In addition, considerable efforts will be needed in the areas of investment, environment, transport, energy, justice and home affairs and agriculture. More generally, substantial reform will be indispensable if this country is to have the structures (administrative and institutional) to apply and enforce the acquis effectively. In conclusion, the Commission considers that negotiations for accession cannot be opened with Bulgaria until it has made sufficient progress in the economic field and in respect for the legislative acquis. The first objective should therefore be to reinforce the pre-accession strategy.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 17/12/1998

PURPOSE: to present the regular report from the Commission on Bulgaria'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 Bulgaria 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); - Bulgaria'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 Bulgaria'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 Bulgaria's results in economic and political terms as satisfactory : Bulgaria's institutions are stable although it needs to devote continuing attention to the reform of the judiciary and to fighting corruption more effectively. However, from an economic perspective, the report observes that Bulgaria is likely to experience considerable difficulties facing up to competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the medium term. As far as legislative alignment is concerned, the pattern of transposition, as long as it is accompanied by a strengthening of the relevant institutions, should enable Bulgaria to assume its obligations arising from membership. Nevertheless, additional efforts will be necessary in particular in the area of the single market, standards and testing, control on state aids and justiceand home affairs. There also remains the thorny question of the Kozloduy nuclear plant which the Union would like to see dismantled. 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. 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.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(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 Bulgaria 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.

Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 04/10/2000 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted the report drafted by Mr Geoffrey VAN ORDEN (EPP/ED, UK). The Parliament considers that Bulgaria is an important element in regional stability and recognises its efforts to establish itself as a pillar of security and cooperation in south eastern Europe. Furthermore, the Parliament calls upon the Bulgarian authorities to closely involve the Roma communities and local authorities in the design of national integration programmes. It should be noted that Bulgaria has continued to make progress towards establishing a viable social market economy but further steps are needed to put Bulgaria in a strong position to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU while enhancing social and economic cohesion. Although Bulgaria still faces numerous environmental challenges, in particular with regard to air, water and soil pollution, it has recently signed an agreement with the Commission to progressively shut down certain units at the Kozloduy nuclear plant. Finally, Bulgaria should clamp down on corruption, organised crime and discrimination against minorities.