Basic information

1997/2183(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Agenda 2000: the enlargement, EP position on Commission'opinions on applications for accession **Subject** 8.20.02 Enlargement 2004: new Member States	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	SPECIALE Roberto (PSE)	23/06/1997
	DONNER Jörn Johan (PSE)	23/06/1997
	HOFF Magdalene (PSE)	23/06/1997
	WIERSMA Jan Marinus (PSE)	23/06/1997
		23/06/1997
	BARÓN CRESPO Enrique (PSE)	23/06/1997
	BERTENS Jan Willem (ELDR)	23/06/1997
		23/06/1997
	CARNERO GONZÁLEZ Carlos (GUE/NGL)	23/06/1997
	KRISTOFFERSEN Frode (PPE)	23/06/1997
		23/06/1997
	BERNARD-REYMOND Pierre (PPE)	23/06/1997
	OOSTLANDER Arie M. (PPE)	23/06/1997
	VON HABSBURG Otto (PPE)	
	AELVOET Magda G.H. (V)	
	CACCAVALE Ernesto (UPE)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	DES PLACES Edouard C.M. P. (I-EDN)	08/07/1997
BUDG Budgets	CHRISTODOULOU Efthymios (PPE)	27/05/1997

ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	RAPKAY Bernhard (PSE)	14/07/1997
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	VAN VELZEN W.G. (PPE)	27/05/1997
RELA External Economic Relations	MONIZ Fernando (PSE)	26/05/1997
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	THORS Astrid (ELDR)	08/07/1997
REGI Regional Policy	SCHRÖDER Jürgen (PPE)	24/06/1997
TRAN Transport and Tourism	SINDAL Niels (PSE)	23/09/1997
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	EISMA Doeke (ELDR)	19/06/1997
DEVE Development and Cooperation	PAASIO Pertti (PSE)	22/05/1997
LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	BERGER Maria (PSE)	08/07/1997
CONT Budgetary Control	KJER HANSEN Eva (ELDR)	16/06/1997
INST Institutional Affairs	SPAAK Antoinette (ELDR)	01/07/1997
PECH Fisheries	PROVAN James L.C. (PPE)	22/05/1997
FEMM Women's Rights	AHLQVIST Birgitta (PSE)	22/05/1997

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2024	1997-07-22
General Affairs	2057	1997-12-08
General Affairs	2047	1997-11-24
General Affairs	2027	1997-09-15
General Affairs	2041	1997-11-10
General Affairs	2029	1997-10-06
Agriculture and Fisheries	2034	1997-10-20
Agriculture and Fisheries	2045	1997-11-17

	Agriculture and Fisheries	2028	1997-09-22

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2000	
18/07/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/07/1997	Debate in Council		
15/09/1997	Debate in Council		
22/09/1997	Debate in Council		
06/10/1997	Debate in Council		
20/10/1997	Debate in Council		
10/11/1997	Debate in Council		
17/11/1997	Debate in Council		
17/11/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
17/11/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0368/1997	
24/11/1997	Debate in Council		
03/12/1997	Debate in Parliament		
04/12/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/12/1997	Debate in Council		
22/12/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2183(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/4/09162

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0368/1997 OJ C 388 22.12.1997, p. 0002	17/11/1997	
		T4-0597/1997		

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		OJ C 388 22.12.1997, p. 0010-0017	04/12/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)2000	15/07/1997	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1197/1997	29/10/1997	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1199/1997	30/10/1997	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0303/1997 OJ C 064 27.02.1998, p. 0040	19/11/1997	

Agenda 2000: the enlargement, EP position on Commission'opinions on applications for accession

1997/2183(COS) - 29/10/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

Enlargement of the EU, along with reform of the Treaty and monetary union, is one of the three great challenges of the turn of the century. The challenge facing the European Union stems from the fact that the ensuing benefits of enlargement will not come automatically: The problems are also daunting. The Committee welcomes the broad thrust of the Copenhagen criteria, but feels that it is also important to include conformity to the European socio-economic model as a criterion in the assessment. On the basis of the assessments contained in Agenda 2000, the Commission considers that Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia can take part in the first wave of accession negotiations. Another approach is gaining ground in the Council, advocating that negotiations should start at the same time for all applicant countries, in order to avoid a feeling of exclusion and hostility developing among the general public in the countries concerned.The impact of enlargement The new EU financial framework proposed in Agenda 2000 is heavily influenced by the current climate of austerity, and by the reluctance of the Member States to increase Community resources. The Committee believes that the Member States and their citizens will have to be persuaded that the financial effort is worthwhile, and that it is in the common interest. Enlargement will radically alter the EU's institutional organization, decision-making procedures and internal balance. The Committee believes that the problem of the smooth political and institutional operation of the Union should be dealt with long before membership exceeds twenty, and that a new Intergovernmental Conference should be convened. The Committee broadly approves the Commission proposals, but wonders whether it might be better to alter the negotiation strategy with the applicant countries (five or ten countries). It also questions the limit on Community funding which was decided in Edinburgh (1.27% of GDP). It thinks that the structural policies to be carried out, as well as the other EU internal policies, could justify a higher level of funding.

Agenda 2000: the enlargement, EP position on Commission'opinions on applications for accession

1997/2183(COS) - 30/10/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee generally approved the Commission’s proposals while wondering whether it would not be preferable to alter the negotiation strategy with the candidate countries (five or ten countries). It also questioned the ceiling for financing Community actions as fixed in Edinburgh (1.27% of GDP). It considered that the structural policies to be carried out and the other internal policies of the European Union could justify financing exceeding the ceiling adopted by the Commission.

Agenda 2000: the enlargement, EP position on Commission'opinions on applications for accession

1997/2183(COS) - 04/12/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The report by Mr Arie OOSTLANDER (PPE, NL) and Mr Enrique BARON CRESPO (PSE; E) on the communication from the Commission on 'AGENDA 2000', adopted by 373 votes to 28 with 58 abstentions, considers that any country which is situated in Europe and has democratic institutions may legitimately aspire to join the Union. Enlargement, which is a response to the changes that have taken place on the European continent, is a moral, political and economic challenge. MEPs feel that a Union reinforced (rather than weakened) by enlargement is in the interests of both the applicant countries and the current Member States. While emphasizing the need to adopt a strategy which does not exclude any applicant country, Parliament states that membership must be based on full compliance with the acquis communautaire and that transitional measures must be limited to a minimum. Parliament reiterates the accession criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, which stipulate that applicant countries must have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. They must also have a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union. Finally, they must have the ability to take on the obligations of membership (respect for the acquis communautaire) and must adhere to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. 1) Enlargement strategy: The first strategic objective of the European Union must be to enable all the applicant countries to meet the Copenhagen criteria. To achieve this, the first step is to acknowledge their moral right to enter the Union, while implementing a strategy which encourages them to meet those criteria. The preparations for this must involve all the Central and Eastern European countries. Parliament considers that the decision taken by the Commission to preselect the countries that in the medium-term would be able to take on the obligations relating to membership of the European Union is appropriate neither in political nor economic terms. It is convinced that all the applicant countries have the right to participate in the enlargement progress from the start, on the understanding that the duration of negotiations may vary depending on the ability of each country to accept the acquis communautaire. Consequently, the European Union must be open to all European democracies wishing to support its objectives, and Parliament calls on the Council to embark upon the enlargement process with all applicant countries. It believes that all applicant countries which currently meets the Copenhagen criteria have the right to start the reinforced negotiation and accession process at the same time, early in 1998. Parliament shares the Commission's view that intensive negotiations should begin, on an individual basis, with the countries which have made the most progress. It also states that the Union should not determine the date of full membership in advance. At internal level, Parliament considers that the institutional framework which has emerged from the Amsterdam Treaty does not meet the necessary conditions for achieving enlargement without endangering the operation of the Union and the effectiveness of its actions. Consequently, it confirms the view set out in its resolution of 19 November 1997 on the Amsterdam Treaty regarding the institutional reforms which must be achieved before any further enlargement. Parliament regards the European Conference as an essential instrument for political cooperation, though it should not replace bilateral negotiations on accession. Instead, it must be designed as a specific instrument of pan-European cooperation. 2) Impact on EU policy: regarding financial aspects, Parliament notes the Commission's view that 1.27% of GDP is enough to meet the challenges facing the EU over the period 2000-2006. However, this estimate is based on its assumptions about GDP growth, reform of Community policies, and the outcome of the enlargement process. Parliament reaffirms its view that the current system of own resources is unlikely to be sufficient to fund a successful enlargement and that, in view of the need to take account of as-yet unknown factors, a review clause on expenditure and resources must be included in the new financial framework. Bearing in mind the positive overall outcome of previous enlargements, and considering that enlargement will strengthen the weight and influence of the European Union in the international economic system, Parliament calls on the Union and applicant countries to define forthwith a coordinated strategy for the commitments to be made within the WTO. Parliament considers it essential for the phased integration of the applicant countries to go hand-in-hand with a more determined policy of harmonizing the external aspects of the internal market (coordination of trade policies). It believes, given the strength of the applicant countries, that enlargement will increase economic growth in the Member States. In any event, it stresses that the budgetary costs of enlargement are but a fraction of the peace dividend gained after the Cold War and that investing in enlargement is a way of sustaining this dividend. In terms of regional policy and economic and social cohesion, Parliament stresses the importance of ensuring that the financial repercussions of enlargement do not undermine the principles of solidarity and cohesion within the Community. The lack of adequate financial resources may result in a cut in the funding currently earmarked for the Union's regions benefiting under cohesion policy. Consequently, and irrespective of the enlargement process, Parliament believes that regional policy reform is essential. Regarding social issues, it notes the absolutely essential need for applicant countries to adjust to the European social model, and it would also welcome a white paper on the social situation and social policy in applicant countries. Parliament calls for appropriate flexibility as regards transition periods, in order to ensure integration in a manner which is acceptable in social terms. It also advocates the ongoing pursuit of economic, social and regional development in the applicant countries. Adaptation of the common agricultural policy is rendered even more necessary by the prospect of enlargement. Parliament believes that, given the considerable differences in prices and the need to encourage a rural development policy, the common agricultural policy in its current form should not be extended to the new members. Thought should be given to the possibility of setting longer transitional periods for the application of this policy in the new Member States. Finally, it notes with great concern the Commission's findings regarding the applicant countries' administrative and judicial capacity to apply Community law. Similarly, it emphasizes the importance of environmental and public health problems in the applicant countries and recommends that measures be adopted in these fields.

Agenda 2000: the enlargement, EP position on Commission'opinions on applications for accession

1997/2183(COS) - 15/07/1997

AGENDA 2000 - FOR A STRONGER AND WIDER UNION: presentation of the European Commission's general document on enlargement of the Union and the political, technical, institutional and financial impact of accessions. SUBSTANCE: in a first overall document, the Commission explains how it examined the various accession applications and the main challenges facing the enlarged Union. The document also puts forward a first indicative timetable for the opening of negotiations and presents the strategy to be adopted. 1) ACCESSION APPLICATIONS: evaluation of accession applications based on criteria laid down by the Copenhagen European Council (June 1993). Applicant countries must have: - stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities, - a viable market economy and the ability to withstand the pressure of competition within the internal market, - the ability to comply with the obligations of the Union, especially regarding EMU. The Commission has drawn up an opinion on each accession application, basing its analysis on these three basic criteria. Between 1994 and 1996 ten countries submitted their applications: Bulgaria COS/1997/21792, Estonia COS/1997/2177, Latvia COS/1997/2176, Lithuania COS/1997/2178, Poland COS/1997/2174, Hungary COS/1997/2175, Czech Republic COS/1997/2180, Slovakia COS/1997/2173, Slovenia COS/1997/2181 and Romania COS/1997/2172 (see these references). According to the Commission's analysis, although several countries still have to make progress with regard to democracy and

human rights, only one country, Slovakia, does not fulfil the political conditions. Hungary and Poland have viable market economies, as do the Czech Republic and Slovenia (though their economic performance is slightly inferior). Estonia must make an effort to comply with the economic criterion, although its economy on the whole can be regarded as viable. Regarding the third criterion (adoption of the acquis), the main trends observed in the applicant countries show that Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic should, in the medium-term, be able to adopt the essential part of the acquis and establish the administrative structures needed to apply it. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia are therefore at the head of the queue for possible accession. An evaluation report will be prepared in 1998 in order to analyse the progress made by these countries and the efforts still to be made with a view to their adaptation to the large market. 2) CHALLENGES OF ENLARGEMENT: the results of the Commission's impact study show that an enlarged Union of 25 members (and 475 million people) will offer considerable political and economic advantages. However, for enlargement to be successful, it is crucial to take full advantage of the pre-accession period, which means that the applicant countries must make substantial investments in fields such as the environment, transport, energy (especially in respect of nuclear safety), industrial restructuring, agricultural infrastructure and rural society. Considerable efforts are also needed to bring social and public health standards into line. In the Commission's view, the success of the entire process depends on the applicant countries' ability to 'absorb' the acquis during the pre-accession phase. If adaptation is too slow, it could compromise the unitary nature of the acquis and distort the functioning of the single market. In parallel, so that the Union can function efficiently with 20 or 25 Member States, it will be essential to reinforce the institutions and their operation. For this reason the Commission is already suggesting that a further IGC be convened as soon as possible after the year 2000 in order to undertake a far-reaching reform of the institutions and introduce qualified majority voting as the general rule. 3) ENLARGEMENT STRATEGY: the success of enlargement depends on a dual principle: - full application of the acquis communautaire from the date of accession, subject to fixed and reasonable transition periods; the Union must exclude any possibility of accession as a second-rank Member State or with exemption clauses or derogations; - application of a reinforced pre-accession strategy pursuing two main objectives: a) amalgamation of the various forms of EU aid into a single framework of 'accession partnerships' based on precise commitments on the part of the applicant countries in certain priority sectors (democracy, macroeconomic stabilization, nuclear safety, national programme for adoption of the acquis); partnerships would also draw upon all the Community financial resources available for the preparation of accessions; b) familiarization of applicant countries with Union policies and procedures by allowing them to participate in Community programmes. As regards pre-accession aid, apart from the PHARE programme (ECU 1.5 billion per year), the applicant countries will, from 2000, be able to count on aid of ECU 500 million per year for agricultural development and structural assistance of ECU 1 billion for the development of transport and environmental infrastructure. 4) CYPRUS AND Turkey: in July 1993 the Commission expressed a favourable opinion on the accession of Cyprus to the Community COS/1997/2171. Although there are few economic obstacles to Cyprus's accession, the Commission still regrets the continuing problem of the island's division. The efforts deployed to resolve the Cyprus question have not yet borne fruit, although the prospect of presidential elections in 1998 might possibly unblock the situation. In any event, accession negotiations will start as planned, six months after the end of the IGC, with or without the representatives of Cyprus's Turkish community. The adoption of a political agreement would be the best way to conclude negotiations quickly. If there is no progress in this direction, negotiations would be held with the Cypriot Government, the only authority recognized by international law. On the question of Turkey's accession, the customs union created in 1995 has reinforced the country's relations with the EU (AVC/1995/0813). However, the deterioration of the political situation has, to date, prevented effective financial cooperation and political dialogue. Consequently, the Commission feels that EU-Turkey relations must be bolstered by a whole series of measures (especially under the responsibility of MEDA and financial cooperation), but does not see any possibility of accession in the short term. 6) FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL: in the light of the various analyses, the Commission has submitted the following recommendations to the Council: - opening of negotiations with the following Central and Eastern European countries: Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic and Slovenia, though emphasizing that the decision to start negotiations with these countries at the same time does not mean that the negotiations will be concluded at the same time; - reinforcement of the pre-accession strategy; - creation of a multilateral cooperation forum in the form of a European Conference; - opening of negotiations with Cyprus six months after the end of the Intergovernmental Conference (during 1998). AGENDA 2000: THE CHALLENGE OF ENLARGEMENT: In volume 2 of COM(97)2000 the Commission analyses in depth the challenge facing the Union in enlarging from 15 to 21 and then 26 members. The first basic conclusion of this document is that the impact of enlargement on the Union and its policies and especially the scale of possible problems will depend to a very large extent on the preparation of candidate countries during the pre-accession period. The Commission considers that the only realistic path is a gradual process of adaptation. A general strategy has therefore been defined to assist these countries to prepare for accession. This pre-accession strategy is based on three fundamental aspects applicable to all applicant countries: the Europe Agreements, structured dialogue and the PHARE programme. This strategy would be reinforced, whatever the specific situation of the applicant countries and would involve: - bringing together within a single framework, which nevertheless takes account of each applicant country, all the resources and forms of assistance available for facilitating the adoption of the Community acquis, - extending the participation of applicant countries to Community programmes and mechanisms to apply the acquis. At the same time the Commission attempts to assess the effects of enlargement in terms of economic and political advantages for Union policies. This analysis demonstrates that there are many advantages for the Union: - in economic terms, any progress towards integration will strengthen confidence in the internal market and thus directly benefit economic operators and citizens; - in political terms, enlargement represents an investment in the peace, stability and prosperity of the peoples of Europe. At the other extreme, the Commission puts its finger on the regional and sectoral tensions generated by enlargement: both for the new members and the existing Member States, tensions relating to adjustment will affect Community policies and will have a budgetary impact. Community funding will be needed to alleviate social problems and regional imbalances, to modernise basic infrastructures and to implement rural and industrial restructuring both in the Member States and in the new countries. The first stage will be to apply the appropriate Treaty rules, in particular with regard to free movement of capital and competition so as to reduce the tensions facing the new Member States. There are major consequences arising from the direct budgetary and financial implications. However, under certain conditions the financing of enlargement can be achieved without changing the own resources ceiling expressed as a percentage of the Union's GDP. If an unchanged ceiling is maintained (and taking into account the limited capacity of the new members to contribute) the financial resources available for the current Member States after enlargement can only develop at a lower rate than that of Union GDP. In sectoral terms the consequences can be summarised as follows: - agriculture: extension to the new countries of the CAP in its current form would involve significant additional costs annually. However, assuming that these countries would not benefit from compensatory aid during a period following accession, the agricultural guidelines should be sufficient to finance the additional expenditure caused by enlargement (in particular intervention measures on the markets and accompanying measures); structural measures: there would have to be a gradual redeployment of budgetary resources to the new Member States where prosperity was well below the current Community average. The criteria used for the allocation of aid should be totally reassessed. Furthermore, the integration of new Member States should be undertaken gradually (with their ability to absorb aid also being taken into account). Lastly, the amount of aid should be smaller if accession of all applicant countries does not take place simultaneously. Taking into account these various hypotheses, the payments could be made within the constraints of an overall cohesion measure which is relatively speaking unchanged; - internal policies (R & D, education and training, trans-European networks, social actions, environment, etc.): enlargement should concentrate efforts on a limited number of measures so as to increase their impact.

Even using this hypothesis, expenditure would have to increase markedly (more than proportionally to the relative weighting of the states concerned). Enlargement would also involve additional administrative expenditure for the institutions (additional languages, extension and diversification of tasks, integration of new nationals). However, enlargement should not imply an overall increase in expenditure on the external actions of the Union. The new Member States could request loans from the EIB, Euratom and the European Investment Fund under the same conditions as the current Member States. In terms of the states' adjustment to the acquis communautaire, the Commission considers that this will be a long and costly process. Major investments would be needed, mainly in the environmental sector, health and safety at work, nuclear safety, energy security stocks and public health. In certain sectors modernisation will be extremely important (polluting industries, nuclear power stations, transport and fishing fleets, energy). Provision should also be made for considerable efforts in relation to the administrative structures to be put in place to apply Community legislation on consumer protection, phytosanitary and veterinary care, surveillance of external frontiers and indirect taxation. In other words, the Commission considers that accession of the new Member States is subject to adoption of the whole acquis communautaire. All the policies will apply to the enlarged Union, subject to adjustments and transitional provisions. Inadequate adoption or too slow a pace could cause serious difficulties after accession. The Union would have to tolerate, inter alia, a permanent distinction between the new and old Member States and their citizens, distortions of competition to the detriment of economic operators in countries which conformed to the Community legislation in force, reduced levels of protection for consumers or for the safety of citizens or even a protectionist response from certain Member States which would look askance at the distortions of competition produced by the arrival of the 'weakest' countries. All these effects could affect the legitimacy of the Union as a whole. To avoid these risks the Commission considers that adjustments and some refocusing of Community policies will be necessary. Among other things, everything possible should be done to ensure that some policies are not neglected as a result of enlargement (development, aid to NICs and the Mediterranean, etc.). In terms of decision-making, the unanimity rule must be reconsidered so that the operation and subsequent development of the Union's policies is not affected (consumer protection, CFSP, justice and home affairs, environment, social policy, liberalisation of energy). Lastly, one of the fundamental questions concerns the future of the Union's institutions after enlargement, in particular the effect of twice the number of official languages. The budgetary consequences here are far from negligible and attention must be paid to the question if energies are not to be wasted. In conclusion: the main challenge facing the Union in the near future will be the preparation of future member states for accession. The gradual adjustment of these countries is essential if the political and financial costs of enlargement are to be limited. The necessary efforts in the pre- accession period will basically be made by the applicant countries, through the technical assistance of the Union as part of its pre-accession strategy. Two other aspects are crucial in order to overcome the problems of enlargement: - reform of the Community institutions, - consent and support of European public opinion.