

Institut für Europäische Politik



In Co-operation with the Trans European Policy Studies Association

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## ON THE PROJECT

The future development of the European Union will be determined by two processes: the accession of thirteen or even more countries, and the ongoing process of internal reform and deepening of European integration, known as Agenda 2000. Both processes are closely linked and will change the face of the Union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

T.E.P.S.A. – Institutes in the 15 EU-countries and the four associated partner institutes from Central and Eastern Europe initiated this semi-annual stock-taking in order to monitor the main features and problems of the accession and negotiation process as well as positions and bargaining strategies of the actors involved. A standardised questionnaire was used by all institutes. Due to the specific position of the applicant countries, country reports from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia are presented in a separate section of this survey.

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This survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire, sent out in September 1999. Most institutes replied between December 1999 and February 2000. Issues of Enlargement - Watch are available on the *World-Wide-Web* (<http://www.tepsa.be>) and on the homepages of the T.E.P.S.A.-Institutes. The current issue covers the second half of the year 1999.

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# INTRODUCTION

From Cologne to Helsinki the enlargement process reached a new stage. The decision of the Helsinki European Council to enlarge the group of countries which negotiate membership to all applicants - with the exception of Turkey - was remarkably uncontroversial. Some, like the Scandinavians but also Italy, Portugal and Spain, had preferred the regatta-model for the negotiations already two years ago. However, the experience of the Kosovo conflict had a decisive impact on the Helsinki decisions. Eventually, enlargement was seen as the most effective instrument to stabilise the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and also Turkey and to make them safe for democracy and market economy.

In its composite paper on the progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries from 13 October 1999, the Commission paved the way for revising the original Luxembourg approach and re-value enlargement as a foreign policy and security tool:

“The idea of EU enlargement has acquired new impetus over the past year. One of the key lessons of the Kosovo crisis is the need to achieve peace and security, democracy and the rule of law, growth and the foundations of prosperity throughout Europe. Enlargement is the best way to do this. There is now a greater awareness of the strategic dimension to enlargement. The Commission wishes to use this new awareness to drive the enlargement process forward and is calling for resolute and courageous action.”

(Composite Paper, 13 October 1999, available at:  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report\\_10\\_99/composite/10.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_10_99/composite/10.htm))

## The Decisions taken at Helsinki

The European Council, meeting on 10 and 11 December 1999 in Helsinki, decided in particular to:

- launch official negotiations in February 2000 with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia;
- consider each applicant on its own merits during the negotiations. This principle will apply both to the opening and the conduct of negotiations;
- allow applicant countries that have just started the negotiating process to join the countries already in negotiations within a reasonable time, provided they have made sufficient progress with their preparations;
- ensure that progress in negotiations goes hand in hand with progress in incorporating the *acquis* into legislation and implementing it into practice;
- avoid cumbersome procedures in order to maintain momentum in the negotiations.

(The enlargement negotiations after Helsinki, MEMO/00/6, 8 February 2000, available at:  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettx.../6|0|RAPID&lg=E](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettx.../6|0|RAPID&lg=E))

If one imagines the advent of a European Union of 20 or 28 members over the next decades, the current debate inside the EU is comparatively sanguine and unexcited. According to the country reports presented in this issue, the aspired "reunification of Europe" or the "completion

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of European integration" do not seem to inspire a profound or passionate discourse on the future of the Union or the continent. Most proposals on how to make enlargement operational and maintain or even improve the functioning of the EU are pretty conservative and lukewarm. However, the "business as usual"-approach seems to facilitate consensus-building among the 15.

Notwithstanding this calmness, a sense of uncertainty and uneasiness creeps into the ongoing Intergovernmental Conference, which shall finally make the EU fit for a first round of enlargement. Still, a restrained public opinion does not take a special interest in the enlargement process but is sensitive on issues like labour market competition, migration, spread of organised crime, social and ecological dumping etc. The need for a prudent communication strategy and extraordinary efforts to explain the benefits and costs of enlargement/accession to the citizens of the Union and the candidate countries is evident.

From the country reports gathered in this issue, a series of questions ensues:

- What is the calendar for accession as far as the timing of entry and sequencing of candidates is concerned?
- How to reduce the politicisation of decisions on membership at the expense of quality?
- What are the concrete terms of accession with regard to the scope and substance of derogations?
- Do we need a revised or updated analysis of the impact of enlargement, i.e. an Agenda 2000 No. II?
- How to cope with multiplied diversity and differently applied EC-policies in the enlarged EU?
- How to win the lasting support of public opinion in the old and new member countries for enlargement?
- How does enlargement affect the international role of the EU and its perception?
- How to cope with new peripheries which are – as in the case of Russia – vital for security in Europe?

Today, the EU is under heavy pressure to complete the IGC 2000 with a convincing package of institutional reforms and must probably continue with a broader agenda for reforms to make enlargement a success for Europe.

Bonn, February 2000

Barbara Lippert  
Institut für Europäische Politik

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## MAIN EVENTS SECOND HALF OF 1999

1 July 1999	Beginning of the Finnish EU-Presidency.
1 July 1999	The EU's Partnership and Co-operation Agreements with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan enter into force.
20 July 1999	Nicole Fontaine, candidate for the European People's Party is elected President of the new European Parliament.
23 July 1999	The European Commission decides on indicative breakdown of structural aid for agriculture and rural development between accession candidates.
29-30 July 1999	The first Stability Pact Summit takes place in Sarajevo.
3 August 1999	The NATO Council approves the British Defence Minister George Robertson as successor to Javier Solana to the post of NATO Secretary General.
17 August 1999	Devastating earthquake in the Marmara region in Turkey.
24 August 1999	The "Trumpf/Piris" report on "Operation of the Council with an Enlarged Union in Prospect" calls for a strengthening of the General Affairs Council and the Presidency with regard to enlargement.
4-5 September 1999	Informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers in Saariselka, Finland. No agreement on the setting of deadlines for EU-membership negotiations is found.
15 September 1999	The European Parliament approves the appointment of the new European Commission for a complete five-year mandate with 404 votes in favour, 153 votes against and 37 abstentions.
30 September 1999	EU-accession negotiations with the six "first-wave" countries continue with four new chapters being opened: Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), Free movement of Capital, Social and Employment policies and Energy Policy.
13 October 1999	The European Commission adopts its regular progress reports on the 13 applicant countries and recommends to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia and Malta.
15-16 October 1999	Special Meeting of the European Council in Tampere, Finland. The Heads of State and Government reach a general agreement to start negotiations on membership with Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia and Malta at the beginning of 2000. Concerning Turkey, they strive for an official candidate status at the Helsinki Summit.
18 October 1999	Jean-Luc Dehaene, Richard von Weizsäcker and Lord David Simon

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present their report “The institutional implications of Enlargement” (the “Dehaene Report”). They recommend a comprehensive reform of the Unions’ institutions in order to remain operational while integrating new members.

- 18 October 1999 Former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana takes up his duties as Secretary General of the Council and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).
- 12 November 1999 Three new chapters are introduced in the course of the EU-accession negotiations with the six “first-wave” applicants: Free movement of Services, Transport and Taxation Policy (except for Poland).
- 18-19 November 1999 OSCE Summit in Istanbul, Turkey.
- 7 December 1999 The EU opens negotiations on the Environment chapter with the six “first wave” countries. The chapter on the EMU is “provisionally closed” with all.
- 10-11 December 1999 European Council in Helsinki, Finland. The Heads of State and Government agree on the opening of accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia and Malta. Turkey is granted “official candidate status” but has to resolve certain issues (e.g. the dispute over the Aegean islands and Cyprus) before accession negotiations can start. The Council does not set a target date for the conclusion of the first accession negotiations, but declares that the EU shall be ready for enlargement by the end of 2002. The Council also decides on a Common Strategy of the European Union on Ukraine.

State of the EU-accession negotiations with the “first wave” countries (01.01.2000):

**Provisionally closed chapters (out of 31)**

Telecom and Information Technologies  
Education and Training  
Industrial Policy  
Small and medium-sized undertakings  
Statistics  
Consumers and health protection  
Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)  
Science and Research

**Open chapters**

External relations (closed with Cyprus)  
Customs Union (closed with Cyprus)  
Culture and audio-visual policy (closed with Cyprus)  
Free movement of capital  
Social and Employment policies  
Energy policy  
Competition policy  
Common foreign and security policy  
Company law  
Free movement of goods  
Free movement of services  
Transport  
Taxation Policy (not opened with Poland)  
Environment  
Fisheries (closed with Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia)



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## List of abbreviations

<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CEEC</b>	Central and Eastern European Countries
<b>CFSP</b>	Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>CIS</b>	Community of Independent States
<b>ECOFIN</b>	Economic and Finance Council (of ministers)
<b>ECJ</b>	European Court of Justice
<b>EMU</b>	European Monetary Union
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>ESDP</b>	European Security and Defence Policy
<b>FRY</b>	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
<b>GD</b>	General Directorate
<b>IGC</b>	Intergovernmental Conference
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PCA</b>	Partnership and Co-operation Agreement
<b>PHARE</b>	Poland and Hungary: Action for the Restructuring of the Economy
<b>QMV</b>	Qualified Majority Voting
<b>SAA</b>	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
<b>TAIEX</b>	Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation



## **ANALYTICAL SURVEY BY EU-COUNTRY**



**1. How did your government assess the work of the German EU-Presidency in the accession negotiations?**

**Austria**

As a principle, the Austrian government does not comment on other countries' Presidencies. In the field of enlargement the German Presidency acted professionally and effectively, undertaking the necessary steps and achieved its targets.<sup>1</sup>

**Belgium**

As indicated in the previous issue of this survey<sup>2</sup>, the Belgian government considers the outcome of the Berlin summit regarding the Agenda 2000 package as relatively satisfactory, since it lays a sufficient foundation for offering EU-membership to some of the front runner applicants in due time. Similarly, in the Belgian view also the German Presidency's work as to managing the largely technical process of accession negotiations should, on the whole, be positively assessed.

Nonetheless, some aspects of the *acquis communautaire* so far appear to have been insufficiently explored. Thus, for instance, as far as Poland is concerned, the decision to (provisionally) close negotiations on the industrial policy chapter may have been

somewhat premature in view of the challenges still facing the country's coal and steel sectors. Equally, the significant amount of non-performing loans characterising the Czech Republic's banking sector is entitled to a more thorough consideration.

**Denmark<sup>3</sup>**

The Danish government has been very satisfied with the work of the German EU-Presidency. Of crucial importance was here the ability to obtain a compromise on Agenda 2000, which clears the road for enlargement.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the Presidency also managed to maintain the momentum in the accession process by opening as many negotiation chapters as the Danish government expected.

**Finland<sup>5</sup>**

The German Presidency was seen to take forward the accession negotiations in an efficient way.

**France**

It should first be noted that, for the French, the work of the German EU-Presidency in the accession negotiations was not the most striking feature of the German Presidency. Its role in the negotiations on Agenda 2000 or during the Kosovo crisis, for instance, was much more extensively commented on<sup>6</sup>. To get

<sup>1</sup> Interview in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. A total of four interviews (three of them by telephone) has been conducted in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for this report. The report was finished before the formation of the new Austrian government under Chancellor Schüssel.

<sup>2</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1, June 1999 (henceforth referred to as E/A-W 1/1999), p. 50. Given the limited number of available documents on the issues covered, much of the information included in this survey was - unless indicated otherwise - obtained through informal contacts with officials dealing with enlargement issues within the Belgian Foreign Affairs Services.

<sup>3</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

<sup>4</sup> As pointed out in the previous *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, Denmark was however of the opinion that the CAP-reform did not go far enough.

<sup>5</sup> If not otherwise indicated, the information is based on personal communications with officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The speeches quoted are for the most part available at the Finnish Presidency Website: <http://www.Presidency.finland.fi>.

<sup>6</sup> "Bilan mitigé pour la présidence allemande", *Le Figaro*, 30 July 1999; "Les

back to the accession negotiations, the French officials we interviewed, in particular from the French Foreign Affairs Ministry, would seem to consider that the German Presidency term has had no specific impact in this respect. The number of the negotiating chapters opened under that Presidency was in fact similar to what it had been under the previous Presidency, as well as under the subsequent one.<sup>7</sup>

### *Germany*

The Foreign Ministry declares that the German Presidency in the EU was extremely successful.<sup>8</sup> Under difficult circumstances - resignation of Commission Santer, Kosovo conflict and elections to the European Parliament - the EU showed decisiveness and a capacity to act collectively. The German Presidency had made it clear from the start, that its main contribution to enlargement would be the settlement of the Agenda 2000 issues and a “road-map” for institutional reforms as outlined at the summit in Cologne.<sup>9</sup> The Berlin agreement on the reform package is viewed as the masterpiece of the red-green government, although criticised by the opposition parties as going not far enough. Also due to the Agenda 2000 agreement the Foreign Minister Fischer concluded:

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couacs européens de Schröder”, *Libération*, 1 July 1999.

<sup>7</sup> 7 chapters were opened under the Austrian Presidency, 8 under the German Presidency and 8 again under the Finnish Presidency. So at the end of the Finnish Presidency, out of a total of 31 negotiating chapters, 23 of them had been opened.

Cf. *Bilanz der deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft*, on the Homepage of the Foreign Ministry, available at [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/4\\_europa/2/4-2-1e.htm](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/4_europa/2/4-2-1e.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Cf. programme speech by Joschka Fischer, 12 January 1999, Presse- und Informationssamt der Bundesregierung (Ed.): *Bulletin*, No. 2, Bonn, 14 January 1999, pp. 9-12 (p. 10), and his speech on the conclusion of the German Presidency to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 21 July 1999 at: <http://www.germanembassyottawa.org/news/whatsnew/bulletins/1999-07-26.0002.html>

“The historic enlargement project has, on the whole, gained considerably in pace and quality”<sup>10</sup>.

The government conceded, however, that under the German Presidency there was no breakthrough as far as the inclusion of Turkey into the accession process through the granting of the so-called candidate status was concerned.<sup>11</sup>

As regards the accession negotiations the record of the German Presidency was non-spectacular. It continued the rhythm of the Austrian Presidency and opened eight new chapters, and closed a number of 5-6 chapters provisionally. Three meetings, two at deputy and one at ministerial level took place. The German Presidency had announced this business-like approach already before the EP and down-played higher expectations from the beginning.<sup>12</sup>

### *Greece*

There is a positive, albeit not-so-focused, assessment of the German Presidency work as regards enlargement. The “re-gatta” approach that grew under the German Presidency is viewed with some suspicion, since it may lead to impediments to the accession negotiations with Cyprus: but the main Greek resentment is due to the fact that positions unilaterally taken by countries such as France, Italy or the Netherlands which make the resolution of the “Cyprus issue” a condition precedent for Cyprus accession to become effective (or for accession negotiations to be concluded), were not vigorously rebutted by the Presidency.

In terms of the first semester of 1999, the Greek position concerning the closer EU-relations with Turkey and granting to Ankara “accession candidate status” was openly negative; the efforts of the German Presidency towards this goal elicited a

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<sup>10</sup> Joschka Fischer, speech on conclusion, 21 July op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Fischer, programme speech, 12 January 1999, op. cit.

clearly negative reflex. But the about-turn in the run up to Helsinki and the final Greek assent to Turkey being granted candidate status has overturned earlier positions.

### *Ireland*

The Irish government's assessment of the work of the German EU-Presidency in the accession negotiations has been very favourable. The perception is that the German Presidency fulfilled the promise of the negotiations and reached its objectives.

### *Italy*

The overall assessment of the work of the German Presidency was quite positive. In particular, the Italian government appreciated the special regard which the German Presidency gave to Turkey to remedy the negative singling out of Turkey at the Luxembourg summit in 1997.<sup>13</sup>

### *Netherlands*

In the 1990s, Germany has been perceived in The Netherlands as less restrictive in the defence of national interests in Europe. Especially after the start of the Schröder government, the Dutch government has openly approved a more active German role in Europe. The Dutch State Secretary of foreign affairs Benschop noticed on a conference in January 1999 that the new Berlin Republic has completed the process of political emancipation and that "a stronger and more active Germany on the European and international stage will be able to bring about an impulse for strengthening the EU".<sup>14</sup> The German presidency in general was positively

evaluated by the Dutch government and in the Dutch media. Attention was however mainly focused on the successful diplomatic role of the German government in the Kosovo war and on the results of the Berlin summit, rather than on the accession negotiations of the candidate members.

### *Portugal*

According to the Portuguese government, the German EU-Presidency worked in a very efficient way towards the accession negotiations. Due to the German Presidency a new dynamic has taken place in the process, especially concerning the analysis of the *acquis* with Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Malta.

### *Spain*

The Spanish government believes that the German EU-Presidency has made an important service in the cause of enlargement by helping to reach an agreement about the financial perspectives of the EU during the Berlin European Council, opening in this way the road for enlargement. Regarding the accession negotiations, the German Presidency was able to follow on with the agreed timetable and open new chapters for negotiation.

### *Sweden*

The Swedish government did not make any official statement concerning the German Presidency, but, according to sources in the Foreign Ministry, the attitude was very positive to the fact that the Presidency, in spite of the Kosovo conflict, managed to make progress with several issues. In the area of enlargement there seemed to be one conflicting view between Germany and the Swedish government concerning Turkey (see separate question about Turkey). However, in an argument with the government, a leading member of the largest opposition party, the liberal-conservative Moderaterna,

<sup>13</sup> Interviews with Italian officials, January 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Benschop, Dick, Deutschland in Europa – Jenseits des Mißtrauens, in: S. Raven (ed.), Die EU-Präsidentschaft Deutschlands – Ein Bericht zur Konferenz am 14. Januar 1999, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Affairs Clingendael, 1999.

gave his support to the proposal by Chancellor Schröder at the Cologne summit to give Turkey the position as a candidate country. In praising this initiative by Mr Schröder, he said that a pragmatic approach vis-à-vis Turkey's candidacy is necessary to make it possible to carry out the EU enlargement.<sup>15</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

The British government assessed the performance of the German Presidency of the EU by its work at the Berlin Agenda 2000 summit (March) and the Cologne Council meeting (June), in the attempt to reform the financial and political organisation of the European Union (EU) in preparation for the accession of potentially twelve new members. The British government also recognised the unique difficulties encountered by Germany during this period due to the resignation of the Commission.

Joyce Quin, (then) Minister for Europe was questioned by the House of Commons' Select Committee on Foreign Affairs (SCFA) on 3 March 1999 over the government's preparations for the Berlin summit and its expectations. She said: '*Certainly the German Presidency is much better informed about the strength of Member States' views on the main Agenda 2000 issues. [...] I believe the German Presidency [is] making good progress and seeking to maintain momentum on these negotiations. Therefore we still hope and believe that an agreement which prepares the EU for enlargement will be achievable.*' (§1)

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary praised the German Presidency as follows: '*...this has been a very active German Presidency and we already have had two summits looking at the Agenda 2000 issue. The major strategic legacy of the German Presidency will have been what it achieved in Berlin in concluding the*

*Agenda 2000 dossier on reform of the structural funds, reform of agriculture and budget discipline. Those are major achievements and of course have taken up much of the activity of the Presidency.*' (SCFA Evidence 19 May 1999 §2)

*'...it is quite a tribute to the strength of the European Union that at the Berlin Council we carried through successfully final decisions on Agenda 2000 even although the European Commission had only very recently resigned and had been temporarily re-appointed and at that point we had no designated new President of the Commission. That was quite an impressive achievement and one in which the German Presidency is entirely right to claim credit for and deserves credit for.'* (op. cit. §12)

Britain's objectives prior to the summit had been the retention of its abatement, a reform of the CAP and the extension of Objective 1 status to Cornwall, West Wales and areas in Northern England. The German Presidency successfully arranged a deal to allow Britain to retain its abatement (but applied only to EU15 spending budgets) while negotiating a freezing of the CAP budget in real terms over the 2000-2006 period. Less satisfactory in the eyes of the British government were the reforms of the CAP agreed in Berlin. The House of Lords' Select Committee on European Communities also noted in their Eighth Report (18 May 1999) that: '*The Berlin European Council agreement is substantially worse than the Commission's proposals, and is a bad outcome for the Community: its agricultural industry, its taxpayers and its consumers. Lord Donoughue (Agriculture Minister) and others such as the German Deputy Foreign Minister have said that the deal will not be able to withstand the pressures acting against it and will have to be reformed before 2006. We hope that they will be proved right.*' (§23)

However, it should be noted that the tone of the passage suggests that the authors' sympathies lie with the German Deputy

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<sup>15</sup> Lars Tobisson, member of the parliamentary EU committee, in: *Svenska Dagbladet*, 12 October 1999.



Foreign Minister. Therefore despite dissatisfaction with the outcome, the German Presidency is regarded to have done its best.

Overall, the Prime Minister Tony Blair was keen to work constructively with Germany during its time as EU-President in order to demonstrate his dedication to working constructively within the EU, in contrast to the previous government's - and current opposition party's - desire to disengage from Europe. During the six month Presidency Chancellor Schröder and Prime Minister Blair launched their *Third Way* manifesto as a joint project, Blair having identified Schröder as someone who shared his own reformist outlook. Within Britain, presenting a positive image of the EU in the face of mounting public scepticism meant working closely with Germany, traditionally portrayed as the dominant power in the EU.

**2. How does your government assess the incoming Commission, the new Commissioner for enlargement G. Verheugen, and the new administrative arrangements inside the Commission in the light of the enlargement and the negotiation process?**

**Austria**

There is no such thing as a government position on individual Commissioners. In all probability, different members of the government will hold quite different personal views on certain members of the Commission.<sup>16</sup>

**Belgium**

Belgian diplomatic circles welcome both the composition and the programme of the incoming Commission headed by Romano Prodi, and are confident that the institution as a whole, and Commissioner Verheugen in particular, has the ability to successfully follow through the enlargement operation. A concrete element entertaining this expectation consists in the administrative reorganisation of the Commission's services through which, as far as enlargement is concerned, both the screening and negotiating teams are brought together within a single Directorate-General.

**Denmark<sup>17</sup>**

The Danish first-hand impression of the new Commission and the Commissioner for enlargement has been positive. The new Commission's composite paper from October 1999 was looked upon as a good starting point for the negotiations in the run up to Helsinki. Not surprisingly, the Danish support was largely due to the

Commission's relaunch of the "regatta" model - a model, which Denmark (and Sweden) had pushed very hard for in the run up to the Luxembourg European Council. As pointed out in the last Enlargement/Agenda 2000 Watch the potential relaunch (at this stage in the enlargement process) had however caused some concern in Denmark.<sup>18</sup> Would the relaunch, where applicants were allowed into the accession negotiation room without fulfilling all criteria, imply that the entire enlargement process was now becoming more politicised? These worries were removed by the Commission's continuation of the basic principles of the Copenhagen and Luxembourg conclusions and the following policy: The EU should allow for greater flexibility with regard to the *opening* of negotiations, but not with regard to the *finalisation* of negotiations talks. Here, countries should still fulfil the Copenhagen criteria.

The Danish government has looked favourably at the administrative changes inside the Commission on enlargement. Although it remains to be seen how the changes will work out in practice, the decision to put all enlargement issues under one institutional hat should reduce the risk of institutional turf battles.

**Finland**

The Commission - the President of the Commission as well as the Commissioner for enlargement - have taken a pro-active high-profile approach to enlargement and the negotiation process.

**France**

The French government was originally wary of the incoming Commission's intentions in relation to enlargement. In fact, as early as September 1999, the new President, Romano Prodi, declared he was in favour of setting "a firm date for the

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<sup>16</sup> Interview in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>17</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

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<sup>18</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No.1/1999, pp. 77-78.

accession of those countries which were best prepared<sup>19</sup>. Conversely, France has been opposed to any deadline being given to accession negotiations: their progress can only depend on the capacity of the applicant country to take up the *acquis communautaire*.<sup>20</sup> Since then, the President of the Commission has given up this claim and the results of the Helsinki European Council reassured the French: the only set date is that on which the Union shall have to be “ready” to welcome new members.<sup>21</sup>

The new Commissioner for enlargement, Günter Verheugen, seems to be more appreciated by French leaders. In the Foreign Affairs Ministry, it has been pointed out that “there is no divergence in approach” with him and an adviser to the Deputy Minister for European Affairs even described him as a “friend” of France. Getting back to the question of dates, Mr. Günter Verheugen had put forward the solution which was finalised in Helsinki<sup>22</sup>.

As regards the new administrative ar-

rangements inside the Commission, they meet France’s concerns on the enlargement issue. Indeed, the new Enlargement Directorate General, which comes under the exclusive authority of the Commissioner for enlargement, implies that the members of the task force for the accession negotiations and those of the former DG IA, more generally responsible for relations with applicant countries, are brought together into one single entity. France considers that the new structure is more likely to highlight and limit the gap which may exist between an applicant country’s commitments made in the course of the negotiations and the difficulties it may have in implementing the needed reforms and in effectively taking up the *acquis communautaire*.

### Germany

The German government welcomes a concentration of competencies and management capacities in the newly installed DG for enlargement. A more streamlined organisation of accession related tasks (screening, negotiations), pre-accession activities (accession partnerships, PHARE, TAIEX) and bilateral relations (Europe agreements etc.) shall enhance efficiency, coherence, effectiveness and control.

The German government nominated Günter Verheugen against domestic pressure (demands to give one post to a representative from the opposition) and some reluctance on the part of the new Commissioner Prodi. The government (and Mr Verheugen) view the post of Commissioner for enlargement as a key responsibility for shaping the further course of European integration. It is part of the new political style, that the German government did not deny its particular interest in the enlargement project and underpinned it with a straight forward personnel policy. Given a trend to play German EU-politics more by party lines, the opposition (and the CDU/CSU group in the EP) criticised that the German influence decreased in the

<sup>19</sup> Speech by Romano Prodi, President-designate of the European Commission, to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 14 September 1999 (available on the europa.eu.int. internet site).

<sup>20</sup> The Foreign Affairs Minister, Hubert Vedrine, commented Romano Prodi’s statement saying that “it would be unreasonable. Serious negotiations on substantive issues are needed”. In *Point de presse* dated 15 September 1999, reproduced on the internet site of the ministry ([www.france.diplomatie.fr](http://www.france.diplomatie.fr)).

<sup>21</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-12 December 1999, point 5. (Available on the internet site <http://www.europa.eu.int>).

<sup>22</sup> Günter Verheugen, Member of the European Commission “Enlargement Speed and Quality” group at the conference on The Second Decade Towards a New and Integrated Europe, The Hague, 4 November 1999 (available on the europa.eu.int site), stated that “after careful verification and many discussions, the Commission therefore proposes to name a target date for the Union to take the first decisions on accession”.

newly installed Prodi Commission.<sup>23</sup> This goes together with complaints that German nationals are notoriously underrepresented in EU-institutions.<sup>24</sup>

### **Greece**

The Prodi Commission is viewed with positive feelings, but mainly because of its contrast with the bad image of the last Santer months. No major importance is given to the foreign-affairs set-up and the administrative arrangements in the Commission and within the overall EU mechanism. G. Verheugen and his nomination have had only passing attention: far higher attention was paid to Javier Solana as CFSP Higher Representative, especially after the high-visibility/high-power role he assumed in Helsinki over the final touches of the negotiations with Turkey (with Solana's recent NATO role in the Kosovo war in the near background).

In fact, it can be said that in Greek public opinion - both general opinion and its informed segments - there is a tangible shift of the centre of attention in CFSP matters away from the Commission (of van den Broek memory, GD I A) and towards the co-ordinating structures of CFSP.

### **Ireland**

The general reaction of the Irish government has been positive. It is clear from the appointment of the new Commissioner and the fact that a new DG for enlargement has been established that enlargement is a top priority for the new Commission. The *raison d'être* for the new arrangements is to create a more efficient

and streamlined administration prior to enlargement.

### **Italy**

Italy has been particularly supportive of President Prodi's new Commission, and on this issue there is practically no dissent at the level of political parties. There is also a perception that Prodi's *démarche* for a more efficient and accountable Commission will greatly improve and accelerate the pace of reforms at all levels, including enlargement. As a result, there is also wide support for Mr. Verheugen as a Commissioner for enlargement, even if some journalists speculated on a possible imposition of the part of Germany.<sup>25</sup>

### **Netherlands**

The debate in The Netherlands about the new European Commission has mainly focused on the controversial candidacy of Bolkestein, the former leader of the Conservative Liberal Party (VVD) in parliament, as the new Dutch commissioner. Although the government coalition gave unanimous support to Bolkestein, several politicians had doubts about his devotion to the idea of European integration. The hesitations followed mainly from some statements that Bolkestein had made in the past. The criticism came especially from Dutch members of the European Parliament.<sup>26</sup>

The Dutch government has not directly expressed its opinion about the choice for Verheugen as Commissioner for enlargement. It can however be expected that the government appreciates a German on this position, since The Netherlands follows the same policy of support for the EU enlargement as Germany does.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. e.g. "Die Brüsseler Reifeprüfung", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 August 1999 and "Prodis Skalpell. Die Deutschen gehören nicht zu den Gewinnern des Revirements der EU-Kommission", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 October 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. "Die Deutschen vertreten ihre Interessen schlecht", *Die Welt*, 3 November 1999 and <http://www.kas.de> on the respective study by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

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<sup>25</sup> Enrico Brivio, "Prodi: viaggio a Est per l'allargamento", *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 21 January 2000, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Representatives of the Green Left Party (Groen Links) in the European Parliament even produced an anthology of supposed anti-European statements of Bolkestein.

As will be elaborated in the answer to question 9, the Dutch government considers the institutional reform of the European Commission as a necessary part of the enlargement process. The resignation of the European Commission in the spring of 1999 must be used as a catalyst for the institutional reforms that are necessary to make the EU ready for an enlargement to a membership of 25 or more countries.

### **Portugal**

The new institutional structure of the European Commission reflects the will to streamline the global external action of the Commission, whilst giving it more efficiency. This goal is obviously supported by the Portuguese government. The decision to have one Commissioner for enlargement is a consequence of the importance attached to this process as well as the recognition of the complexity of carrying out negotiations simultaneously with so many countries.

### **Spain**

The Spanish government thinks that Mr. Verheugen is an able person and is happy with the new administrative arrangements inside the Commission in the light of enlargement and the negotiation process, especially with the appointment of a Spaniard, Mr. Eneko Landáburu, as Director General in this area.

### **Sweden**

Romano Prodi's initiative to transfer the work concerning enlargement to one DG rather than handle it in separate task forces is a positive change, according to the Foreign Ministry, and the government believes that this will simplify the continuing process. Speaking unofficially, a Ministry source says that Mr. Verheugen is a very experienced and strong person who is backed up by a big Member State, "and this, we believe, is a good thing both for the Union and the candidate countries".

A newspaper analysis, which places Günter Verheugen in "Prodi's inner circle", says that the Commissioner has been given an "enormous task". "He has shown during the EP hearings that he is a master of the details and has a strategic view. But will he be able to bring about sufficient enthusiasm for these questions of fate for Europe?"<sup>27</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

Britain, as one of the large Member States, has approached the question of new institutional arrangements inspired by the enlargement process from the perspective of revised voting rights in the Council of Ministers - rather than the pressing issue for smaller members - the revision of the Commission. A further issue which has raised much concern in the British Parliament is the extension of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) to issues that may infringe the sovereignty of Westminster. These two issues reflect the lingering sentiments within British politics which approaches the EU as principally a Single Market - the legacy of Margaret Thatcher - rather than a democratic institution. It is interesting to note in the quotes given below that the Minister for Europe justified QMV to an opposition critic in a language of *business*, rather than *democracy*.

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<sup>27</sup> Rolf Gustavsson, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 5 September 1999.

Keith Vaz, (current) Minister for Europe, gave evidence to the House of Commons' Select Committee on European Scrutiny (SCES) on 10 November 1999. During this session he was questioned at length over the proposals to extend qualified majority voting to more areas, most forcefully by the Eurosceptic MP, Bill Cash, who stated *'I hope you would be the first to agree that the movements towards increased majority voting inevitably affect the democracy of the United Kingdom Parliament.'* (§16) Mr Vaz replied: *'You have got to have QMV if you are going to conduct effective business in the European Union. [...] Everybody accepts that this is the way in which the vast majority of business is conducted in the European Union. We have made it quite clear that we will examine an extension of qualified majority voting on a case-by-case basis. [...] We do not wish to extend qualified majority voting—and this position has been very, very clear for many years—in areas such as tax, defence, social security, Treaty changes, own resources and border controls.'* (§16)

Vaz then attempted to convince sceptics by saying that: *'...up until September this year, out of 181 occasions where we have voted under QMV, we have only been out-voted once. So clearly the rest of Europe is taking its lead from the United Kingdom and it is no threat to our national interest.'*(§16)

Vaz is leading the vanguard fighting against the widely held belief that there is a deeply rooted antagonism between EU-bureaucracy and British parliamentary sovereignty, where the former frequently legislates against British national interests. It compliments the government's attempts to portray a constructive relationship with the EU.

In the same session Vaz explained the government's position on revisions to the number of Commissioners: *'... it has been put to us that the larger States ought to consider giving up one of their Commissioners in exchange for a re-weighting of*

*votes. (§1) [...] We have made it clear we are in favour of giving up one of our Commissioners on the understanding that there is a re-weighting of votes and that is certainly one of the models that has been put forward. I would favour a position which would leave us with the same amount of influence in the Council that we have at the moment, but clearly the larger States are going to want to have compensation for the loss of one of their Commissioners. (§2) [...] I think what the smaller Member States want more than anything else is to retain a foothold in the Commission. They are attached to the idea of having a Commissioner.'* (§3)

As a large Member State Britain does not fear losing its presence in the Commission and is prepared to forego one Commissioner in return for a suitable reweighting of votes in the Council of Ministers. One reason why Britain is more concerned over the issue of QMV than losing a Commissioner is that it holds its national veto in the Council of Ministers in very high regard. In keeping with the concern for sovereignty mentioned above, the veto is seen as the ultimate expression of national self interest, and reforms that weaken its potential are more sensitive issues than those of national representation, such as Commissioners.

On the final aspect to this question, the assessment of Mr Verheugen, it is quite difficult to answer because of the way parliamentary reports are written. Witnesses are invited to present evidence to a given committee and then cited in their subsequent reports. The Commission's Director General for enlargement, Mr van der Pas, has spoken extensively to the various committees and is therefore heavily cited in its reports while the actual EU Commissioner, Mr Verheugen, is less prevalent. However, the British government is generally satisfied with the new Commission as a whole, (reflecting the prominence of the two Britons, Neil Kinnock and Chris Patten) and also with Mr Verheugen's overall approach to enlarge-

ment. Only two issues cloud the horizon - the first is the extent to which Mr Patten and Mr Verheugen will overlap in responsibilities, and the second is the issue of the “regatta” principle of negotiating with applicant States. (See next question).

Overall, Britain regards its stance as being pro-enlargement and portrays itself as a leader in Europe for enlargement. The British government also wish to present themselves as a force of modernisation in the EU, arguing that the Commission needs to be more transparent and accountable in the wake of the Santer Commission’s resignation. This is intended to change the attitude of the British, who traditionally see the EU as a wasteful bureaucratic institution. In this sense, the British government agrees with the report to the European Commission by Weizsäcker, Dehaene, Simon - ‘The Institutional Implications of Enlargement’ (18 October 1999), which stated: ‘The group believes that discussion of these issues [Commission reform and voting reform] can not be handled in isolation.’ (p.6 §2.1).

**3. What was your government's position during the Helsinki enlargement summit on the following issues:**

- **Target dates /time limits for the conclusion of accession negotiations;**
- **Widening of accession negotiations; To which countries? And why?**
- **Special arrangements for Romania and Bulgaria.**

**Austria**

A decision on target dates is not considered to be useful because it is impossible to foresee the future development of the applicant countries. Important and decisive is, however, each applicant country's full attainment of the Copenhagen criteria and the successful conclusion of the accession negotiations.

The widening of accession negotiations to all applicant countries has always been supported by Austria because the division of the applicant countries in two or more groups requires difficult political decisions that unavoidably leave some countries disappointed. The division of the applicant countries into two groups also had the disadvantage that it was a rather inflexible approach that could not react swiftly to individual developments in each country. Austria also supports the candidate status of Turkey because this improves security and stability in Europe.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Interview in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

**Belgium**

*Target dates / time limits for the conclusion of accession negotiations*

With a view to the Helsinki summit, the Belgian government spelled out its conviction that it was not desirable to set any target dates for the six "first wave" countries<sup>29</sup>, be it for accession or for conclusion of the accession negotiations.<sup>30</sup> After all, according to the Belgian view, each applicant country<sup>31</sup> should be treated on an equal footing and the duration of the respective (pre-)accession processes depends solely on the rhythm of reforms and preparations undertaken by the applicants themselves.<sup>32</sup> Hence it is not up to the Union to anticipate target dates. Moreover, in addition to the thus artificial character thereof, the widely differing state of preparations in the candidate countries

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<sup>29</sup> In explicitly restricting the target date issue to the six applicants already engaged in accession negotiations, the Belgian government implicitly made it clear that the question did not (yet) raise as regards the remaining candidate countries.

<sup>30</sup> See Joint Note of Prime Minister Verhofstadt and Foreign Affairs Minister Michel entitled "*Position du gouvernement belge par rapport aux réformes institutionnelles et à l'élargissement de l'Union européenne*" (henceforth referred to as Joint Note), approved by the Belgian Federal Government on 29 October 1999.

As reported in the previous issue of this survey (see E/A-W 1/1999, p. 113), no formal Belgian position paper was drawn up as regards the enlargement strategy until very recently. Hence, Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Michel's foreign policy statement ("*Note de politique étrangère*") of December 1999, in which the Joint Note is included, labels the latter as a first step in a progressive process of policy shaping launched in view of the Helsinki summit which will regularly be adapted to both the changing circumstances and the views expressed by, among others, the European institutions.

<sup>31</sup> Including Turkey (see below), whose membership application is to be considered by the Union in the same way as those forwarded by the other candidate countries.

<sup>32</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, pp. 85-86.



makes the formulation of a single and uniform target date very unlikely. As a consequence, it could not be excluded that the setting of such dates would result, for some at least, in a politically painful - and therefore undesirable - differentiation between candidate countries.

*Widening of accession negotiations: to which countries and why?*

In Helsinki, as any further differentiation between candidate countries would carry the risk of sending inverse political signals, the Belgian government fully and enthusiastically supported the Commission's proposal to extend the accession negotiations to all six "second wave" countries.<sup>33</sup> In the Belgian view, as the construction of the "new" Europe should not be allowed to raise new dividing lines on the continent<sup>34</sup>, any preliminary distinction between "ins" and "pre-ins" ought to be removed. If, however, during the negotiations the need for such differentiation would nonetheless arise, this would have to be dictated by objective divergences in the applicants' individual merits (in terms of preparation for membership).

In line with this reasoning, Belgium favoured the opening of accession negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria alongside the other (better prepared) "second wave" applicants. Yet, in the same spirit it also supported the Commission's approach of formulating specific preconditions thereupon, particularly as far as the

adoption of an acceptable closure date for its unsafe nuclear power plants by the Bulgarian authorities is concerned.<sup>35</sup>

In the event, however, that Romania and Bulgaria would not receive an unanimous invitation for the opening of accession negotiations at Helsinki, Belgium stressed the need for the adoption of measures meant to reaffirm these countries' eventual membership prospect.<sup>36</sup> In this regard, it reminded of the fact that already today these two countries were the only applicant countries that receive macro-financial support.

**Denmark<sup>37</sup>**

Denmark supported the idea of a target date for the EU's preparations. According to the Danish government 2002 seemed liked a realistic date, which also had the advantage of putting pressure on the Member States to conclude the forthcoming IGC within a relatively short time-frame.

The Danish pressure for a target date for internal reform was not followed up by a similar pressure for a target date for finalising accession negotiations; let alone ratification of the first accession Treaties. From a Danish perspective it was not realistic to engage in a debate on such dates as long as negotiations have not been opened on all chapters.

*Widening of accession negotiations*

Denmark took the view that all "second wavers" should be promoted to the "first wave". In principle, this policy stance was the same as in the run up to the Luxembourg European Council: in order to

<sup>33</sup> See Joint Note.

Whereas Belgian diplomatic circles initially were sympathetic to the "regatta" model, opening accession negotiations with all applicants (fulfilling the political preconditions for EU membership) simultaneously, they swiftly readjusted their view to the differentiation formula set forth by the Commission in its Agenda 2000-communication (see E/A-W 1-1999, p. 85). Yet, the revised approach proposed by the Commission in the framework of its second Progress Reports offered Belgian diplomacy the opportunity to revert to its original stance.

<sup>34</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 85.

<sup>35</sup> After all, a decision on such closure dates had also been demanded - and obtained - from the other "second wave" applicants with similar nuclear safety risks (notably Slovakia and Lithuania).

<sup>36</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 85.

<sup>37</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

strengthen the membership perspective of all applicant countries, the EU should open negotiations with all. All countries should be allowed to negotiate at their own speed and possibly catch up with the first ones. The speed of enlargement should thus be decided at the negotiation table.

#### *Special arrangements for Romania and Bulgaria*

The Danish government was not in favour of creating special arrangements for Bulgaria and Romania. In order to strengthen their membership perspective, the EU should instead open “normal” accession negotiations.

#### **Finland**

Finland was of the opinion that setting a timetable for the first accessions would be premature and counterproductive at this stage. Instead, one should indicate a time when the EU will be ready for enlargement - as was also done. As the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs had put it in July, the Finnish intention was to bring forward the process of enlargement, but without giving any unrealistic promises from the EU side, notably regarding timetables.<sup>38</sup>

Regarding the question of which countries should be included, Finland has supported the view that enlargement is important and that the process should be inclusive: all European countries willing to become members should be involved in the process. All candidates should then be treated equally and objectively so that they would progress on the basis of their respective merits. As the country holding the EU Presidency, Finland was above all looking for a consensus in this matter. It started to emerge after the Commission's Progress Reports of 13 October at the Tampere

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<sup>38</sup> Tarja Halonen at the EU Parliament, presenting the programme of the Finnish Presidency, on 21 July 1999, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 22 July 1999.

summit: six countries would be invited to the accession negotiations, with a view to, as the Helsinki Conclusions summarise, “lending a positive contribution to security and stability on the European continent and in the light of recent developments as well as the Commission’s reports [...]”.

Finland’s relations to the neighbouring Baltic States is obviously an interesting question in this respect. Finland stresses the equal treatment of all candidates in the first place, but indirectly, it nevertheless pays special attention to these countries. The Finnish Northern Dimension Initiative has recently been more clearly anchored to the postulate of the membership of the three Baltic countries and Poland in the EU.<sup>39</sup>

Among the main political parties, there are two that in their programmes particularly emphasise the Baltic States. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) considers it specially important to support the Baltic countries so that they can participate in the first stage of enlargement<sup>40</sup> while the National Coalition Party (Kokoomus) emphasises the importance of the Baltic States’ access to the Union and notes that Latvia and Lithuania should be given significant support to be able to start as soon as possible.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “The first postulate of the Northern dimension concept is the future Union membership of all three Baltic States and Poland. The enlargement of the Union is considered as historically necessary in order to avoid a new divide in Europe and to facilitate utilization of latent and misused potentialities of Europe. Europe has a chance to perform as one of the most dynamic areas of growth in the world and the Baltic Sea region is one of the most promising subregions in Europe.” Speech by Ambassador Peter Stenlund at the European Finance Convention Foundation, 22 November 1999.

<sup>40</sup> Stand on European policy, approved during the Finnish Social Democratic Party XXXVIII Party Congress, Turku, 26-30 May 1999; available at the internet site: <http://www.sdp.fi/pk1999/kannanotot/eng-europ.html>.

<sup>41</sup> See “Kokoomus and European Policy” at <http://www.kokoomus.fi/english/policy.ph>.

**France**

In the course of preparation of the Helsinki enlargement summit and during the summit itself, France stood by the position it had taken before<sup>42</sup>. It continued to be opposed to time limits or target dates for the conclusion of accession negotiations. The reason for this is simple: France insists that enlargement should in no way prejudice the pursuit of community integration. It is then essential to make sure that the joining of new Member States will not hinder the process and to verify that they are actually capable of taking up the *acquis communautaire* without anticipating on when this may occur. On the contrary, setting a target date for their accession beforehand may entail that countries which might not be ready to join a highly integrated system such as the European Union could be allowed in<sup>43</sup>. So, the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council only specify the date the French agreed to determine, that is as of when the Union “should be in a position to welcome new Member States” - in other words “from the end of 2002”.<sup>44</sup>

There again, in accordance with its previous position, France supported the idea to widen accession negotiations to all applicant countries, on the basis of principle and opportunity. Over the past few years, France has regularly supported the “regatta” principle, on condition it went together with the principle of differentiation: all applicant countries should be at

the same starting post and their progress in the race to accession should be based solely on their “own merits”, in other words their ability to take up the *acquis communautaire*.<sup>45</sup> For France, this position has the advantage to secure that countries will join on the basis of technical considerations, of their capacity to integrate the European Union and not according to political considerations. Under a more expedient angle, this standpoint should avoid that Central European countries should be unduly privileged on account of their close ties with Germany and that the Eastern European “protégés” of France, mainly Romania, should indefinitely be kept out of the accession negotiations.<sup>46</sup>

France has therefore been opposed to any special arrangement for Romania and Bulgaria. In spite of the reservations the Commission expressed in its “regular reports” on Romania and Bulgaria, it stood in favour of opening accession negotiations with all the “second wave” countries and not merely with Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia or Malta.<sup>47</sup> It may seem contradictory that a country such as France which often takes on the community temple custodian posture, should insist on opening accession negotiations with candidate countries which do not seem to

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Institut für Europäische Politik in Co-operation with the Trans European Policy Studies Association, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch, Pilot issue*, October 1998; *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, Nr.1/1999.

<sup>43</sup> Answer of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, to a “question d’actualité” at the Assemblée Nationale on 14 December 1999, *Bulletin d’actualités du Ministère des affaires étrangères*, 15 December 1999, n° 242/99, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> “Presidency Conclusions”, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 5.

<sup>45</sup> Press conference held by the Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Alain Lamassoure, in Bulgaria 14 September 1993; Joint press meeting held by the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, and the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Christoph Zoepel, 9 November 1999 (available on the [ww.diplomatie.fr](http://ww.diplomatie.fr) site).

<sup>46</sup> As to the reasons of French support to the countries from Eastern Europe, refer to the previous report: Institut für Europäische Politik in co-operation with the Trans European Policy Studies Association, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, Nr.1/1999, p. 88.

<sup>47</sup> *Bulletin quotidien Europe*, 18-19 October 1999, n° 7575; Joint press meeting held by the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, and the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Christoph Zoepel, 9 November 1999, op. cit.

meet economic conditions for membership and which the Commission describes as “not able to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium term”<sup>48</sup>. French leaders justified their position in arguing that such a decision would have more advantages than disadvantages: rejecting Bulgaria’s and Romania’s requests might discourage their modernisation efforts whereas opening negotiations with those two countries does not in any way mean anticipating their accession date which depends on their domestic developments. The French were also concerned that the two countries of Eastern Europe close to France might insidiously be pushed back into a “third wave” of applicant countries which emerged in the wake of NATO’s action in Kosovo. This new wave is supposed to involve Balkan countries who benefit from Stabilisation and Association Agreements while their accession prospects are more remote.

### **Germany**

#### *Target dates*

Foreign Minister Fischer explained that the German government was one of the first to push for a concrete target date for the closing of negotiations with the first round countries.<sup>49</sup> Also the opposition parties were in favour of setting dates and criticised the government for not having taken the initiative during the German Presidency. They continue in a sometimes contradictory way to push for an early entry date.

The government realised, however, that its

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<sup>48</sup> European Commission, *Regular Report on Progress towards Accession*, Romania, 13 October 1999, part C (conclusion); *Regular Report on Progress towards Accession*, Bulgaria, 13 October 1999, part C (conclusion). As regards Bulgaria, the exact wording is “not yet in a position to cope with...”. The reports are available on the <http://www.europa.eu.int> website.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Enlargement / Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1, June 1999, p. 79.

proposal for a target date won nearly no support among the Member States. It should however be taken up by the French Presidency in order to maintain the momentum of preparation for accession and enlargement on both sides. In reaction to the Dehaene report Minister Fischer demanded that the EU shall be ready for enlargement by 1 January 2003.<sup>50</sup> In line with the announced realistic enlargement policy, Chancellor Schröder stated before the Parliament (Bundestag) that the government does not want to nurture illusions about target dates. The candidates shall live up to realistic schedules and so determine the pace of enlargement. The German government supports self-set goals of candidates to be ready in 2002/2003 and stresses that the EU shall be ready for enlargement at the end of 2002. However, by implication this means that the German government assumes that 2004/2005 is a realistic date for effective accession.

In a policy paper the Association of the German industry (BDI) expected - in line with the composite paper of the Commission - first decisions over accession only in the year 2003. It stresses that the capacity to cope with the internal market *acquis* shall be the decisive criteria.

The German government is satisfied with the result of Helsinki (EU ready for enlargement 1.1.2003), because the EU remains flexible and signals encouragement to the forerunners (like Hungary) that they will not have to wait because the EU fails to reform in time.

#### *Widening of accession group*

On the Luxembourg decision of 1997 to start negotiations only with five countries the Kohl/Kinkel government took an active in-between position. It favoured to include the “pre-ins” in an overall accession process and opted for differentiation

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<sup>50</sup> “Das neue Tandem”, interview with Joschka Fischer and Hubert Védrine, *DIE ZEIT*, No. 44, 28 October 1999.

at the same time. After Kosovo<sup>51</sup>, the German government revised the approach although it did not go into a detailed argumentation as to the reasons and the consequences. It favoured opening negotiations with all remaining countries, including the slow reformers Romania and Bulgaria. This position was confirmed at the special summit in Tampere in October 1999. Just like the Commission, the German government did not come to an essentially more favourable assessment of Romania's and Bulgaria's progress in adapting to the *acquis*. However, the government wanted to repay the two countries' loyalty throughout the NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia and the Kosovo crisis. Moreover, the step towards negotiations - whenever they may be concluded - signals the Union's concern for stability and that Romania and Bulgaria belong to the "Europe of integration".

### *Greece*

Greece has been advocating progress in the enlargement front along with a widening of the negotiations to involve in a credible way the candidatures of Romania and Bulgaria (to which there exists a standing Greek commitment to offer EU-support) but also, eventually, of other Balkan countries. The Greek position is that the stabilisation of the Balkan and South-Eastern Europe has as a vital ingredient the region's tying to "Europe", to the overall European architecture.

Still, Helsinki came to be dominated in Greek consciousness by the matter of Turkey's status as a candidate country. Greece has traditionally tied its approval to a series of conditions being fulfilled, further to the Copenhagen criteria. Such conditions involve:

- (a) Turkey's renouncement of violence or the threat of violence in the resolu-

tion of conflicts with Greece

- (b) Independence of the Cyprus accession negotiations from the future of Turkey-EU relations
- (c) The establishment of a EU mechanism which would guarantee that Turkey would be a bona fide EU candidate, with a specific "road-map" leading through accession procedures and with control steps for Ankara's compliance with the terms set.

The formula adopted on all three points - after arduous negotiations at the very summit - has been construed by the Greek government as an acceptable basis to lift the Greek veto and let Turkey be granted candidate status.

### *Ireland*

In the lead up to the Helsinki European Council, the Irish government supported the thrust of the Commission's recommendation in its "October Composite Report on Enlargement". Ireland therefore strongly supported the outcome on enlargement at Helsinki itself.

### *Italy*

In Italy the government has long campaigned in a rather consistent manner for an extended enlargement to all associated members plus Turkey. In that sense the country was one of the most active EU members at the Helsinki December summit on the question of opening accession negotiations with the remaining six countries.

The question of target dates is being given lesser regard by the Italian policy makers, or, it is rather considered to be a correlate of the question of the precedence of institutional reforms. Allegedly, the Italian government would be happy to welcome enlargement in 2003 if it were satisfied with an "Amsterdam plus" package ac-

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Joschka Fischer, speech at the Bundestag, 16 September 1999, available at [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/6\\_archiv/2/r/r990916a.htm](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/6_archiv/2/r/r990916a.htm)

cepted and ratified by the 15 before that.<sup>52</sup> In this respect it should be noted that Italy considers particularly important at least 5-10 year transition periods after the eventual conclusion of negotiations. It is ready to consider starting negotiations 2003 for two or three candidates.<sup>53</sup>

Regarding candidate selectivity, Italy has always had an all-inclusive approach, not only towards the "second wave" candidates, but also towards Turkey.<sup>54</sup> Most of these countries are Italy's major trade partners (especially Turkey), security partners in the Balkans, where Italy feels particularly exposed (Bulgaria and Romania, whose performance during the Kosovo crisis was quite appreciated), and culturally affiliated States (such as the catholic Lithuania). In addition, Italy sees the joining of more members from the South as a way to counterbalance what it considered a disproportionate strengthening of the Northern-Central flank of the EU if enlargement had been extended only to the first six candidates. As a result, the Helsinki European Council generally satisfied Italian policy makers, who had long been campaigning for an all-inclusive enlargement.

### *Netherlands*

The Dutch government has supported the use of target dates for the conclusion of the accession negotiations, because it thinks that some speed is necessary in order to use the 'momentum' of the enlargement process.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the government has emphasised that this policy must not lead to a weakening of the careful use of the accession criteria. Pro-

gress in the negotiations will be dependent upon a candidate's performance in taking over the *acquis communautaire*. In Helsinki, the Dutch government favoured a timetable in which the internal reforms of the European Union would be completed in 2002. In a reply to the second chamber of the parliament in the beginning of December 1999, the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed the hope that the European Council would express the intention in Helsinki to make the European Union ready for the accession of the first group of candidates in 2002.<sup>56</sup> This target date makes it necessary to round off the Inter-governmental Conference in the end of 2000, so that two years will be left for the ratification procedures in the member states.

The Dutch government supported accession negotiations with a large group of candidates. Already in November 1999 State Secretary Benschop had declared in a speech that the European Union should prepare for a situation in which it would have 25 to 27 members.<sup>57</sup> In Helsinki, the government of The Netherlands agreed with the inclusive approach that the European Commission had adopted earlier. This implies that the Dutch government supported the start of accession negotiations with the 'pre-in' candidates which complied with the political criteria of Copenhagen: Latvia, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Malta. Compliance with the economic criteria should form a precondition for final accession, but not a precondition for the start of accession negotiations.<sup>58</sup> There existed concerns about the political situation in Romania and Bulgaria, especially with regard to the treatment of minorities. The

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<sup>52</sup> Interviews with Italian officials, January 2000.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, pp. 79, 90-91, 99.

<sup>55</sup> Reply of the government to the Second Chamber of the Parliament, the Commission for Foreign Affairs and the Commission for European Affairs, report nr. 109, 2 December 1999, document 21501-20.

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<sup>56</sup> Letter by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Second Chamber of the Parliament, 7 December 1999, doc. DIE-829.

<sup>57</sup> Speech at the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht / Lanaken, 5 November 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Helsinki en hoe verder?, report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 November 1999, doc. 710/99.

Dutch government observed at the same time, however, that there was sufficient improvement to conclude that these two countries complied with the political criteria. An additional reason for a positive decision on Romania and Bulgaria was linked up with the war in Kosovo. Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Aartsen had praised the two countries in July 1999 for their co-operative role in the conflict.

The Netherlands attached importance to the granting of a candidate-status for Turkey, but noticed that Turkey did not comply with all political criteria for membership yet (see also question 5). Concerning Cyprus, the Dutch government has insisted on its position that Cyprus can not become a member of the EU as long as the island remains divided. The Netherlands has tried to improve the relations between Turkey and Greece by taking the initiative to set up a committee of wise men for the problems in the Aegean Sea.

The possibility of a partial membership status for Romania and Bulgaria was treated with considerable reservations by the Dutch government. The general rule should be that the EU spends enough time to prepare the candidates for complete membership. In the view of the Dutch government, partial membership should never become a permanent alternative for real accession. It should only be a last solution in order to prevent a division in Europe or to keep the enlargement process going. Transitional periods for candidates in certain policy fields might be necessary, but should be as short and exceptional as possible and should never be introduced in the field of the internal market.

### *Portugal*

The Portuguese government has always supported the simultaneous negotiation with all the candidate countries, but always stressing that each candidate country should be evaluated according to its own merits. According to the Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs, Por-

tugal has always shown its disagreement with the division of the candidate countries in two groups, stressing that the division could create a new psychological border in Europe.<sup>59</sup> It welcomed, therefore, the results of the Helsinki summit. During the Portuguese Presidency (1 January - 30 June 2000) the remaining chapters will be opened with the six countries which are already in the process of negotiations and in February the remaining countries will start their own process of negotiations. The Portuguese Presidency, however, does not intend to give any dates to the candidate countries, claiming that it is too early to have a clear picture of the possible end of the negotiations process. As far as Romania and Bulgaria are concerned, the Portuguese government has always supported the view that these two countries should not be left outside the negotiations process. At the same time, however, accession to the EU must follow technical criteria and the demands presented to the two countries are based on these criteria.

### *Spain*

Spain is happy with the approach adopted in Helsinki because it coincides with the model advocated by Spain since the Luxembourg European Council. Spain is in favour of the EU opening negotiations with all the candidates, without setting accession dates for anybody. To have Romania and Bulgaria engaged is an important political aim for Spain. Therefore, Spain is concerned about the possibility that the Commission will open only some chapters in the negotiations with these two countries and not give them the same treatment as the other candidates. The Spanish government believes that the evolution of the negotiations with the candidates should be a consequence of their degree of preparedness and not of a priori positions.

<sup>59</sup> Francisco Seixas da Costa, "Reunificar a Europa", *Diário de Notícias*, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000.

### *Sweden*

The government has several times expressed that it wishes to see the Union receive new Member States without any unnecessary delays. Shortly before the summit, the Foreign Minister said "it is too early to establish target dates for individual candidate countries...but in our opinion the target for the Union must be to prepare itself for receiving new members from the year 2002 on"<sup>60</sup>. This was also the Swedish position during the summit, which meant a faster schedule than the one proposed by the Commission - a decision in the course of 2002 with possible new members in 2003. The conclusions of the summit say that the Union shall be able to welcome new members by the end of 2002, and this was welcomed by the government as a sign of increased ambitions on the part of the Union.

Already in 1997, Sweden was supporting the "regatta" option, with each candidate country being invited to start negotiations when it fulfils the objective criteria, and then being judged individually on its own merits.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the Swedish position was in line with the decision in Helsinki, and the government is satisfied with the opening of negotiations with the six States in February 2000. Apart from the planned progress review by the Commission during the year, the Swedish position is that no further "control-stations" are necessary - and that includes Bulgaria and Romania.

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<sup>60</sup> Foreign Minister Anna Lindh in the Parliament, 23 November 1999.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. also *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch, Pilot Issue*, October 1998, page 21.

### *United Kingdom*

#### *Target dates/time limits for the conclusion of accession negotiations*

The British government's position is similar to that stated in the XXI Report of the House of Lords' Select Committee on European Communities (9 November 1999) when it considered the question 'Should there be a timetable for negotiations?':

*'In considering the desirability of a timetable, there are strong arguments on both sides. It can certainly be argued that failure to agree a timetable now that it has been explicitly proposed would be seen as sending a negative signal to the applicant States. Yet on the other hand raising expectations may prove dangerous in the long-term unless some realistic timetable can be agreed. There is therefore a difficult dilemma: is it more dangerous to set a date knowing that it could be subject to delays on a number of fronts, or to refuse to do so for the same reason and thereby appear less than totally committed to enlargement? (§11)*

*We do not think that there is any realistic prospect of setting a formally agreed timetable, either for the closure of individual chapters or for the overall completion of negotiations. This does not mean that targeting should be abandoned, but it should be seen as aspirational, because there are too many uncertainties for the EU to commit itself to targets being met. What is important is that targets should not be missed simply because of a lack of readiness on the part of the EU itself. (§12)*

#### *Widening of accession negotiations*

*'Accession negotiations are already in progress with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia (the "first wave" States). Recognising the strong political imperative to accelerate enlargement, we welcome the Commission's proposal that negotiations should*



*now be opened with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia. We considered whether widening the field like this would carry the same danger of raising false hopes as the (misleadingly named) "regatta" approach which had been previously rejected. But we think there is a crucial difference. It has always been the case that the negotiations on each chapter (that is, subject area) would be closed separately at the pace of individual applicants, but chapters have hitherto been opened with all the applicants at the same time. Under the new approach, chapters would be opened with individual States only when they were judged to be ready. This would make it quite explicit from the start that each applicant country would proceed at its own pace, with the speed of negotiations as well as the ultimate date of accession depending on the individual situation of each country. (SCEC XXI Report §8)*

The British government recognises that the enlargement of the EU is about reuniting Western and Eastern Europe and promoting stability, peace and prosperity. One must remember that Britain's idealistic stance is buttressed to a certain degree by geographical distance from the eastern borders of the EU and does not face the domestic political concerns of, for example, increased labour migration which Austria or Germany do. Nevertheless, Britain's concerns for further integration as a means towards peace and stability is consistent with its participation in the Kosovo conflict and joint proposals at the Helsinki summit for a EU combined military force, (although subordinated to NATO).

In a parliamentary report it was acknowledged that although Romania and Bulgaria still have a long way to go until they reach the stages presently attained by the States most likely to join the EU in the "first wave", such as Hungary and Poland,

*'We can see that it might have been more logical simply to say that Bulgaria and*

*Romania were not yet ready to open negotiations, but we appreciate that the events in Kosovo have prompted a particular sense of obligation to those two countries (which suffered considerable economic damage), as well as heightening the perception of the geo-political importance of EU enlargement as a potential contributor to regional stability. (SCEC XXI Report §74)*

The Lord's Select Committee clearly sees this to be congruent with the view expressed by the EU, when it recorded:

*'Mr van der Pas, now the Commission's Director General for enlargement, confirmed that the impetus for proposing further enlargement had come from the 'tragedies that we have gone through in the Balkan region. These countries were always there at the edge of our field of vision, but now they have gone straight to the centre.' (SCEC XXI Report §70)*

In the case of these two countries Britain's primary concern is the political stabilisation of the region, even if this is in disagreement with specific criteria for negotiations (such as the Copenhagen criteria - see question 7). The principle aim of the enlargement of the EU is to create a zone of prosperity and peace within Europe - this aim is in the interests of all States - and the recent events in Yugoslavia should be taken as an impetus to re-focus on these ideals.

**4. How are the results of the Helsinki summit evaluated, by the government, informed public opinion etc. in the light of enlargement?**

**Austria**

The Austrian government welcomed the results of the Helsinki summit as very positive. Most of Austria's views are reflected by the decisions of Helsinki. In the field of enlargement this concerns the following points:

Firstly, the extension of accession negotiations to the second group of candidates, which Austria had favoured from the very beginning. The dissolution of the two groups allows a better evaluation of each country's progress. From Austria's point of view the commencement of accession negotiations with its neighbour, Slovakia, would be highly desirable because without Slovakia, the benefits of enlargement for Austria would not be complete. Above all, Austria would continue to have an external border.

Secondly, the essential question of safety standards for Eastern European nuclear power plants is addressed in the Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki summit.<sup>62</sup>

However, the government expressed its disappointment at the decisions of the European Council concerning the Intergovernmental Conference. Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel called it "a big mistake" to limit the conference to the Amsterdam "left-overs".<sup>63</sup>

In the press coverage of the Helsinki Council a single most important topic could not be identified. All the major decisions were reported. To a certain degree,

however, the Helsinki summit was overshadowed by domestic politics. On 9 December 1999, the Federal President, Thomas Klestil, charged the Chancellor of the provisional government and head of the Social Democratic Party, Victor Klima, with the task to form a new government.<sup>64</sup> Victor Klima's former and - and that time - most likely future coalition partner, the head of the People's Party, Wolfgang Schüssel, was also Foreign Minister. Therefore, the Austrian press focused very much on the relation between Mr. Klima and Mr. Schüssel and every statement was put in the context of the domestic coalition negotiations. Even the body language of the two party leaders and representatives of Austria's government was analysed.<sup>65</sup>

**Belgium**

On the whole, the decisions taken (or confirmed) by the Helsinki summit are received favourably within Belgian diplomatic circles. As far as the (pre-)accession process and its many related geopolitical issues are concerned, the outcome of the Helsinki European Council is considered to largely reflect the Belgian views. As to the institutional reforms necessitated by enlargement, Belgian (foreign) policy actors clearly applaud the Helsinki conclusions on the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference, in that they are considered to leave sufficient room to manoeuvre towards a relatively wide institutional agenda (along the lines of the preliminary agenda withheld by the June 1999 Cologne European Council, the so-called "Cologne acquis"). Belgian Prime Minister Verhofstadt particularly welcomed the possibility created for the Por-

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<sup>62</sup> See point 7 of the Presidency Conclusions.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Die Presse*, 11 December 1999. A detailed report of Austria's positions concerning the Intergovernmental Conference follows in answer to the corresponding question.

<sup>64</sup> According to Art. 70 (1) of the Austrian Constitution "The Federal Chancellor and, on his recommendation, the other members of the Federal Government are appointed by the Federal President."

<sup>65</sup> The following newspapers have been looked through: *Der Standard*, *Die Presse*, *Salzburger Nachrichten*, *Kurier*, *Kronen Zeitung*.

tuguese Presidency to propose additional issues to be taken on the agenda of the conference, thus widening the debate beyond the Amsterdam “leftovers”.<sup>66</sup>

### *Denmark*

The Danish government was very satisfied with the result of the Helsinki summit. The decision to launch accession negotiations with 6 additional countries was very much in line with Danish policy since the Luxembourg summit. The Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen stated that “it is the largest breakthrough [in the enlargement process] since 1993”<sup>67</sup>. In his statements he stressed the important role Helsinki would have for the stability in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps to play down the high expectations raised in Denmark, the Prime Minister added that he did not expect the first countries to join at the end of 2002, i.e. when the EU had finalised its internal reform.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, it was important for the EU to finalise these reforms as quickly as possible. According to the Prime Minister “we are going to move as fast as possible. But the speed should also be seen in relation to the progress of [the applicant] countries in all reform-areas”<sup>70</sup>.

Concerning Turkey’s new status, the Prime Minister characterised it as an important “breakthrough”. He took the view that it was important for the EU that Turkey does not turn its back on Europe and become a key factor of instability in the European region.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore Poul Nyrup Rasmussen stressed the importance of a dialogue with Turkey, since it was a useful tool to assist a process of democratisation in the country.<sup>72</sup> The Danish For-

eign Minister Helverg-Petersen on his part underlined the importance of granting Turkey candidate status, but that Turkey would now have to live up to the Copenhagen criteria.<sup>73</sup>

The decision to relaunch the “regatta” option was generally received very positively by Danish political parties, interest groups and media. Obviously this was also due to Denmark’s close relations to Latvia and Lithuania. Turkey, conversely, did however not receive a similar positive reception. The Socialist People’s Party and the Danish Red-Green Alliance were critical of the decision; claiming that it was a wrong signal to send to Turkey at a time when it still upholds the death sentence over Abdullah Öcalan.<sup>74</sup> The Liberal and the Conservative Parties were of the opinion that it would take a long time before Turkey would become a member of the EU since it still is violating human rights.<sup>75</sup> The right-wing Danish People’s Party, conversely, made some strong statements that a country like Turkey, due to its religion, did not share the European culture and should therefore not be granted candidate-status.<sup>76</sup>

### *Finland*

Among the issues of the Helsinki summit, more attention was paid to the development of security and defence policy than to enlargement. Yet, enlargement was seen as one of the main successes of the summit, if not the main one. Before the summit, Finland had expressed the wish that Helsinki would be remembered as the place where six new countries were included in the negotiating group and where the relations with Turkey advanced a step.<sup>77</sup> Afterwards, Prime Minister Lipponen characterised the step taken towards enlargement as “historical”, while the newspaper reported the High Representa-

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Agence Europe*, 12 December 1999, p. 4. In his view, especially enhancing the potential of the flexibility provisions of the Treaties should be down for discussion.

<sup>67</sup> *Børsen*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>68</sup> *Information*, 11.-12. December 1999.

<sup>69</sup> *Børsen*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>70</sup> *Politiken*, 15 October 1999.

<sup>71</sup> *Information*, 11.-12. December 1999.

<sup>72</sup> *Information*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>73</sup> *Erhvervsbladet*, 6 December 1999.

<sup>74</sup> *Information*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>75</sup> *Jyllandsposten*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, 10 December 1999.

tive Javier Solana as having noted that the Presidency was in a key position in finding the solution to the question of Turkey.<sup>78</sup>

### France

French leaders considered the results of the Helsinki summit satisfactory as regards enlargement issues.<sup>79</sup> The conclusions of the European summit can actually be viewed as acknowledgement of the principles France has steadily upheld. Firstly, the “inclusive nature of the accession process” was “reaffirmed”: it implies opening negotiations with all applicant countries, including Romania and Bulgaria. Admittedly, although the two countries were not expressly mentioned, the European Council pointed to their economic shortcomings which the Commission had underlined in its regular reports.<sup>80</sup> But such assessment did not rule out the opening of negotiations.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12 December 1999.

<sup>79</sup> During his joint press conference with the Prime Minister, the President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, declared that the Helsinki summit would “remain in the history of the European construction”. The press conference is transcribed in the *Bulletin d'actualités* of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, 13 December 1999, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council 10-11 December 1999, op. cit. point 6: “It emerges that some candidates will not be in a position to meet all the Copenhagen criteria in the medium term.”

<sup>81</sup> The European Council merely indicated that: “the Commission’s intention is to report in early 2000 to the Council on the progress by certain candidate States on fulfilling the Copenhagen economic criteria”. As for the two other conditions explicitly put by the Commission - “a decision by the Bulgarian authorities on acceptable closure dates for units 1-4 in the Kozloduy nuclear power plant”, on the one hand, and “the confirmation of effective action announced by the Romanian authorities to provide adequate budgetary resources and to implement structural reform of child care institutions”, on the other - the President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, himself informed the European Council that the two

In accordance with what France wanted<sup>82</sup>, such bilateral accession negotiations are clearly governed by the principle of differentiation: the conclusions of the European Council specify that “each candidate State will be judged on its own merits” and that “progress in negotiations must go hand in hand with progress in incorporating the *acquis* into legislation and actually implementing and enforcing it”<sup>83</sup>. This wording even holds prospects of a better control of the uptake of the *acquis communautaire* by applicant countries and therefore meets the already mentioned French concern that accession negotiations should be well “controlled”.

French diplomacy was also successful insofar as the Presidency conclusions set no time limits or target dates for the conclusion of accession negotiations. One single date is mentioned, that on which the Union should be ready to welcome new members, and this is linked to the completion of internal institutional reforms. The need for an institutional preliminary step, long advocated by France, was thereby recognised.

However, on the Cyprus issue, the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council do not reflect the views traditionally held by France. As explained before, France has been opposed to accession of the island while still divided.<sup>84</sup> The position reached

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countries had made satisfactory commitments. The Bulgarians and the Romanians had actually sent letters to the Commission spelling out their commitments. Cf. European Commission, *Regular Reports on Progress towards Accession*, 13 October 1999, Composite paper (part IV, formal conclusions); *Bulletin quotidien Europe*, 12 December 1999, n° 7613.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. for instance the press conference held by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, following the General Affairs Council of 6 December 1999 (available on the [www.diplomatie.fr](http://www.diplomatie.fr) site).

<sup>83</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 11.

<sup>84</sup> Institut für Europäische Politik in cooperation with the Trans European Policy

in Helsinki was markedly different. Admittedly, the European Council underlined that “a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union” but it did not define it as a “pre-condition”<sup>85</sup>. The officials we interviewed in the Foreign Affairs Ministry tried to play down the concessions France had made on the issue which they considered could be offset by the prospect of closer ties between the European Union and Turkey. In this new context, it was necessary to reward the more conciliating attitude of Greece, avoiding to grant Turkey a right of veto on the accession of Cyprus, while giving a political settlement the best possible chance. This would explain the European Council’s Declaration which leaves the question of Cyprus open: the Council would make a decision when the time comes, on the understanding that the absence of political settlement would not prevent accession of the island but would not facilitate it either.<sup>86</sup> The Foreign Affairs Ministry nevertheless recognised that “an additional step” has been taken towards the accession of Cyprus and that it may be difficult for the Council to go against it, once the negotiations have been completed.

So, contrary to what had happened in the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997, the Helsinki European Council considered Turkey like any other candidate, even if, for want of satisfying the Copenhagen criteria, Turkey could not, for the time being, open accession

negotiations.<sup>87</sup> There again, for France, the decision was satisfactory. Over the past few years, for political and economic reasons, President Jacques Chirac has regularly supported the application of Turkey.<sup>88</sup> After the Helsinki European Council, he expressed his satisfaction that the application had been accepted “with the same rights and duties” as the other applicants; he specified that the decision corresponded to “a strategic vision through which Turkey can be rooted in Europe”<sup>89</sup>. It is more difficult to work out how the results of the Helsinki summit were evaluated by informed public opinion. With the notable exception of the decision applying to Turkey, the conclusions of the European Council on enlargement went relatively unnoticed in fact. There may have been two reasons for this: a general one which is that still only small circles are generally involved in European issues; the other, more related to the summit itself, is that the decisions made in Helsinki were,

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Studies Association, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, Nr.1/1999, p.97.

<sup>85</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 9 (b).

<sup>86</sup> The exact wording of the Presidency Conclusions is as follows: “The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council’s decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors”.

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<sup>87</sup> In its Declaration, the European Council “recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations” (point 4).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Institut für Europäische Politik in cooperation with the Trans European Policy Studies Association, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch, Pilot issue*, October 1998, p. 37.

<sup>89</sup> European Council. Joint press conference held by the President of the Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac and the Prime Minister, Mr. Lionel Jospin, Helsinki, 11 December 1999, *Bulletin d’actualités*, 13 December 1999, p. 5. During the press conference, Mr. Jacques Chirac also referred to numerous “telephone conversations” which had taken place between French and Turkish officials. There is a further indication of French support: it was on board a French aircraft that the High Representative for the CFSP, Mr. Solana, Commissioner Günter Verheugen and a representative of the Finnish Presidency flew to Ankara to explain to the Turkish authorities the content of the decision made by the Union: “La Turquie, candidate officielle à l’Union Européenne, participe au déjeuner des chefs d’état et de gouvernement”, *Le Monde*, 12-13 December 1999.

by and large, already known. But as regards the decision to grant candidate status to Turkey, which was not actually made when the summit opened, it produced much criticism on both the left and the right of the French political spectrum. The socialist President of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Assemblée Nationale, Mr. Jack Lang, for instance, said he was shocked that a country which does not apply “the rules of democracy” should be rewarded in this way.<sup>90</sup> On the right, it was not so much the democratic record of Turkey which was challenged but rather its European identity. So, the former President of the Republic, Mr. Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, as well as the President of the right-wing party, “Democratie libérale”, Mr. Alain Madelin, considered that the European Union was no place for Turkey.<sup>91</sup> Although the argument is not put forward as such, the fact that Turkey is a Muslim country obviously underlies a number of those reflections.

### **Germany**

For German enlargement policy “Kosovo” became a turning point. The Helsinki summit was meant to demonstrate that the EU offers enlargement as the main instrument to project stability in the neighbourhood and now adopts a broader foreign and security policy-led approach to the issue.

In Germany, the debate on the Helsinki summit centred around the decision on Turkey. The longstanding consensus on enlargement in general gave way to a far more controversial and heated debate between government and opposition.

As far as the government is concerned

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<sup>90</sup> “En France, la candidature de la Turquie à l’UE est critiquée à gauche comme à droite”, *Le Monde*, 16 December 1999.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*; “La Turquie dans l’Europe”, *France-Soir*, 14 December 1999; also refer to the record of the 14 December 1999 session of the Assemblée Nationale on the internet ([www.assemblee-nationale.fr](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr).)

Foreign Minister Fischer hailed the Helsinki decisions as a path towards the completion of European integration: before the turn of the century, the EU drafted definitive contours in terms of its internal order and its foreign policy, particularly towards the neighbouring regions. He said that Helsinki rightly set the course for a Union of 28 members and for the opening of accession negotiations with six more countries. Chancellor Schröder made it clear that there would be no concessions for new entrants, e.g. in view of the *acquis* on the environment, the Single Market or Home and Justice Affairs. He stressed the imperative of keeping with the Copenhagen criteria in the moment of accession. The government understands the opening of negotiations with economically weak and backward countries as a security and confidence-building measure or gesture. Schröder and Fischer alike were actively lobbying for granting Turkey the same rights and obligations as other candidate countries. After the failure of Cologne, Minister Fischer explored possibilities to reactivate the dialogue with Turkey.<sup>92</sup> Chancellor Schröder in particular referred to an (unpublished) exchange of letters in his capacity as EU-Presidency with Prime Minister Ecevit. This document would facilitate relations because Turkey adopts a more realistic and self critical position in view of membership.<sup>93</sup>

The German government believes, that an equal treatment approach (no discrimination) gives the EU better leverage to enact conditions in view of the human rights situation in Turkey, the treatment of the Kurdish minority, civil control over mili-

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. his trip to Ankara in 1999, “Fischer will das Verhältnis der Türkei zur EU verbessern”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 July 1999.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Fischer, speech at the Bundestag, 16 September 1999 *op. cit.*, Gerhard Schröder, policy statement at the Bundestag, 16 December 1999, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Ed.): *Bulletin*, No. 88, Bonn, 20 December 1999, pp. 833-835 (p. 834)

tary etc.<sup>94</sup> After Kosovo and the earthquake in the Marmara region there was a more favourable climate to make a step towards Turkey. Some believe that also the US pressure for integrating Turkey had an impact on the Foreign Ministry's position. The government argues, that the Helsinki decision is also a positive signal towards the 2,2 million ethnic Turks living in Germany because it demonstrates that the EU is not a Christian club. It shall complement the new law on citizenship of 7 May 1999 and demonstrate a more liberal, open-minded and strictly rational approach. In reaction to strong criticism of the Christian Democrats the government emphasises, that the Helsinki decision is due to historic obligations and commitments (association agreement etc. agreed to by previous Christian Democratic governments) that now bind the red-green government. It declares that it merely translated the decisions of Luxembourg and Cardiff into action but did not revise the official line of argumentation. On the contrary, it accuses the opposition of having followed a hypocritical policy towards Turkey.

The Christian Democrats argue that the EU is ill prepared to negotiate with twelve candidates although it welcomed the opening of negotiations with 6 more countries.<sup>95</sup> It fears a probable overstretch of the EU as a community of fate and responsibility. Mister Stoiber, Chairman of the CSU and Prime Minister of Bavaria, rejects the Helsinki decision because the speed of the enlargement process would go at the cost of its quality and solidity. The opposition fears that the future EU will have little to do with the Community envisaged by the founding fathers Adenauer, Schuman and de Gasperi. The Lib-

erals, however, supported the widening of the negotiations with six more countries but were reluctant to accord Turkey the status of a candidate, because this would provoke new disappointments on the Turkish side.

At the heart of the opposition's criticism lies the decision on Turkey. Mister Schäuble, leader of the parliamentary group of the CDU/CSU, said that Turkey - just like Russia - was simply not apt for membership. Reasons given are: geography, demography, cultural/religious identity and orientation, economic backwardness. The Christian Democrats voice cultural reservations towards Turkish membership on reasons of principle but do not publicly withdraw the membership perspective which the EU and the CDU/CSU has confirmed time and again. The opposition questions the government's reassurance, that there will be no automatic membership negotiations with Turkey, unless the political and economic situation improves considerably.

Initially, the Luxembourg option of stressing sui generis relations along the lines of the European strategy with a loose reference to the membership aspirations, reflected a wide spread hope - across all parties - to find an easy way out of obligations. Interestingly, besides the geopolitical arguments and the sense of fair treatment, the government does not give additional reasons for integrating Turkey into the queue of candidate countries at that specific moment in time.

### *Greece*

Given the pivotal role that the issue of Turkey holds in Greece, the outcome of the Helsinki summit negotiations was greeted as extremely positive by the government and its political allies - the latter comprising a major part of the press and of the electronic media. There have been positive comments on the part of academic opinion, too. Pressure groups such as the Confederation of Greek Industry were fast to capitalise on the normalisa-

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Parliamentary debate on the results of the Helsinki summit, *Das Parlament*, No. 52-53, 24 December 1999, pp. 4-7.

<sup>95</sup> „Regierungskonferenz und Osterweiterung - Herausforderungen für die Europäische Union an der Schwelle zum neuen Millennium“, Antrag der Fraktion der CDU/CSU, Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 14/2233, 30 November 1999.

tion of relations with Turkey.

In the opposition, the Communist Party and the (PASOK radical splinter) DIKKI have been violently opposed to the arrangement achieved in Helsinki, which they considered an imposition of US wishes and a total overturn of long-standing Greek foreign policy positions. The major opposition party, Nea Dimocratia, took a rather more balanced stance considering the positions adopted over Cyprus positive, while those over the Aegean and Greek-Turkish relations were assessed negatively. The opposition press, both of the left and of the right as well as columns sticking to earlier policy throughout the press, tended to adopt the least positive appreciation.

As already stated, the Helsinki summit was evaluated in Greece mainly through this specific angle.

### ***Ireland***

The results of the Helsinki summit were evaluated very positively. There is a perception that the summit introduced a focus to the enlargement process by emphasizing both the importance of progress in the negotiations and the preparations of individual applicant States. There has been a growing acceptance by informed public opinion that enlargement is top of the EU agenda, particularly post Kosovo, and the media response to the “regatta” approach has been positive overall.

### ***Italy***

The results of the Helsinki summit were reported in a very positive light by the Italian press. As already mentioned, Italy has consistently campaigned for an opening of the negotiations to all associate members and Turkey, and as a result, media accounts have been quite favourable. For example Treasury Minister Giuliano Amato was quoted as being an “optimist” on the future of Europe.<sup>96</sup> What is to be

noted in these reports and is also underlined by foreign policy analysts is the intrinsic linkage, as it is seen in Italy, between enlargement and fundamental questions concerning the new nature of the Union, notably institutional reforms and European defence.<sup>97</sup> As a result, much of the discussion that arose in the aftermath of the Helsinki Council had to do more with the agenda of the next IGC, rather than with the progress of the negotiations or the status of the eventual new members of the Union. The one exception to this tendency has to do with Turkey which has indeed received more attention from the Italian media because of the already mentioned commercial ties, but also due the fact that it has generally received more attention after the capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, in Italy in 1998. Finally, it should be noted that the general coverage of the results of the summit, and respectively, the informed public debate, was almost immediately obfuscated by a government crisis, which seriously challenged the credibility of Premier D’Alema’s cabinet on the domestic politics front and gained precedence over all other debates.

### ***Netherlands***

The Dutch government reacted positively to the results of the Helsinki summit. Prime Minister Kok said after the summit that “he could not think of a better end of the millennium” and that “at the start of the new century we are ready to shift the points to the biggest enlargement ever.”<sup>98</sup> When we compare the results of the Helsinki summit with the Dutch position at the start of the negotiations, as presented in the answer to question 3, most wishes of the Dutch government have indeed been fulfilled in Helsinki.

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<sup>96</sup> *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 12 December 1999, pp. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Leonardo Maisano “Verso un’Unione a 27”; Stefano Silvestri “Il modello della Uem a geometria variabile”, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 12 December 1999, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*, 13 December 1999.



The major parties in parliament were predominantly positive as well, although in the plenary debate on the results of the Helsinki summit some criticism existed regarding Turkey and Cyprus. The conservative liberal party (VVD), one of the three parties of the coalition government, confirmed its earlier rejection of a candidate status for Turkey. Several members of parliament were moreover not satisfied with the formulation of conclusion 9b of the Helsinki conclusions about Cyprus, complaining that an opening has now been created for the accession of Cyprus before the division of the island has been terminated.<sup>99</sup> Finally, a motion was adopted with the support of 76 of the 150 members of the second chamber of parliament including the formulation that “it is not desirable to admit a new member state where a peace-keeping force is placed”.<sup>100</sup> The reports in the Dutch daily newspapers saw the decision to admit Turkey as a candidate member as the most striking result of the summit. The commentaries on the general results of the Helsinki summit were notably different. While the *Volkskrant* called the results “surprisingly positive”, *Trouw* emphasised that the current EU does not have the capacity for the ambitious goals as agreed upon in Helsinki. One commentator in *NRC* took a middle position and argued that the Helsinki summit was a historical step, but in an uncertain direction. He had doubts about whether the EU will be able to make

sufficient internal reforms to clarify this direction.<sup>101</sup>

### *Portugal*

According to the Prime Minister, António Guterres, Helsinki was a demonstration of the harmony between the 15 Member States about Europe’s future. The decision to formally open the negotiations with all the candidate countries was stressed as having been the Portuguese position for a long time. This decision is a step forward in achieving peace and stability in Europe. The events in former Yugoslavia are a demonstration that the EU must further enhance its role in Europe, and that widening the Union is the best way to prevent further crisis.

### *Spain*

Reporting to the Parliament on December 15 on the results of the European Council meeting in Helsinki (December 9-11), President Aznar described the agreements reached with respect to the process of enlargement as “a substantial improvement of the conclusions of the European Council meeting in Luxembourg in December 1997”. President Aznar evaluated the EU’s decision to open accession negotiations with six new countries as a success of Spanish diplomacy and its long-standing advocacy of a non-discriminatory treatment of accession candidates (the “regatta” approach). The decisions adopted in Helsinki, Aznar argued, put an end to the “artificial division of candidates in blocks” and strengthen the credibility of the political and economic criteria which all candidates must meet. It is now evident for all candidates, Aznar concluded, that accession will depend on each country’s specific merits and individual progress.

Also the main opposition party (Socialist, PSOE) welcomed the decision to initiate accession negotiations with six new coun-

<sup>99</sup> Conclusion 9b of Helsinki reads as follows: “The European Union underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council’s decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors.”

<sup>100</sup> The motion was supported by the conservative liberal party (VVD), christian-democratic party (CDA) and the three small christian parties (GPV/RPF/SGP), motion nr. 108, doc. 21501-20.

<sup>101</sup> *Volkskrant*, 13 December 1999 / *Trouw*, 11 December 1999 / *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 December 1999 (J.L. Heldring).

tries, but warned of the potential for frustration which a long negotiation process can lead to in those countries whose economic and political situation is more precarious. Opposition leader, Mr. Almunia, has emphasised his party's preoccupation with the way in which the enlargement process is being managed, both in terms of the insufficiency of EU financial resources agreed on in Berlin as well as in terms of the insufficient depth of the institutional reforms envisaged by the Fifteen. In its present shape, Almunia said to the Parliament, the enlargement process does not assure the effective functioning of an enlarged Europe, questions the Union's ability to move ahead along its political dimension, and will limit Spanish weight and influence in Europe.<sup>102</sup>

### *Sweden*

The government is very satisfied with the outcome, since the decisions on enlargement is well in line with the Swedish priorities. On the last day of the meeting, Prime Minister Göran Persson said to the media that the "Helsinki summit will go to history. It is one of the most important ever". He pointed out that for many countries, the prospect of a EU-membership is a strong driving-force to make positive changes, and "therefore, the EU should not close the door to countries such as the Ukraine or a future, democratic Belarus". This enthusiasm is generally shared by other political parties and the media. One example of this is from the social democratic Malmö newspaper *Arbetet*: "What makes the Helsinki summit historic are the decisions about the enlargement eastwards. If the decisions are realised, both the geographic and political structure of

the Union will be changed radically. Even if one may question if it was correct to give Turkey the candidate status, the decision to include not less than 12-13 new States in the Union is a big step forward. It is indeed the opposite to a 'Festung Europa' and far more important to security than any rapid deployment force. Provided, of course, that the new borders to the East and South after the enlargement will not be transformed into cold frontlines and that the EU will keep an openness to co-operate with, and maybe even include, the countries that remain outside the new frontiers"<sup>103</sup>.

The decision to set up a military force and establish EU bodies for civilian and military crisis management has deepened an old split between political parties and in the public opinion, but both sides can see a connection between this area and the enlargement. Those who support building a "military dimension" are stressing the importance for the Union to be able to play an active role for peace in most parts of Europe without always relying on NATO. The most fierce opponents are ironically the political parties which usually support the minority government in Parliament, the leftist Vänsterpartiet and the green party Miljöpartiet. They regard the decisions as a confirmation of their conviction that the EU is building "a military super-power".

### *United Kingdom*

The issue of enlargement does not attract much public interest in Britain in comparison to other issues such as the Euro and intra-European trade. The British media focused on other issues discussed at Helsinki, pushing enlargement down the agenda. The two issues which dominated were the continuing refusal of the French government to lift the ban on British beef and the threat of an ECJ ruling and Britain's objection to the proposed withholding tax on non-resident savings income, which analysts predicted could seriously

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<sup>102</sup> Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados, Pleno y Diputación Permanente, Año 1999, VI Legislatura, Sesión Plenaria núm. 271, miércoles 15 de diciembre de 1999, núm. 281, p. 15119,15124 (henceforth DSCD 271/99 at <http://www.congreso.es>); "PSOE e IU ponen reparos en el Congreso a la ampliación de la UE", *El Mundo*, 16 December 1999, at <http://www.el-mundo.es>

<sup>103</sup> *Arbetet*, Editorial, 13 December 1999.

damage the international bond market in London valued at \$3000bn. (*Financial Times*, London 11/12 December 1999 p.6) Further down the list of interest came the agreement on the joint Anglo-French proposal for a EU common defence initiative which was hoped would show how Britain's disagreement with France was limited to the question of beef. The aspect of enlargement that attracted the most interest was the formal agreement to grant Turkey candidate status with the EU after Greek concerns were overcome. Its recognition as a candidate for EU-membership overshadowed to an extent the promotion of Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia into negotiations.

Although he did not ignore his difficulties on beef and tax in his statement to the House of Commons on 13 December 1999, Prime Minister Blair emphasised the progress made on enlargement and defence: *'The Helsinki summit dealt with pressing issues of the day, but also had a vision for the future. We made the historic decision that the Europe of the future would be one that embraced countries in Eastern Europe that 10 short years ago were only just emerging from totalitarian communist rule. This enlarged Europe is one that would have been unimaginable until the very recent past, and it is one that we should embrace.'*

*'We also all made the decision that our continent of Europe, which twice this century has lost millions of its citizens in the two most bloody wars in human history, should now co-operate in defence where the object is to help keep the peace. A bigger European Union; a Union committed to embracing countries committed to democracy; a Europe of nations determined to use their collective strength to advance our values - that is our vision, and I commend it to the House.'*

In response, opposition leader William Hague attempted to portray Blair as isolated and unsuccessful in defending British interests as well as having been pushed onto an integrationist path: *'The Prime Minister has managed to pull off the unbe-*

*lievable double of signing up to the integrationist agenda while simultaneously being isolated in Europe. Baroness Thatcher was isolated when she won Britain the rebate, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major) was isolated when he won the opt-out from the single currency. Those British Prime Ministers may have sometimes been isolated, but they came back with something that we needed. Is not the right hon. Gentleman the first British Prime Minister in history to return from a summit both isolated and empty handed?*

**5. What is your Government's position on the decisions on Turkey:**

- *Candidate status /pre-in?*
- *How to proceed further? Opening of negotiations or postponement? Are new initiatives necessary?*

**Austria**

The candidate status of Turkey is welcomed because closer relations of the European Union with Turkey enhance the stability and security of Europe.<sup>104</sup> The immediate task for the EU is now to work out the details of the new relationship with Turkey on the basis of the candidate status. This means that an accession partnership has to be elaborated by the EU and Turkey. This would also involve the formulation of conditions for the commencement of the screening-process and the preparation of a pre-accession strategy. A very important point will also be the exact funds and the terms of financial support for Turkey. This is enough work for the time being. It is much too early to talk about any date for the opening of negotiations. New initiatives are not necessary at the moment.<sup>105</sup>

**Belgium**

*Candidate status / pre-in*

In line with the equal treatment paradigm mentioned above, the Belgian government considered it desirable to formally grant Turkey candidate status.<sup>106</sup> Belgium thus supported the Commission's proposal for a full alignment of Turkey's pre-accession status to that of the other applicants for EU-membership (enhanced political dialogue, adoption of an Accession Partner-

ship, co-ordination of all EU pre-accession assistance within a single framework, pursuit of an analytical examination of the *acquis*, opening up all Community programmes and agencies, etc.). In its view, such a move could represent for Turkey an incentive to persevere in the - still required - reform efforts towards a better respect for both democratic principles and human and minorities' rights.

As to the link between the Turkish and Cypriot applications, Belgian diplomatic circles believe that both the perspective of and the preparations for EU-membership in these countries should constitute elements which contribute to the finding of a political settlement on the island. Yet, although it would certainly be preferable if a settlement of the Cyprus issue would be brokered prior to Cypriot accession to the Union, Belgium - unlike some other Member States - has not officially declared to consider such a settlement as a prerequisite for Cypriot EU-membership.<sup>107</sup> After all, Belgium does not want to create any situation where one applicant country would be in a position to impose a veto against another candidate country's accession to the Union.

*How to proceed further: opening of negotiations or postponement; new initiatives*

Still, whilst thus underlining the importance of offering Turkey a credible European perspective, the Belgian government at the same time made it clear that the award of candidate status to Turkey could in no way be considered as anticipating a posterior opening of accession negotiations with the country.<sup>108</sup> Such a decision would pre-require the latter's entire fulfilment of all political and economic (Copenhagen) membership criteria, which - to date - remains a relatively distant prospect.

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<sup>104</sup> Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel in *Kurier*, 12 December 1999.

<sup>105</sup> Interview in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>106</sup> See Joint Note (p. 22).

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<sup>107</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 97.

<sup>108</sup> See Joint Note (p.22).

**Denmark**<sup>109</sup>

Denmark supported the Commission's proposal that Turkey should be granted candidate status. This was mainly due to the wish to put an end to the isolation of Turkey after Luxembourg. The conflict in Kosovo had also highlighted the importance of Turkey to stability in South-Eastern Europe. Furthermore, Denmark was of the opinion that it was important to avoid a Turkish "veto" on the enlargement process through the Cyprus issue.

*How to proceed further: opening of negotiations or postponement; new initiatives*<sup>110</sup>

Denmark fully supports the strategy agreed upon in Helsinki: Turkey shall be treated like any other candidate, i.e. it has to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria before it can be invited to actual negotiations. Furthermore, as other applicants it should be offered assistance. Of special importance is here the accession partnership, which could act as a tool to influence the development in Turkey, especially with regard to fulfilling the political criteria. A special "road-map" for accession, conversely, would break with the policy of treating Turkey like other candidates.

**Finland**

President Ahtisaari affirmed during his visit to Turkey in November that Finland supports Turkey's application, reminding, however, that Turkey has still a lot to do to fulfil the membership criteria, in particular in the field of human rights. He considered it essential to include Turkey in the programme of enlargement, thus drawing it in a closer co-operation with the EU.<sup>111</sup> In a speech at the European Parliament on 1 December 1999, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Tarja Halonen said Finland hopes that the European

Council could give Turkey the status as a candidate country.

Finland fully supports the decision of the Helsinki European Council stating that Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidates; thus, it must fulfil the Copenhagen criteria. The Helsinki summit decision to grant Turkey the candidate status is seen as important both for regional stability and for the solution of the question of Cyprus. Closer co-operation between the Union and Turkey is part of the Union's work in strengthening peace and human rights.<sup>112</sup>

**France**

The criticisms levelled at the decision on Turkey forced the French government to better elucidate its position. First, the government considers that Turkey should be seen as a European country. While the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, recognised that it stretches "astride the Balkans, therefore over Europe and Asia Minor", he nevertheless recalled that "its European vocation" had been acknowledged ever since 1963.<sup>113</sup> The Deputy Minister for European Affairs is even more straightforward: "It should be reiterated that Europe is not a Christian club and that other types of countries can join, including Muslim countries like Turkey", which, to him, is "clearly European"<sup>114</sup>. On this point, the President of the Republic agrees with the government. In his press conference following the European summit, he did not hesitate to

<sup>109</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, 21 November 1999.

<sup>112</sup> Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen at the European Parliament on 14 December 1999.

<sup>113</sup> Answer by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, to a "question d'actualité" in the Senate, 16 December 1999 (reproduced in the *Bulletin d'actualités* of the Foreign Affairs Ministry dated 17 December 1999, n° 244, p. 16).

<sup>114</sup> Interview of the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, by France 2 TV (reproduced in the *Bulletin d'actualités* dated 13 December 1999).

say that “Turkey, through its history and not merely through its geography and through its ambitions, is definitely European”<sup>115</sup>. For French leaders, it is therefore justified that Turkey should be viewed as any other candidate, all the more as improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey should be encouraged.

This being said, France nevertheless does not suggest that negotiations with Turkey should be opened immediately. In the Assemblée Nationale, the Foreign Affairs Minister asked members of Parliament “not to mistake the Helsinki decision for accession”<sup>116</sup>. The opening of negotiations is conditional on conforming with the Copenhagen criteria and for the time being, Turkey does not meet the political conditions they entail. Hence the importance of the pre-accession policy which Turkey will benefit from in the checking and monitoring of its development. That is another argument French leaders used to support the Helsinki decision: it gives the Fifteen a “lever for modernisation and progress of human rights in Turkey”<sup>117</sup>.

### *Germany*

Cf. question No. 4.

### *Greece*

Given that the decisions on Turkey have been largely derived from negotiations directly involving Greece, the outcome of Helsinki has been considered positive to official Greek positions. Insofar as Greece really means its stated position, i.e. that negotiations for Turkish accession should

lead to a genuine European turn for Turkey, the future steps should constitute real preparation for accession and not just ostentatious moves. But even if the present Foreign Affairs Minister G. Papandreou - and thus the official Greek position - is associated with such a positive reading of the future of Turkey as a candidate country, the general consensus of public opinion is more cynical and expecting no more than formal talks to take place between the EU and Turkey for quite a long time.

Moreover, Greece vows to track closely Ankara's compliance with what Greek diplomacy deems conditions precedent for Turkey's road towards closer relations with the EU. Such conditions, according to Athens, have been agreed by Ankara and guaranteed by the EU (but Ankara considers them in no way as binding commitments, relying on the Finnish Presidency's affirmations and European leaders' explanations to the Turkish President Demirel and Prime Minister Ecevit). Since a specific track has been determined for Greek-Turkish issues of contention, involving bilateral talks and ending in referral to the Hague Court of International Justice, the next months will be crucial to test intentions on all sides.

A series of confidence-building and common-interest-forming initiatives are being prepared between Greece and Turkey, building on the climate of “earthquake diplomacy” and mutual public opinion acceptance between the two countries: such initiatives might well adopt a European setting, thus further helping a de facto integration of Turkey.

### *Ireland*

The Irish government's position on the decisions on Turkey favours the candidate status for Turkey, as it is deemed likely to give an incentive to Turkey to meet the Copenhagen criteria. Like other Member States, Ireland fully supports the Helsinki European Council's reiteration that compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria is a prerequisite for the opening of negotiations. The Helsinki decisions on

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<sup>115</sup> *Bulletin d'actualités*, 13 December 1999, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> Answer of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, to a “question d'actualité” in the Assemblée Nationale on 14 December 1999, *Bulletin d'actualités*, 15 December 1999, n° 242, p.10.

<sup>117</sup> Answer of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, to a “question d'actualité” in the Senate on 13 December 1999, *Bulletin d'actualités*, 17 December 1999, n°244, p.16.

enlargement, including Turkey, provide the framework for the enlargement process in the period ahead.

### *Italy*

Italy has consistently sustained Turkish candidacy for EU-membership on the same terms as those applied for the other candidates. The relations between Italy and Turkey have been particularly good, with the exception of a brief episode of tension at the end of 1998 over the extradition of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader.<sup>118</sup> Excellent relations, mainly relating to mutually beneficial trade, have been completely restored since, and as a result, Italy has been one of the strongest advocates for the inclusion of Turkey in the process of EU-enlargement.<sup>119</sup> In fact, Italy's Foreign Minister Dini travelled to Turkey and intensified the dialogue with the Turkish government during the period of the Helsinki summit to "illustrate directly to [his] colleague Cem the correct interpretation of the understanding expressed [at the Helsinki summit]."<sup>120</sup> At the 12 December press conference at the end of the Helsinki summit, Premier D'Alema stated that his Turkish counterpart, Bulent Ecevit, had expressed his gratitude to Italian policy makers for the long term support for Turkish desire for EU-membership.<sup>121</sup> The attitude is clearly that Turkey should be treated on an equal basis with the rest of the applicants.

With regard to concrete suggestions on how to proceed, however, there seems to be no sense of urgency, most of the speculations are linked to the need for Turkey to

improve its human rights observance, to better guarantee minority protection, and to demonstrate willingness for a constructive solution of the Greek-Turkish disputes.<sup>122</sup> It is also to be noted that President Romano Prodi's remark with regard to inevitable problems over Turkish cultural integration with European values and the question of the Union's new boundaries, have also been taken up and debated by the Italian public, thus introducing a wholly new topic to the general enlargement discussions in Italy.<sup>123</sup>

### *Netherlands*

The Netherlands government agrees with the candidate status of Turkey. The main reason for this position is that the government thinks that the confirmation of Turkey's candidate status will offer more opportunities for the European Union to influence the political and human rights situation in Turkey. The government has underlined moreover that it considered the improvement in the bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey in the second half of 1999 as a facilitating reason for the decision on Turkey. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Aartsen has emphasised that the policy of the Dutch government towards Turkey is a policy of "engagement" and not of "isolation".<sup>124</sup> While the government policy towards Turkey is supported by two out of three parliamentary parties taking part in the coalition government, - the social-democrats (PvdA) and the progressive liberals (D66) - the third party, the conservative liberal VVD, rejects Turkey's candidate status because

<sup>118</sup> See, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, p. 99.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Lamberto Dini, Italy's Foreign Minister by Maurizio Molinari, *Il Tempo*, 2 January 2000.

<sup>120</sup> Own translation, quoted by Leonardo Maisano "I Quindici Aprono ad Ankara", *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 11 December 1999, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Bulletin Quotidien Europe*, Special Edition on the 11-12 December Helsinki European Summit, N° 7613, 12 December 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Alberto Negri, "Uno Sguardo a Oriente: La Turchia è Europa", *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 11 December 1999, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Reply of Foreign Minister Van Aartsen to the Advisory Council on International Affairs, doc. DEU 527-99, 20 September 1999. The Advisory Council (AIV) had written a report on request of the government with the title "Towards calmer waters - a report on relations between Turkey and the European Union", report nr. 9, July 1999.

it thinks that Turkey's democracy and human rights situation do not justify such a status. The Green Left party shares these doubts, while the largest opposition party, the Christian Democrats (CDA) supports the position of the government.

The Netherlands government has emphasised that its support for Turkey's candidate status does not mean that accession negotiations will be opened with Turkey in short time. Its sound opinion is that Turkey does not qualify for the political criteria of Copenhagen. On a visit to Ankara on 29-30 November 1999, Foreign Minister van Aartsen has urged his Turkish colleague Cem to improve the human rights situation in Turkey and not to execute the death penalty to Öcalan.

In the view of the Dutch government, co-operation with Turkey in the next future should take place on a practical basis, rather than being a one-sided focus on the accession criteria. Turkey should also be closely involved in European security and defence policies. The government considers it important that the European Commission studies the financial consequences of Turkey's status as a candidate member.<sup>125</sup>

### ***Portugal***

Portugal supports a new negotiation style, better reflecting the present moment in the relations between Ankara and Athens. The evolution in the bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece opens a window of opportunity for the improvement of the relations between the EU and Ankara. Portugal supports the European approach to Turkey, based on the role this country has in NATO. Therefore, it should be considered as a candidate for future membership of the EU. However, Ankara must commit itself to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, namely its political dimensions, especially within the human rights field. It should also be of utmost importance that Ankara shows more openness to solve the

Cyprus question.

### ***Spain***

Prime Minister Aznar described the decisions on Turkey adopted by the European Council as a "fair balance" which recognises the legitimate expectations of all parties involved. "The decision to accept the right of Turkey to participate in the European Union has not been an easy one", Aznar emphasised, but the Spanish government is convinced this decision serves well the interests of Europe and will increase its stability. Turkey, Aznar highlighted, will not be discriminated, it will have to meet the same criteria as the other candidates, but in return, will be offered the same opportunities.<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, the Spanish government thinks that now is the time to take all the necessary steps to upgrade Turkey's status to that of a candidate country and define a legal and financial framework for Turkey similar to the ones for the other candidate countries.

### ***Sweden***

Statements by the government during the second half of 1999 about Turkey's proposed candidature attracted some international attention. Prior to the General Affairs Council on 5 September representatives of the Swedish and Greek Governments had met, and the news came out that Sweden was not willing to unconditionally accept Turkey as a candidate country, as suggested by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at the Cologne summit. After the Council meeting, Foreign Minister Anna Lindh was singled out by the Turkish press as the EU politician most opposed to Turkey, as reported by the Financial Times, which carried a headline quoting Sweden as "Turkey's latest enemy".

After being criticised by political oppo-

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<sup>125</sup> Supra note 6.

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<sup>126</sup> DSCD 271/99, p. 15120.



nents, Ms. Lindh stated “according to the Amsterdam Treaty, even a candidate country must be democratic...we have said all the time that we would like to see Turkey as a candidate country, but before that, Turkey has to show some progress concerning human rights and democracy”. She also denied that Sweden was isolated and that Greece accepted a Turkish candidate status without conditions.<sup>127</sup>

However, a gradual shift in the Swedish position could also be seen. After a meeting with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, Anna Lindh said “Turkey has to deliver reforms of the human rights before the Helsinki summit or make a commitment to carry out such improvements”<sup>128</sup>. After a meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem on 25 November, the Foreign Minister stated that “recent developments, as a consequence of the international attention on the human rights situation in Turkey, have in reality had a positive direction”<sup>129</sup>. Finally, in a newspaper interview, the Foreign Minister said that much had changed this autumn in the area of human rights and Turkey’s relations with its Kurdish minority, and “now might be the time to have Turkey accepted as a candidate”<sup>130</sup>.

After the Helsinki summit, the Swedish participants were satisfied: “Turkey becomes a candidate for membership without the EU renouncing the demands for human rights and democracy.”<sup>131</sup> The Foreign Minister further explained: “Six months ago would have been too early. By waiting and making demands on Turkey we have contributed to opening up a valuable debate about human rights inside the

country.”<sup>132</sup>

A few days later in Parliament, the Prime Minister stated: “Our position is exactly the same as last summer and before. One of our strongest objections earlier was that a decision was about to be made which did not take Greece’s interests into consideration...the way in which the decision now came into being, i.e. after our intervention, Greece became one of the architects behind it.”<sup>133</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

#### *Candidate status / pre-in*

Prime Minister Blair told the House of Commons on returning from the Helsinki summit on 13 December 1999 that: *‘The European Council also opened a new and much more positive chapter in its relations with Turkey. This has long been a preoccupation for Britain. Turkey is of great strategic importance, and an ally in NATO. A more constructive relationship between Turkey and the EU is long overdue, but we now have secured that. Turkey is now a candidate country, destined to join the European Union on the same basis as the other candidates. It will enjoy all the benefits of other candidates, including financial assistance, even though accession negotiations are unlikely to begin for some time. However, it is an excellent outcome.’*

The British government’s position on Turkey had earlier been defined principally around its relationship with Cyprus and the accession of Cyprus to the EU. Britain asserted that it would have no problem allowing Turkey to become an applicant State and open discussions with the EU provided that there was no attempt by Turkey to block Cypriot entrance in the “first wave”. In March 1999 the (then)

<sup>127</sup> *Svenska Dagbladet*, 22 October 1999.

<sup>128</sup> *Dagens Nyheter*, 15 October 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Reply by the Minister in the Riksdag on 2 December, to a question about discriminating legislation in Turkey.

<sup>130</sup> *Financial Times*, 7 December 1999.

<sup>131</sup> Prime Minister Göran Persson at a press conference on 11 December 1999.

<sup>132</sup> Foreign Minister Anna Lindh on the same occasion.

<sup>133</sup> Prime Minister Göran Persson in a parliamentary debate about the Helsinki summit, 15 December 1999.

Minister for Europe, Joyce Quin, stated before the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs:

*'We are active both in our support and work in terms of Cyprus itself and also in terms of our relationship with Turkey. We have made the point repeatedly that we believe that Cyprus's accession to the European Union is in the interests of all the people of that island. Also, there are contacts with people in both communities in Cyprus. We think there is some awareness, even if it is not reflected in official statements there, among Turkish Cypriot business people and the people in the Turkish Cypriot community that the European Union can have considerable economic and political benefits in Cyprus.'* (SCFA evidence 3.3.99 §74)

Britain was therefore willing to accept Turkey into negotiations provided it did not attempt to bar entry to Cyprus. (op. cit. §68) The SCFA Third Report (March 1999) concluded: *'We consider that the Government should make it clear that Turkey does not have a veto over the accession of Cyprus, and that Cyprus, even in its present divided state, may therefore be admitted to the EU on the same basis as all other applicants.'* (§88)

*How to proceed further: opening of negotiations or postponement; new initiatives*

It would be hoped that with Turkey now a candidate and Cyprus in negotiations with the EU, the end of the conflict in the island could be achieved through initiatives taken by the EU. However, it is too early to say what form these initiatives might take.

6. *Has the general attitude towards enlargement or accession (inside the government, public opinion) changed over the last six months?*
- *Also with regard to basic questions raised in the Finnish EU-Presidency paper on enlargement (ultimate limits of EU, long term consequences of enlargement)?*
  - *Impact on external and transatlantic relations*

### *Austria*

The general attitude of the Austrian government seems to have changed to a more sceptical approach which has to be seen in the context of the development of the internal political situation in the last months. The outcome of the general elections on 3 October 1999, seriously weakened the government coalition (Social Democrats and the People's Party) which has been in power since early 1987. For the first time, the People's Party came third behind the Freedom Party (FPÖ), though only by a narrow margin of 415 votes. The forming of a new government coalition is very difficult because the ruling coalition parties face a serious dilemma. In the twelve years of their coalition government, the two partners have lost in total more than 24% of the vote. But the only available coalition partner,<sup>134</sup> the Freedom Party under the leadership of Jörg Haider, is completely unacceptable to the SPÖ, and the ÖVP would also have to overcome inner-party opposition against a coalition with the FPÖ. In addition to this, the ÖVP had promised in its election campaign that it would go into opposition in the case of falling back behind the Freedom Party. This stalemate led to two months of "exploratory talks" between the parties. As already mentioned, on the day before the Helsinki summit, the Federal President, Thomas Klestil, finally asked the current Chancellor and head of the Social Democrats, Viktor Klima, to form a new government. The ÖVP "expanded upon" its decision to go into opposition and entered into coalition negotiations with the SPÖ. These talks failed on 21 January 2000. On the same day, President Klestil renewed the mandate of Mr. Klima to form a government, this time including the possibility to form a minority government. ÖVP and FPÖ already expressed their fierce opposition to a socialist-led minority government and started unofficial coalition negotiations. The outcome is still unclear but a coalition government of ÖVP and FPÖ is very probable. For the time being the former SPÖ-ÖVP coalition governs as acting government.

Official result of the general election of October 3, 1999 (as compared to the last elections in 1995):

SPÖ	33,2%	(-4,9%)	65 seats	(-6)
FPÖ	26,9%	(+5%)	52 seats	(+11)
ÖVP	26,9%	(-1,4%)	52 seats	(±0)
Green Party	7,4%	(+2,6%)	14 seats	(+5)
Liberal Forum	3,7%	(-1,8%)	0 seats <sup>135</sup>	(-10)

The fundamental views of Austria's government concerning EU-enlargement remained largely the same. It is characterised by antagonistic interests and cleavages within the gov-

<sup>134</sup> The Green Party is a potential coalition partner too, but it cannot provide enough votes to get a majority with any of the other parties in Parliament. Therefore, the Green Party could only be part of a three-party coalition or a minority government.

<sup>135</sup> The Liberal Forum this time missed the 4%-threshold needed to be represented in Parliament.

ernment parties. The overall mid- and long-term effects of enlargement on Austria's security, economy and its political position in the European Union are considered to be highly positive. This is opposed by short-term apprehensions concerning migration, jobs, unfair competition due to lower prices in the neighbouring countries and rising transit traffic. Accordingly, the interest organisations representing labour, agriculture and other parts of the economy argue for a "well-prepared" (often a euphemism for later) enlargement together with extensive transition periods. The government also has to take public opinion into account, which is not very supportive of enlargement. The resulting government position is one of support for "well-prepared" enlargement together with several transition periods. In the words of Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel, particular attention in the enlargement negotiations will have to be paid to the labour market and the freedom of movement: "We will commit ourselves to ensuring that these issues are treated with extreme sensitivity with regard to migration and commuting." Schüssel also-called for a solid transition period to be drawn up with a view to ensure a successful accession process.<sup>136</sup>

#### *Government positions in the second half of 1999*

It is the strategy of the Austrian government to emphasise the need for solutions in several areas from the outset of the accession negotiations. The main difference between Austria and the majority of the other 14 EU-countries is that Austria will be most affected by enlargement since it has extensive neighbouring borders with four applicant countries. As a consequence, Austria in some cases is the only country that has already looked in detail into several areas and assessed its potential effects. Whereas some of the EU-countries do not have specific views on certain chapters (i.e. transit traffic is of no major concern to countries such as Spain or Portugal), Austria already has a relatively clear picture on their potential effects. This situation can sometimes generate the impression that Austria is blocking the negotiations.<sup>137</sup>

At least in the public, members of the Austrian government have threatened to block the enlargement process if certain questions are not dealt with in an acceptable way for Austria. This behaviour is apparently devised to appease different groups that view enlargement critically. In the last six months, two topics were particularly sensitive.

The first of these two topics was the question of nuclear safety which constitutes a continuous priority of Austria's EU-policy.<sup>138</sup> Austria's position - as communicated to the public - concerning nuclear power plants in neighbouring countries, and especially in Slovakia, has not always been entirely clear. In July, the Austrian government agreed on an "anti-atom-plan" that demanded the earliest possible shut-down of several nuclear power plants of the first generation in Eastern Europe.<sup>139</sup> The "anti-atom-plan" included a paragraph that called for convincing closure plans for these power plants that should have been presented before the Helsinki summit. These closure plans then should have formed the basis of Austria's decisions concerning enlargement in Helsinki. Implicitly this wording indicated the possibility of an Austrian veto against the decision on the extension of accession negotiations to all applicant countries, envisaged for Helsinki. Furthermore, the "anti-atom-plan" referred to

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<sup>136</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Press Release, 7 December 1999.

<sup>137</sup> An expert in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs estimated that sometimes 50%-80% of the speaking time in the relevant working groups is consumed by Austrian representatives.

<sup>138</sup> One of Austria's most important topics in its first year of membership in the European Union already concerned nuclear power plants in neighbouring Slovakia. Austria tried to block the use of EU-funds to finance the building of the nuclear power plant at Mochovce.

<sup>139</sup> This concerns the nuclear power plants in Ignalina, Bohunice und Kosloduj.

nuclear power plants under construction.<sup>140</sup> These plants should have safety standards according to “state-of-the-art” technology.

While the EU Member States tried to find common ground before the opening of the chapter on energy with the applicant countries, especially between September and November 1999, some members of the government expressed different opinions about Austria’s policy concerning nuclear safety.<sup>141</sup> In the Council negotiations Austria insisted that newly built power plants should have safety standards according to “state-of-the-art” technology. The majority of the Member States, however, insisted on a safety standard “prevailing in the Union”. Finally, the EU-15-governments agreed on a compromise text which referred to the relevant Council conclusions concerning nuclear safety.<sup>142</sup> This was interpreted by the Austrian public and the opposition parties as compromise which was a defeat and a violation of the “anti-atom-plan”.

The sometimes inconsistent statements of government members were criticised in November by Austria’s Ambassador to Slovakia, Ms. Gabriele Matzner, in a letter to several federal ministries.<sup>143</sup> The Ambassador argued that contradictory statements by Austrian politicians had weakened Austria’s position in Slovakia and in the European Union and that threats to veto Slovakia’s EU-membership because of nuclear safety would be regarded as insignificant in Slovakia. Ms. Matzner further criticised that she had not received accurate data concerning nuclear safety from the Austrian government, making it very difficult for her to explain and argue Austria’s position in Slovakia.

On 18 November 1999, the National Council (Nationalrat) unanimously passed a resolution concerning nuclear safety. In this resolution the Parliament called upon the government to do everything it can to achieve the closure of the nuclear power plant in Bohunice (Slovakia) as soon as possible.<sup>144</sup> With a view to the European Council in Helsinki the government was asked to insist that the European Council should give a clear signal with respect to the advancement of the closure of Bohunice. Austria, the resolution continued, demanded that Slovakia should show the willingness to negotiate an earlier closure of Bohunice before the opening of accession negotiations with Slovakia.

The second topic concerned transit traffic. In a surprise move the Federal Minister for Science and Transport, Caspar Einem, declared, on 4 November 1999, that Austria would block the opening of the chapter dealing with traffic in the accession negotiations. This rather unusual step was explained with the need to find solutions to avoid an unbearable increase of transit traffic through Austria, especially considering the older and therefore more environmentally damaging Eastern European lorries. Mr. Einem added that Austria could not accept

<sup>140</sup> This concerns most of all Temelin in the Czech Republic.

<sup>141</sup> Austria’s Minister for Women’s Affairs and Consumer Protection, Barbara Prammer, on one occasion announced that Austria would veto the opening of accession negotiations with Slovakia unless it agrees to close Bohunice before 2006. Chancellor Klima declared shortly afterwards that this connection would not be made and made it clear that Austria would not veto the decisions of the Helsinki summit on enlargement, *Der Standard*, 9 November 1999.

<sup>142</sup> Council conclusions of September and December 1998, confirmed by the European Council in Vienna (point 67 of the Presidency conclusions). See also point 7 of the Presidency conclusions of the European Council in Helsinki: “The European Council recalls the importance of high standards of nuclear safety in Central and Eastern Europe. It calls on the Council to consider how to address the issue of nuclear safety in the framework of the enlargement process in accordance with the relevant Council conclusions.”

<sup>143</sup> The letter, dated 11 November 1999, became public a few days later, *Der Standard*, 16.11.1999.

<sup>144</sup> Slovakia wants to close the nuclear power plant in Bohunice in 2006 and 2008. Austria insists on an earlier date.

EU-membership of Eastern European applicant countries as long as the diversion of transit traffic to rail or ship is not guaranteed.

This announcement was highly criticised by the Austrian media and, according to the press, also by the other Member States, EU-institutions and applicant countries. Especially the timing of the announcement to block negotiations caused amazement, because it came before substantial talks had even started. Since a solution to the Austrian criticisms can only be found in negotiations, it is hardly a successful strategy to block the commencement of negotiations and thereby provoking all the other participants in the talks. The Austrian government's way of acting was attributed by commentators to the current political situation in Austria.<sup>145</sup>

In the end, the opening of the chapter on traffic was not blocked. Austria insisted that some sort of solution had to be found in the course of the negotiations to avoid an explosive increase in transit traffic. The Austrian government considered its concerns sufficiently reflected by a common declaration of the Council and the Commission, complemented by a unilateral Austrian declaration, that demanded the full transposition of the *acquis* in the field of road transport - including social, technical, environmental and safety standards - before the full liberalisation of traffic.<sup>146</sup>

#### *The Freedom Party - a changing position?*

The Freedom Party has always opposed enlargement. The main arguments against enlargement were the costs and that Austria would be "flooded with 200 000 cheap workers" which would lead to wage decrease and an explosive increase in unemployment. The anti-enlargement rhetoric of the Freedom Party and especially of its leader, Jörg Haider, had always been aggressive. He accused the government of acting like an occupying power and of selling out Austria.<sup>147</sup>

The opposition to enlargement remained but the arguments, and most of all, the rhetoric changed in the last months. In its manifesto for the general elections the FPÖ<sup>148</sup> stated that enlargement needed to be reconsidered. It continued that the applicant countries so far do not fulfil the membership criteria and that a premature and over-hasty eastern enlargement would lead to serious disadvantages for Austria. Therefore, enlargement is out of question at the moment. The manifesto went on to list the preconditions for enlargement from the point of view of the Freedom Party. Five out of the nine points of this list concerned the existing European Union itself. Enlargement should not take place as long as

- unemployment in the EU is not at least reduced by half;
- a substantial reform of the *acquis* has not clearly defined the division of the competencies between the Union and the Member States;
- a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy has not led to the re-nationalisation of agricultural income-policy;
- fraud and mismanagement have not been effectively dealt with;

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<sup>145</sup> A provisional government, coalition negotiations and the possible participation of the EU- and enlargement critical Freedom Party, *Der Standard*, 6/7 November 1999.

<sup>146</sup> *Der Standard*, 13 September 1999.

<sup>147</sup> *Der Standard*, 29 January 1998 and 10 September 1998.

<sup>148</sup> "FPÖ - Der Haider-Prinzhorn Plan", Vienna, 1999, translations by Helmut Lang.

- the Union has not undertaken substantial steps to enhance citizen orientation, subsidiarity and transparency.

The preconditions concerning the applicant countries are less demanding. Enlargement will be opposed by the Freedom Party as long as

- significant differences between the wage levels continue to exist;
- social and environmental standards and labour legislation are not in conformity with EU-standards;
- the applicant countries have not agreed at least to mid-term strategies to stop the use of nuclear energy;
- the so-called AVNOJ- and Benes-decisions are not repealed.<sup>149</sup>

The first two of these points repeat mainly mainstream positions as put down in the Copenhagen criteria. The third point, however, would be difficult to achieve as long as current EU-countries continue to use nuclear power. Consequently, the precondition should be either that the applicant countries have to meet the highest possible safety standards or that the EU as a whole should commit itself to reject the use of nuclear energy.

The last point mainly refers to the question of restitution. The Austrian government also considers this topic as one that has to be tackled in the course of the accession negotiations.

Taken together, these preconditions to enlargement express the Freedom Party's opposition to enlargement. Some conditions will not be achieved in the foreseeable future (the amount of the reduction of unemployment), some are very general and lack the criteria to make their fulfilment determinable (i.e. the condition concerning fraud and mismanagement), and some are simply not on the agenda of the European Union (re-nationalisation of agricultural policy).

However, a further convergence of the positions of the Freedom Party with those of the current government is not completely impossible. The Freedom Party wants to enter government, which is in the current political situation only conceivable through a coalition with the People's Party. The People's Party would and could accept a coalition with the FPÖ only if the latter changed - among others - its policy-positions concerning the EU and especially enlargement. In this context, in mid-November Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider expressed his views on enlargement in a way which largely coincided with those of the government. He pleaded for enlargement in the case that Austria's interests will not be jeopardised. This would only be possible if certain transitional periods in several fields such as access to the employment market are introduced. Furthermore, European-wide nuclear safety standards should be achieved.<sup>150</sup> Haider also welcomed the forthcoming decision to accept Turkey as a candidate country. He added that he had always favoured enlargement and had never said otherwise.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> These decisions go back to the days of World War II and were the legal basis of the expulsion of German-speaking inhabitants of what is now Slovenia (AVNOJ-decisions) and the Czech Republic (Benes-decisions).

<sup>150</sup> Thereby changing the position put down in the manifesto for the general elections a few months before.

<sup>151</sup> *Der Standard*, 19 November 1999.

### *Social Partners*

Long standing and well known positions of the Austrian social partners<sup>152</sup> have not changed. From time to time the arguments are repeated. The head of the Chamber of Labour, Herbert Tumpel, for example, repeated in August that transition periods to protect the labour market in Austria will be absolutely necessary. The duration of the transition periods should be determined by social and economic criteria such as unemployment or the differences of the wage levels. To reduce the differences Mr. Tumpel proposed to transfer funds from the southern EU-Member States to the applicant countries.<sup>153</sup>

The head of the Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (ÖGB), Fritz Verzetnitsch, rejected any talk of target dates. He called it “playing with figures” when, for example, the Commissioner for enlargement, Günter Verheugen, mentioned 2004 as the year when the first Eastern European countries could enter the EU. Necessary are, from the unions’ point of view, rules and transition periods for the labour market. Furthermore, the trade unions in the applicant countries should be much more involved in the negotiation process.<sup>154</sup>

In a statement in July, Mr. Verzetnitsch specified that transition periods concerning the freedom of labour will be necessary until the wage level in the Eastern European countries rises to 70 or 80% of the average level in Austria.<sup>155</sup> The head of the representation of the European Commission in Austria, Wolfgang Streitenberger, clearly rejected this demand of the trade unions and argued that, for example, the wage level in one of the Austrian States (Länder), Burgenland, also clearly remains under the Austrian average.<sup>156</sup>

### *Public Opinion*

According to the Eurobarometer 51, Austria showed the lowest average support level for enlargement of all the current EU Member States. The figures ranged from support levels of 62% and 58% in Denmark and Greece respectively to support levels of 38% Portugal and Germany, 33% in France and 29% in Austria.

The low support for enlargement in Austria was confirmed by a survey on behalf of the Austrian government, conducted in September and October 1999.<sup>157</sup> Only 5% of those interviewed said that they would very much welcome enlargement, against 26% who said they would not welcome it at all.<sup>158</sup>

Taking the positive and negative categories together, 33% of the people of Austria were more or less in favour of enlargement versus 59% who were more or less against it.

The analysis by demographic variables shows that men were significantly more supportive of enlargement than women. There did not seem to be a clear correlation between age and attitudes to enlargement. Only one result clearly stood out: those aged 60 or more were by far the most critical towards enlargement with a net opposition of 42% (23% in favour and 65% against enlargement).

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<sup>152</sup> The Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (ÖGB), the Chamber of Labour, the Chambers of Agriculture, the Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Austrian Industrialists (VÖI).

<sup>153</sup> *Der Standard*, 9 August 1999.

<sup>154</sup> *Der Standard*, 15 October 1999.

<sup>155</sup> *Der Standard*, 28 July 1999.

<sup>156</sup> *Der Standard*, 3 December 1999.

<sup>157</sup> “Market-Institut: Die Einstellung der Österreicher zum EURO”; (the survey also includes questions concerning enlargement); Fieldwork was done in September and October 1999; 1000 face-to-face interviews, translations by Helmut Lang.

<sup>158</sup> In the following I will sum up the figures of the two positive and the two negative categories. For details see the tables.



A clear and positive correlation existed between formal education and the support of enlargement. Those who had attended only elementary school opposed enlargement with a net percentage of 53%, those who had finished secondary schools opposed it by 23% and those with “Matura”<sup>159</sup> or university degree supported enlargement with 59% versus 36% (net support of 23%).

Looking at the results from a geographical perspective, the people in the States (“Länder”) sharing borders with the applicant countries (Lower Austria, Burgenland, Styria and Carinthia, and to a less degree Upper Austria) were most critical. In the western States (Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg) and in Vienna opposition to enlargement was smaller.

*Support of eastern enlargement (in percent)*

Eastern enlargement would be	very much welcomed	welcomed	not welcomed	absolutely not welcomed
Austria	5	28	33	26
Men	7	32	32	23
Women	2	24	34	29
Aged 15-29	5	30	33	22
Aged 30-39	8	23	31	31
Aged 40-49	6	27	41	18
Aged 50-59	3	39	31	21
Aged 60+	1	22	30	35
Elementary school	2	16	35	36
Higher school	2	33	36	22
“Matura” or university degree	16	43	23	13
Upper Austria	2	28	37	22
Lower Austria, Burgenland	5	19	44	21
Vienna	5	36	18	30
Styria, Carinthia	5	20	41	25
Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg	4	36	25	31

Source: Survey on behalf of the government in September and October 1999, conducted by the “market”-Institut.

Taking these rather critical attitudes towards enlargement into account the answers to another question are a little bit surprising. Asked whether advantages or disadvantages would prevail for Austria in the case of Eastern enlargement, slightly more people tended to say that advantages would prevail (20% expect more advantages, 18% more disadvantages). However, about half of the people thought that neither advantages nor disadvantages would prevail. A large majority of those clearly did not welcome enlargement.

<sup>159</sup> In Germany “Abitur”.

*Would advantages or disadvantages for Austria prevail (in percent)*

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Undecided	Don't know
Austria	20	18	51	10
Men	28	18	48	5
Women	13	18	54	14
Aged 15-29	21	21	47	11
Aged 30-39	20	19	55	6
Aged 40-49	21	14	59	4
Aged 50-59	23	21	47	8
Aged 60+	17	16	49	18
Elementary school	11	16	61	11
Higher school	25	16	49	11
“Matura” or university degree	32	28	35	5
Upper Austria	13	24	52	10
Lower Austria, Burgenland	15	19	55	11
Vienna	30	13	40	15
Styria, Carinthia	22	16	56	5
Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg	19	20	53	8

The only Eastern European applicant country that can count on the support of the Austrian population is Hungary. 53% would welcome Hungary's EU-membership against 46% who oppose it. The figures for the other countries shown in the survey are:

Slovenia	38% in favour	60% against;
Czech Republic	33% in favour	65% against;
Poland	28% in favour	71% against.

In reply to the question about the preferred date of eastern enlargement a relative majority mentions the years 2006 to 2010:

until 2005:	19%
2006-2010:	29%
after 2010:	18%
no enlargement:	23%

## **Belgium**

Overall, there is no strong evidence of any significant change over the last few months in the Belgian attitude towards the forthcoming enlargement. At most, the many basic questions raised in the Finnish EU-Presidency Paper on Enlargement evoked some shift in emphasis. As most issues arising from this document are dealt with in extenso elsewhere in this survey, only one will be shortly covered here: notably where the Paper asserts that it is not useful to try now to raise the question of where the ultimate limits of the EU should be drawn. Belgian diplomacy indeed considers it too early<sup>160</sup> to have a debate on this issue. Yet, at the same time it fully concurs with former Belgian Prime Minister Dehaene's assertion<sup>161</sup> that the EU Member States will, at some point in the long term, have to take a position on the Union's ultimate geographical extension.

### *Impact on external and transatlantic relations*

From a Belgian point of view, sufficient attention should be devoted to the potential impact of the enlargement operation on the wider spectre of EU-relations with other countries in Europe and beyond. After all, the one's gain should not necessarily result in another's (perceived) loss. As far as countries in the Union's (future) immediate periphery - be it to the East or to the South - are concerned, Belgium therefore fully supports the Commission's plea for the elaboration of distinctive strategic partnerships with each of these neighbouring countries in parallel to the

enlargement process.<sup>162</sup> As to the impact on the transatlantic relationship, given the fact that stability and prosperity on the European continent are in the shared interest of both protagonists of this relationship, Belgium firmly believes that the process of intra-European integration, and that of eastward EU-enlargement in particular, should not block the way to a further and balanced intensification of EU-US relations.

## **Denmark<sup>163</sup>**

The last six months have in no way led to changes in the Danish government's position on enlargement. The same applies to public opinion, although it still remains to be seen how the public will react to the enlargement decisions reached at Helsinki.

So far, there has been no discussion on the ultimate limits of the EU in the Danish government. Generally, such a discussion is looked upon with great scepticism: should one really draw new lines on a map and clearly distinguish potential insiders from outsiders? Why should one extinguish any kind of accession hope in countries like Ukraine or Croatia? Presently, it is unrealistic to talk about membership for Ukraine, but the situation could look differently in ten years time. With a political turn-around in Croatia this perspective could rapidly come into play.

## **Finland**

The general attitude has not changed considerably. The importance of enlargement is emphasised; it is seen as the most important challenge for the EU, and also a strong (if not the strongest) foreign policy tool of the Union.<sup>164</sup> Finland is determined

<sup>160</sup> And maybe even potentially counterproductive, since the maintenance of some degree of ambiguity on this matter is not necessarily negative.

<sup>161</sup> Made, together with former German President von Weizsäcker and former British Trade Minister Simon, in their Report of 18 October 1999 to the Commission on 'The institutional implications of enlargement'.

<sup>162</sup> Some of these relationships will be dealt with in more detail below.

<sup>163</sup> Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 1999

<sup>164</sup> Secretary of State Jukka Valtasaari at the Conference of the European Parliaments in Helsinki 20-21 July 1999.

in promoting the enlargement process as a necessity for stability in Europe.<sup>165</sup> Security and peace in Europe are best guaranteed through involving all the interested European countries into closer co-operation within the EU.<sup>166</sup>

The government sees that in order to be able to take care of its interests, and of those of its members, the Union should develop its relationship to all countries in Europe, and beyond Europe, in an active and not a reactive way.

An important question for Finland in this context is how to avoid the creation of new dividing lines. It culminates in the relations with Russia: the gap between Russia and Europe tends to widen also as a result of the Baltic countries' progress in applying the EU *acquis*. The problem Finland, and the EU, seem to face now is how to develop relations with Russia in a form that is meaningful for both parties, or at least impede Russia from isolating itself, in a situation in which Russia should be reminded of, e.g., some shared legal principles and in which concrete conclusions should be drawn in case of non-obedience (see the Helsinki summit conclusions on Chechnya).

The public opinion is certainly not enthusiastic about EU-enlargement. The opinion poll carried out by the Centre for Finnish Business and Policy Studies (EVA) in autumn 1999 showed that working for EU-enlargement was the least popular among the 21 alternatives that had been proposed as the main goals of the EU and of the Finnish Presidency in particular. The most popular aim was to make the fight against transnational crime more effective. The results were practically

identical in the polls in 1998 and 1997.<sup>167</sup>

### *France*

Over the past six months, the most striking development has probably been the growing awareness that, within a relatively short period of time or at any rate shorter than might have been thought, the European Union will include some thirty Member States. Quite obviously, government circles had already come to terms with this development but the idea of a continent-wide Union follows a slower course in public opinion. However, the Helsinki European Council's decision on Turkey may have contributed to making a greater number of French people realise that the European construction, planned in the past to accommodate six West European States, was going to stretch to the confines of Asia.

And yet, this does not mean that there is any real debate in France on the ultimate limits of the EU. Considering the statements made by the President of the Republic and the "attacks" the Foreign Affairs Minister had to face with respect to Turkey on his return from Helsinki, it is in fact rather unlikely to be launched by French leaders. Mr. Jacques Chirac actually stated that "the limits of Europe is a somewhat abstract issue. (...) We shall see as we go in which conditions the countries which have not yet applied may do so"<sup>168</sup>.

A vast Union could somewhat be attractive to the French who often wish that Europe should play a role on the international scene. In addition, far from watering down into a mere free-trading area, a loathed prospect in French views, the Union is currently developing the instruments

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<sup>165</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs Tarja Halonen at Chatham House on 17 September 1999.

<sup>166</sup> Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen at the Conference of the European Parliaments in Helsinki 20-21 July 1999.

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<sup>167</sup> "Suomalaisten EU-kannanotot", syksy 1999; EVA, Helsinki 1999. (Available also at <http://www.eva.fi>).

<sup>168</sup> Joint press conference held by the President of the Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac and the Prime Minister, Mr. Lionel Jospin, Helsinki, 11 December 1999, *Bulletin d'actualités*, 13 December 1999, p. 6.

which will strengthen its monetary and military might in the world<sup>169</sup>. But enlargement has not materialised yet and French leaders still dread its institutional consequences. The way a thirty-member-strong Europe should be run is an increasingly concerning issue for French officials and they are already trying to think it out.<sup>170</sup>

### Germany

The debate on Turkey revealed the deficit of a more thorough debate on the terms and consequences of enlargement in Germany. Thus, in the aftermath of Helsinki a lively discussion on the borders of a wider EU, its political identity, the need and risks of flexibility and differentiation in a EU of 28 and the problems of governance in an ever more diverse Union etc. came up. For many academic observers and officials, Helsinki kicked off a new ball game accompanied by a general feeling of uncertainty. Soul searching and a review of integration doctrines is going on at present.<sup>171</sup> As far as the overall framework, including the project of a structured process of constitution-making is concerned, the German government looks for an intensive exchange with France.

There are contradictory statements on the limits of enlargement. Whereas Chancellor Schröder thinks, that more enlargement than agreed in Helsinki would be

inappropriate<sup>172</sup>, the geopolitical dynamic of enlargement might make the inclusion of Croatia or even the Ukraine probable.<sup>173</sup>

One of the lessons of Kosovo for the German government obviously was to strengthen the position that EU-enlargement is the most important strategic goal of the EU.<sup>174</sup> It shall be accomplished as swift as possible. It is quite unclear that public opinion supports this position. Germany is constantly among the more reserved Member States with an average of 38% of the population supporting enlargement with a significant spread depending on the candidate country.<sup>175</sup> There are still no national polls available on enlargement.

Interestingly, the positive economic effects in the run up to enlargement do not get proper attention. Exports from Germany into the 13 candidate countries increased by 113% from 1993 to 1998. In 1998 it reached a volume of 92,2 billion DM. Imports increased by even 123% and counted for 76 billion DM (Imports from Turkey 1998: 10,7 billion DM; exports 13,6 billion DM). Trade with the 13 countries make up 9% or so of Germany's overall trade. Most important markets are Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Turkey; because of the automobile sector the Czech Republic is number one among the candidate countries in terms of imports (followed by Poland, Hungary and Turkey).<sup>176</sup> Economists assume that the first

<sup>169</sup> "L'Europe-puissance", *Le Monde*, 12-13 December 1999.

<sup>170</sup> Enlargement viewed by Hubert Vedrine, Foreign Affairs Minister, "Nous allons vers une Europe à géométrie variable", *Libération*, 10 December 1999.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Wessels, "Die EU darf nicht an Überdehnung zugrunde gehen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 December 1999, p. 10; Wolfgang Weidenfeld, "Die Achillesferse Europas", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 January 2000, p. 11; "Ein Wagnis. Erweiterung der EU", *Handelsblatt*, 13 December 1999; "Die türkische Falle", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 December 1999; "Europa und die Gefahr der Größe. Vertiefen, Erweitern oder Scheitern", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 12/13 February 2000.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. "Ich kenne mein Zeitmass", interview with Gerhard Schröder, *Der Spiegel*, No. 52, 27 December 1999, pp. 86-92 (p. 86).

<sup>173</sup> Cf. interview with Minister of State Dr. Christoph Zöpel, *Berliner Zeitung*, 6 December 1999.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Fischer, speech at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Berlin, 24 November 1999, available in the internet: [http://www.auswaertiges.amt.de/6\\_archiv/2/r/r991124a.htm](http://www.auswaertiges.amt.de/6_archiv/2/r/r991124a.htm).

<sup>175</sup> Cf. *Eurobarometer*, No. 51, July 1999, p. 73.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. "Der deutsche Export mit den EU-Beitrittsländern boomt", *Handelsblatt*, 26 January 2000.

round enlargement will increase growth by 0,4% annually. However, the East German Länder in particular fear new competitors in the neighbouring countries and point at difficult cost/benefits relations depending on the sectors and regions in Germany.<sup>177</sup>

As far as the impact of enlargement on transatlantic relations is concerned the German government is eager to demonstrate co-operation and partnership as well as a sense of assertiveness.<sup>178</sup> Europe is regarded as an indispensable partner for the US and as a global economic factor. The government regards European integration and the enlargement project in particular as conducive to US interests, whereas a more fragmented Europe would be a danger for the US. From this point of view the US needs the EU because a uni-polar world could not provide the degree of stability in international politics that is needed. The German government does not plead for a straightforward renovation of transatlantic relations but sees a process of adaptation under way that flows from an ever more intensive interdependence between the US and the EU. The development of the ESDP is a case in point.

There might occur some minor conflicts of interests between the EU and the US on concrete terms of accession with individual countries. The projection of stability to Central and Eastern Europe through enlargement is, however, also a strategic interest of the US. Successful enlargement will certainly add political clout to the EU as an international actor, a development the red-green government welcomes.

#### **Greece**

General attitudes in Greece towards enlargement have changed dramatically in the last weeks of 1999 due to the Helsinki

summit decisions over Turkey. At the same time the overall importance of enlargement negotiations has faded from Greek view. Neither the long-term consequences of enlargement nor its institutional implications have been the object of deeper debate.

In a similar way, the implications of enlargement on what might be termed the construction of a multi-polar international system, with Europe at a more equal footing with the US, are largely absent from public discussion in Greece. Earlier advocates of such a reading of international relations - both academics and politicians - have had to cope with the image of total US domination over events and "European" decisions in the Kosovo crisis.

#### **Ireland**

There has been no significant change in the general attitude to enlargement. There is an increased interest in political and parliamentary circles and a heightened awareness of the imminence of enlargement. No one has as yet addressed the issue of the limits of the EU but there is an awareness of the long-term implications of enlargement in terms of the EU-institutions. As regards the impact of enlargement on external relations, the general view is that it will have a positive effect in terms of the EU as an actor in international relations.

As regards transatlantic relations, the perception is that the US will welcome enlargement, as it will contribute to peace and stability in Europe. It will also fulfil US expectations that EU-enlargement is less likely to antagonise Russia than NATO-enlargement. Furthermore, it provides an implicit guarantee to non-NATO CEEC in so far as pending EU-membership aligns them with the EU rather than suspending them in a vacuum between NATO Member States and Russia. There is a limited appreciation in the public at large of the Common Strategy adopted at the Helsinki Council, although some articles are beginning to appear in

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<sup>177</sup> Cf. "Wohlfahrtsgewinne durch Osterweiterung. EU-Erweiterung stellt Ostdeutschland vor Herausforderung", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 October 1999.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Fischer, speech in Berlin, 24 November 1999, op. cit.

the media on the candidate countries.

### *Italy*

Enlargement has somewhat receded from the public agenda as compared to the first half of the year, when the unfolding of the Kosovo crisis generated an intensification of the overall debate on the future of Italian foreign policy.<sup>179</sup> However, the general policy course of the Italian government has substantially remained the same, and EU-enlargement continues to be viewed as one of the two major challenges for Italy in Europe.<sup>180</sup> In particular, enlargement, viewed also in conjunction with a policy of strengthened integration of the Western Balkans, is welcomed and considered beneficial both for the EU as a whole, and for Italy in particular. The positive thrust has to do notably with an expectation of stabilisation of the Italian eastern maritime border, commercial extension to new markets, and an overall support for the re-integration of Europe.

Deliberations on some of the fundamental conclusions of the Finish Presidency paper on enlargement have been touched upon by both the public and policy-makers.<sup>181</sup> Both EU Commission's President, Romano Prodi, and Treasury Minister Giuliano Amato, whose statements are always closely followed on the domestic level, have raised the importance of determining the final borders of the EU.<sup>182</sup> Finally, EU-enlargement is always viewed in Italy as intrinsically linked to the major institutional reforms expected to be solved

at the next ICG in December. In fact, general discussions on the future of the EU tend to be dominated by debates and analyses on issues pertaining to the timing and the nature of institutional reforms, while topics strictly related to EU-enlargement are almost always put aside.<sup>183</sup> Romano Prodi's frequent statements in this direction are particularly representative of the Italian way of viewing enlargement.<sup>184</sup>

### *Netherlands*

The general attitude towards enlargement or accession in The Netherlands has not changed in the last six months. Perhaps the only important change that can be observed in the policy of the Dutch government is that it emphasises the need for a broad IGC agenda. In the view of the government the consequence of the decision to start accession negotiations with a large group of candidates is that the institutional structure of the EU needs more radical reforms than the left-overs of the Amsterdam treaty and the institutional points from the Cologne summit.

### *Portugal*

Concerning the enlargement, the Portuguese position during the last six months didn't change significantly. Portugal remains a strong supporter of the enlargement process, which was one of the top priorities of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union. The strategic importance of enlargement is always stressed by the Portuguese authorities, even if they are aware that it can have some detrimental consequences for the Portuguese economy. There is a global awareness that the European Union must give the same kind of support to the applicant countries that it gave to Portugal. Being a southern, cohesion country, Portugal is trying to avoid

<sup>179</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, p. 79.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Lamberto Dini, Italy's Foreign Minister by Maurizio Molinari, *Il Tempo*, 2 January 2000.

<sup>181</sup> Alberto Negri, "Uno Sguardo a Oriente: La Turchia è Europa", *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 11 December 1999, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> Giuliano Amato actually addressed this question in depth as a Chairman of the Reflection Group on the Long-Term Implications of EU Enlargement, which produced a Final Report on "The Nature of the New Border" in April 1999.

<sup>183</sup> Interviews with Italian officials, January 2000.

<sup>184</sup> See for example, "Prodi: Senza Riforme l'allargamento frena", *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 21 October 1999.

being labelled as anti-enlargement, a task not always easy. Regarding the ultimate limits of enlargement, the Portuguese government is not willing to draw any kind of borders: in the end, the EU must remain open to those who subscribe their principles and are willing to fulfil the criteria.

### *Spain*

Spanish support for enlargement is 51% of public opinion, still well above the EU average (42%) and a remarkable 17 points higher than German support. Still, Eurobarometer 50 (Autumn 98) shows a three point decline in support for enlargement among Spanish public opinion compared to Eurobarometer 49 (Spring 98) when Spain scored 54%. The priority accorded to enlargement is as low as in EU-15 (27%) with citizens considering employment issues more urgent.<sup>185</sup>

### *Sweden*

The enlargement still has the highest priority, according to the government. There is a general feeling - shared by the Foreign Ministry - that one result of the events in Kosovo is an even increased interest in carrying out the enlargement. There is a sense that a prolonged process may increase the danger of new serious conflicts. The political opposition and the main interest groups share this enthusiasm over new EU-members, even if some concern has been raised within the trade unions about the free circulation of labour from the East. There is also, naturally, some uncertainty about the relations between Turkey and Greece, and the possibilities for the entire island of Cyprus to join the Union.

The possible impact of the enlargement on relations with third countries is mainly discussed in political circles, especially concerning the closest eastern neighbours in the future: "The further the accession negotiations proceed, the more important

will become strategies with Russia and Ukraine, in order to make it possible for the two countries to share the positive effects of the enlargement."<sup>186</sup>

No opinion poll was made in 1999 to examine public support for the enlargement, but it is thought to be wide-spread. The almost complete absence of public debate on the matter may possibly be seen as proof of the consensus in the nation about EU-enlargement.

### *United Kingdom*

It is difficult to judge the degree to which general attitudes towards enlargement have changed in the last six months. Enlargement has not been an issue which attracts debate in the same way it might in Germany or Austria - and furthermore, the Euro question steals the limelight from other European issues.

The run up to the referendum on the Euro, which was marked on 14 October 1999 by the launch of *Britain in Europe* - and the parallel case against membership being lead by the conservative party - represent a more fundamental debate over whether Britain should stay in the EU. The government is having to restate the case for EU-membership - in effect winning the 1975 referendum again, before it can advance on the Euro. Despite claims to the contrary, advocates of sterling are effectively putting the case for permanent marginalisation within Europe and increasingly divergence of interests between Euro and non-Euro States.

In the meantime, the government is attempting to change this by promoting enlargement and institutional reform together and stressing their successes at constructive engagement with Europe - leading the charge to reform the EU in the name of transparency and efficiency. Nevertheless, the question of enlargement is infrequently raised in public debate. The general malaise and feeling of detachment with the EU that is pervasive in Britain at

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<sup>185</sup> More details on the Eurobarometer at <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/infcom/eipo/polls.html>

<sup>186</sup> Quote from a personal communication with the authorities concerned, mid-November 1999.



the present time means that there is little hostility towards the expansion of the EU, but little explicit enthusiasm either.

**7. General assessment of accession negotiations so far. Which positions can be identified on:**

- **The importance of Copenhagen criteria;**
- **Results of progress reports - new picture /consequences for accession process;**
- **Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria?**
- **Derogation's /transitional arrangements? Development of the Positions in the Member States?**
- **Should the EU further develop the monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in the candidate countries?**

**Austria**

Austria assesses the overall development of the accession negotiations as very positive and dynamic. Of course, the negotiations have not yet tackled the most serious problems. Especially from Austria's point of view, there are several topics that have to be considered thoroughly. It is Austria's position to point out possible problem areas as early as possible; especially in the first part of the negotiations to avoid later surprises. The Copenhagen criteria have not lost any of their importance. Transition periods will be necessary in several fields, most of all regarding the labour market and the freedom of movement of persons. Other topics, such as the liberalisation of traffic, will have to depend strictly on the full transposition of the *acquis* in the new Member States.

The progress reports are of outstanding importance for the candidate countries as well as for the EU-15. They give a good picture and clearly mark the areas which need special attention. The reports are of

high quality and clearly show the different problem areas in the applicant countries. The decision of the Helsinki summit to extend negotiations to all the applicant countries was also based on the progress reports.

The monitoring of the implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in the candidate countries should be enforced. Austria fully supports the corresponding propositions of the Commission.

**Belgium**

*The importance of Copenhagen criteria*

In the Belgian view, the eastward EU-enlargement should maintain the dynamism of the process of European integration. Accordingly, it considers the formulation of political and economic conditions upon EU-membership not only to be fully justified but even to constitute an essential means to prevent this guiding principle from being repudiated.<sup>187</sup> As to the assessment of the applicants' respect for these conditions, however, Belgium agrees with the Commission's approach of making a distinction between the purely political conditions on the one hand, which are to be fulfilled in an absolute manner, and the economic (and *acquis*) criteria on the other, for which a prospective evaluation is appropriate.

*Results of progress reports - new picture / consequences for accession process*

As already mentioned above, the Belgian Federal Government fully subscribes to the Commission's proposal of opening accession negotiations with all remaining candidate countries, with the only but significant exception of Turkey. Any further differentiation between applicants as to the progress realised through these negotiations would henceforth be acceptable

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<sup>187</sup> Accordingly, albeit willing to award Turkey candidate status, Belgian foreign policy could not fall in with any mitigation of the membership criteria as regards the country (Knack, 8 December 1999).

only provided this stems from a distinctly different level of preparation for membership.

*Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria*

Belgian diplomatic circles clearly favour a strict, transparent and objective application of the membership criteria so that each candidate will advance towards accession in accordance to its individual merits, independently of the progress made or delays suffered by others.

*Derogations / transitional arrangements. Development of the positions in the Member States*

From a Belgian point of view, eastward EU-enlargement should not be allowed to result in a diluting or slowdown of the European integration process. New Member States will therefore, as a rule, have to accept, transpose and implement the existing *acquis communautaire* upon accession.<sup>188</sup> Yet, in the Belgian view, whenever necessary and/or desirable, transitional measures might in principle be contemplated, provided they are limited both in time and in scope, and on the understanding that intermediary objectives, a clear timetable as well as corresponding financial provisions are agreed upon in advance. The tool of flexibility, provided for in the Treaties, should not be reverted to as a surrogate for derogations or transitional measures since, still according to the Belgian perception, it was designed precisely to facilitate deeper integration in spite of widening (rather than the other way around).<sup>189</sup>

<sup>188</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 86.

<sup>189</sup> In its Governmental Policy Statement of 14 July 1999, the newly elected Federal Government reiterated the Belgian plea for a further deepening of the European Union in a federalist spirit (see Doc. 20/1-1999 Chambre S.E.). At the same time, however, whilst stressing that Belgium will in the future - as it did in the past - continue to take the general European interest into account when defining its position, Belgian Prime

As to which matters would a priori qualify for derogations, no clear information is available. It is nevertheless possible to perceive some general reflections. First of all, from a Belgian point of view, in the crucial area of Internal Market legislation the granting of transitional periods ought to be avoided as much as possible.<sup>190</sup> Second, the need for transitional measures will depend largely on the individual applicants' degree of preparedness. On some issues, though, it can not be excluded that some requests for derogations would originate from within the Union. In the Belgian view for instance, as budgetary means for such support were not provided in the Agenda 2000 or under the 2000-2006 financial perspective agreed at the special Berlin European Council of March 1999, newly acceding States could not enjoy a full direct income support for farmers until 2006. On the other hand, whilst fully understanding the concerns ventilated on the matter in those Member States that share borders with the candidate countries, Belgium does not plan at this stage to request for transitional periods on free movements of persons.<sup>191</sup>

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Minister Verhofstadt unveiled his government's determination also to give more close consideration to specific national interests. In the same sense, Foreign Affairs Minister Michel's foreign policy statement (see above) stresses that Belgium will continue to support the CEEC integration into NATO and the EU without, however, overlooking its own specific interests. With the recent Belgian dioxin crisis in mind, this stance certainly contributed to the insertion of a paragraph on public health and food safety in the Helsinki summit conclusions.

<sup>190</sup> Although derogations available for the current Member States (such as periods for transposition of directives into national legislation) should be equally available for newly acceding States.

<sup>191</sup> Belgian political circles are, however, not entirely insensible to the issue of the (expected) influx of applicant's nationals following their country's accession. Thus, for instance, Senator Kestelijn-Sierens hinted at the adoption of certain transitional periods (alongside the adoption of a common asylum and migration policy before the first accession actually takes place) for alleviat-

*Further EU monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the acquis in the candidate countries*

According to Belgian diplomacy, a revision of the Union's enlargement strategy along the lines of the suggestions formulated by the Commission in the framework of its second Progress Reports is to be welcomed. After all, both in the first and second groups of applicants some undesirable side-effects of the current enlargement strategy became apparent. As far as the "first wave" countries are concerned, at some stage the Czech example evidenced a certain risk of loss of momentum for reforms once negotiations are ongoing. As to those in the "second wave" for accession, a mechanical application of the economical and political Copenhagen criteria would probably have resulted in the isolation of Romania and Bulgaria in the margins of the enlargement process. In depriving them from their main incentive to uphold political and economic reforms, such an evolution might then further have blurred their membership prospect.<sup>192</sup> Accordingly, both risks could be countered by opening accession negotiations with all applicants (except Turkey) while establishing at the same time a more direct link between, on the one hand, progress realised during the negotiations and, on the other, progress made in preparing for membership. In this scenario, however, a close monitoring of progress in accepting, transposing, implementing and enforcing the *acquis* is crucial in order to assure a successful pursuit of the enlargement

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ing the danger of increased migration flows (see Report of 8 November 1999 on the XXIst COSAC conference, Doc. 50, 233/1 Chambre)

<sup>192</sup> The dramatic changes in the geopolitical situation on the continent brought about by the recent conflicts on the Balkan even added to the risk of such a downward vicious circle, which was to be avoided at all costs. In the Belgian view, a prospective evaluation of these countries' progress towards meeting the economic accession criteria could offer an outlet.

process.

**Denmark<sup>193</sup>**

*The importance of Copenhagen criteria*

From a Danish perspective, the Copenhagen criteria remain the be-all and end-all of the enlargement process. No tickets for B-membership are on offer! Applicants are expected eventually to take on the entire *acquis* on the same basis as any other of the present Member States.

*Results of progress reports - new picture/consequences for accession process*

The Danish government looks favourably at the Progress Reports. In general, the most recent Progress Reports gave a realistic estimate of the development in the applicant countries, which to a high extent coincided with the evaluations conducted by Danish authorities. The closer a country gets to membership, the more important it will become that the Progress Report is precise and hence, operational. The political impact of the reports in the candidate countries is also of significant importance.

*Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria; derogations /transitional arrangements*

Denmark is against a politicisation of the negotiations at the expense of strict criteria. As pointed out above, the process has to be tied to the Copenhagen criteria. So far, EU Member States have not embarked upon a detailed discussion on the length of transition periods. As pointed out in the last Enlargement/Agenda 2000 Watch, the only area which will be particularly sensitive for Denmark is the environmental *acquis*.<sup>194</sup> However, here the position papers of the applicants have shown that

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<sup>193</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

<sup>194</sup> *Enlargement/Agenda 2000-Watch*, No.1 / 1999, p. 78

they will not be asking for transition periods of 20 to 25 years, but rather 10 to 15 as a starting point for negotiations.

*Further EU-monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in the candidate countries*

The Danish government did not support the Commission's proposal of introducing new monitoring mechanisms. This would not only provide the Commission with an additional steering instrument, but also create problems of manageability: how is one to monitor the administrative capacity in practice? What should be the objective standard?

***Finland***

According to the government, the accession negotiations which were opened with six countries in March 1998 have proceeded very well. The overall progress in the candidate States has also been good even though a lot still remains to be done. The government stresses that both the Union and the acceding countries have to be well prepared in order for the enlargement to be successful; the Copenhagen criteria are the essential basis for acceding the Union. As to derogations or transitional periods, the government sees that at this stage, the general statement made at the opening of the negotiations (31 March 1999) is sufficient. On the basis of the proposals made by the Commission in the Composite Paper (13 October 1999) the Member States have discussed the further development of the monitoring system which is becoming more important as the accession process proceeds. The number of instruments for monitoring is seen to be sufficient.

In general, Finland stresses the importance of the commonly agreed criteria in giving credibility and consistency to the enlargement process, as well as the principle of equal treatment of all candidates

based on their respective merits and the progress they make. The negotiations should be carried on in a way which enables each country to proceed according to its situation; while the Union cannot promise any dates, it can set goals for itself and give clear signals on the conditions on which, and when, it is ready for enlargement.<sup>195</sup>

***France***

As regards accession negotiations, the various positions upheld by France can be explained by its concern that enlargement should not run counter to the deepening of European construction. The major point is therefore that the applicant countries should be ready to join the political and economic system of the European Union. Hence the emphasis put on the Copenhagen criteria and the refusal of any politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria. Hence the already mentioned determination that the Union should further develop the monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in the countries. Indeed, according to the Foreign Affairs Minister's staff, it is not the requests for transitional arrangements that could be seen as worrying but rather the small number of such requests from applicant countries. The latter could overestimate their ability to adopt the *acquis* in order to be considered as "good candidates" and to join the European Union quickly. It should nevertheless be underlined that the absence of derogation requests may also be due to the fact that the negotiations started with the "easier" chapters. The opening of negotiations on agriculture for instance will be an opportunity to better test the realism of candidate States' positions.

Controlling the reality of the commitments made by candidate countries in terms of uptake of the *acquis* does not necessarily

<sup>195</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs Tarja Halonen at the European Parliament on 1 December 1999.

call for new instruments. Still according to Hubert Vedrine's staff, it would already be necessary to have a better "coupling" of the progress reports exercise, which is an opportunity to make clear-sighted reviews of the actual situation of applicant countries, with the negotiation process itself. Similarly, the twinings being developed between the administrations of Member States and those of applicant States and the subsequent exchanges of experts are designed to help applicant countries to genuinely take up the *acquis communautaire*. But they can also allow both the Member States and the Commission, which does not necessarily have the means to get first hand information, to get a better appraisal of the local situation.

French leaders also stress that the negotiating chapters reported as closed are only temporarily closed.<sup>196</sup> As official phrasing indicates, closing a chapter merely means that it requires "no further negotiations at this stage". For France, "nothing is achieved unless everything is achieved". The French therefore consider that at the end of the negotiations, it will be perfectly possible to return to temporarily closed chapters and that it may even be indispensable if a compromise is to be reached.

We should finally underline, as previously when responding to the question of the special arrangements for Romania and Bulgaria, that declaring principles does not preclude some deviation from them. France did not hesitate to plead in favour of the opening of negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria although the Commission had underlined their shortcomings in its annual reports. It is also true, as France argued, that a decision to the contrary might have discouraged their efforts and this does not exclude subsequently making a genuine differentiation between the various bilateral negotiations.

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<sup>196</sup> 11 negotiating chapters are reported to be temporarily closed with Cyprus, 10 with the Czech Republic, 9 with Poland, Hungary and Slovenia and 8 with Estonia.

### *Germany*

The strict observance of the Copenhagen criteria is seen as imperative by all political actors, including interest groups like trade unions and business community. Thus, the pace of negotiations shall depend on the quality of adaptation and individual progress of the candidate States. A further differentiation among the twelve candidates is expected. Frictions between pace and quality of negotiations, as indicated by the Commission, are officially denied with reference to the Copenhagen conditions. The priority given to political considerations shall only apply once at the start of negotiations. It shall not give a precedent for the conduct of negotiations. However, the threat of a politicisation of the whole process cannot be ruled out.

The government thinks that the Commission gave an appropriate account of the political and economic situation in the candidate countries. Thus, the progress reports are seen as a useful tool. The strict monitoring agreed to in Helsinki is regarded as helpful and necessary in view of transparency and objectivity. Because of the political nature of the Helsinki decisions the government did not discuss the Commission's conclusions in detail. This is also true for other proposals contained in the Commission's composite paper (better market access for agricultural products, refraining from anti-dumping measures etc.).

As far as derogations are concerned it goes without saying that Germany looks for transition arrangements on free movement of labour and agriculture. Christian Democrats also aim at the service sector and social security systems. There is a general sensitivity in the SPD that the terms of accession must consider labour market sensitivities of Germany and other EU-countries. Minister Fischer however plays down fears of a significant inflow of migrants from new member countries.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Interview with Joschka Fischer, *Sächsische Zeitung*, 11 September 1999.

The government looks, however, for a timely assessment and expertise on migration as a consequence of accession. It pays special attention to regional effects in the neighbourhood areas to the candidate countries.

The German industry, expects numerous derogations, e.g. for process related environmental standards. It pleads, however, for a standstill clause for special economic zones in prospective new Member States. It insists that requirements of efficient competition authorities, effective and reliable judicial system and customs authorities must be fulfilled by the time of entering the Union.<sup>198</sup>

### *Greece*

Since the Greek view on the perspective of enlargement is heavily influenced, as already stated, by the candidate status and the accession perspectives of Turkey, the Copenhagen criteria are given sacrosanct status - especially those which have to do with human rights and essential functions of democracy. The Copenhagen criteria are considered in public discussion as binding benchmarks, not indicative directives; this is why the notion of a "road-map" for Turkey, with checkpoints/monitoring mechanisms is considered of the essence.

This is the official position, embraced by the media and much of public opinion: but, in fact, the very negotiations that took place in Helsinki have denoted the acceptance of political negotiation (indeed, of some sort of horse-trading) in the place of strict adherence to criteria. Insofar as this position of principle permeates the general Greek stance over Copenhagen criteria, Greece can be ranked high up among Copenhagen fans.

### *Ireland*

There is a general acceptance that the Co-

<sup>198</sup> Cf. "Positionspapier zur EU-Erweiterung", Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie, Berlin, 3 December 1999.

penhagen criteria are of paramount importance. The government takes a positive view on the strict application of the criteria in the progress reports and the focus on implementation and legislation. A new picture is emerging with backsliding in some areas, where the development of the legal/democratic process was not proceeding apace. The movement away from the "two-wave" approach is, therefore, interpreted in terms of the slippage in some of the CEEC. Furthermore, it has been noted that the chapters negotiated in the initial phase dealt with less controversial issues than the forthcoming chapters on agriculture, energy, free movement and the environment. The progress reports presented a picture of a process where a lot of progress has yet to be made.

The Irish government does not accept the concept of politicisation of the negotiations, while it accepts that there was a certain amount of politicisation in the wake of the Kosovo crisis and in the light of Turkey's position. The view, however, is that the Copenhagen criteria must be strictly adhered to.

There is recognition that certain issues are of particular importance and sensitivity to certain Member States bordering on, or, in the vicinity of the applicant States. However, it is clear that the negotiations in the main areas of the *acquis* are of vital importance to all Member States, including Ireland.

Careful monitoring of progress in the transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in the candidate countries should be continued. The Commission delegations are already actively involved in this process.

### *Italy*

Italy's general assessment of the accession negotiations shows no substantive differences from that of the EU Commission. The primacy of both the Copenhagen criteria and the European *acquis* is univer-

sally accepted by all political players in the country as it is considered a *sine qua non* condition for enlargement. The necessity for a complete and satisfactory fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria on the part of the candidate countries is a prelude to any debate on the question of EU-enlargement, and was certainly reiterated by both the media and high-level officials when they were reporting on the decisions of the Helsinki summit last December. Italy fully supports the Commission's opinions and conclusions regarding the direction and the type of changes the new applicants still have to fulfil in order to meet the criteria for membership. Italy is also in favour of transition periods for the new candidates, which would permit the better adaptation and functioning of EU institutions in particularly sensitive areas, such as agriculture or the environment.

#### *Netherlands*

It is the view of the Dutch government that the Copenhagen criteria should be strictly used. Hereby, each candidate country should be individually evaluated on its progress. This means that it is possible that countries which are now in the second group enter the first group and the other way around. With regard to the economic criteria, no concessions should be made towards the candidates with respect to the *acquis communautaire*, whereby a good implementation of the required EU legislation is essential. Although the government has also emphasised the need for a strict use of the political criteria, the case of Romania and Bulgaria shows that it allows some politicisation of the negotiations. As already mentioned in the answer to question 3, the Dutch government considered it right to open the negotiations with these countries, partly because of their positive role in the Kosovo conflict and despite its hesitations about the position of national minorities. Like in the case of Turkey, the Dutch government seems to be convinced that further steps in the accession process, like the granting of a candidate status or the opening of nego-

tiations, will provide the EU with more influence on the performance of the candidates. The final decision to admit the candidates as member states allows, however, no weakening of the Copenhagen criteria.

The Dutch government accepts the need to make use of transitional arrangements on certain policy fields, but these arrangements should be exceptional and should not take too long. The government opposes transitional arrangements in the field of the internal market.<sup>199</sup> The Socio-Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad), an influential organisation in which trade unions, employers' organisations and the government are represented, warned in a report in November 1999 against too long transitional arrangements.<sup>200</sup> The report emphasises that priority should be given to the internal market and suggests that arrangements which are related to the internal market should not exceed a period of four or five years. The suggestion of the advisory council that the EU should instead make use of partial membership constructions for less developed candidates has not received much support from the government (see also the question 3).

#### *Portugal*

The Copenhagen criteria are absolutely essential. They are the basis upon which the accession negotiations must be carried on, providing a framework for all the candidates. To the Portuguese government, the negotiations must be based on strict criteria, which is the way to ensure that all the candidates are evaluated in a similar way. At the same time, the dimension of enlargement, with the possibility of 27 Member States, requires a strict evaluation of its impact on the Union itself.

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<sup>199</sup> Supra note 3.

<sup>200</sup> SER, *Uitbreiding van de EU met Midden-Oost-Europese landen*, advice to the State Secretary of foreign affairs, publ.nr. 16, 10 November 1999.



Concerning derogations and transitional arrangements, they will, most probably, be necessary, as it was the case with Portugal's accession. They must, nevertheless, be carefully considered, since excessive derogations and transitional arrangements might lead to a situation where the newcomers and the present Fifteen will have different status. On the development of the monitoring, the Portuguese government position is in line with the conclusions of the Helsinki summit: "Progress in negotiations must go hand in hand with progress in incorporating the *acquis* into legislation and actually implementing and enforcing it." Given that was the decision, the EU must develop the monitoring.

### *Spain*

The Spanish government believes that the negotiation with the candidates is arriving at a turning point as key chapters as regional policy, competition or agriculture that are important for Spain are being opened for discussion. The government also holds the view that discussions on transitional periods or derogations cannot start until all chapters are opened.

Concerning the *acquis*, Spain is worried that the European Commission's current overload of work with the negotiations will weaken its capacity to monitor the candidates countries' progress with respect to the transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis*.

### *Sweden*<sup>201</sup>

The government thinks that the ongoing negotiations are running smoothly. More than half of the chapters have been opened, and the ambitions of the Finnish

Presidency have been kept on a continuously high level. However, the problems are increasing as the more difficult parts of the *acquis* are coming closer.

The Copenhagen criteria remain the basis and the most important issues for the EU-membership. As the then Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallén stated in her speech in Brussels on 30 March 1998, at the opening of the accession process, "without States governed by the rule of law, the Union can not function... also, the new States have to manage the competition on the EU market...but, regardless of how successfully the economy develops, it has no meaning unless the political criteria is fulfilled".

The recommendation in the latest progress report to open negotiations with Latvia and Lithuania was very satisfactory to Sweden. There are existing facts which give a reason to draw a line between Bulgaria/Romania and the others. The proposed strategy for the continuing negotiations – "keeping up speed without sacrificing quality" - is ambitious and will probably give more energy to the process. The basic element in the strategy, the principle to differentiate between the candidate States and try to break up the "convoy-thinking", is well in line with the ideas of Swedish government. The Foreign Ministry proposed that Sweden should seek to have that principle included in the Conclusions from the Helsinki summit.

So far, the accession negotiations have been held on a non-political, expert level, chapter by chapter. When time comes for the more controversial chapters, and for the final package negotiations, the politicians will take over. Until then, the government is not willing to announce any opinion about the issue of politicisation of the talks.

The suggestion by the Commission to be more generous with longer transitional arrangements for certain areas is causing some uncertainty in Sweden. The govern-

<sup>201</sup> This, and the following, is, unless otherwise stated, based on an early report by the Foreign Ministry on the Commission's latest progress report and the so-called Composite Paper of 13 October 1999 - Promemoria 26 October 1999 - and on personal communication with the authorities concerned. The statements do not represent final positions.

ment is worried that this could lower the ambitions in areas such as environment, which is seen as one of the central parts of the negotiations. The proposal might send signals to the candidate States that for example environmental issues are less important and therefore can be given lower priority. Generally, the government has pointed out that any transitional arrangements to be considered must be limited in time and scope and accompanied by a plan with clearly defined stages for application of the *acquis*.<sup>202</sup>

The Commission is proposing a much more pronounced role for the monitoring of the progress in the candidate countries, and the government supports this increased control of the process. The question of opening and closing chapters is becoming more important, and the way the *acquis* is being enforced will attract much more attention as the negotiations continue. The government wants to see a better control of the work - but, on the other hand, this must not be used as an excuse to delay the process.

### **United Kingdom**

#### *The importance of the Copenhagen criteria*

The government is supportive of President Prodi's position on the Copenhagen criteria. The House of Lords' Select Committee on European Communities 21st Report quoted Prodi at length in his speech to the European Parliament on the 13 October 1999. It recognises the fine line between using the criteria to give the accession process purpose and credibility, while also needing to extend a hand out to Eastern Europe and not allowing them turn away from the EU.

*'...If we apply these recommendations to the letter, it rules out opening negotiations with most of the remaining applicant*

*countries since they do not meet the criteria. The risk in taking this 'hard line' approach is that the countries concerned, having already made great efforts and sacrifices, will become disillusioned and turn their backs on us. Their economic policies will begin to diverge, and an historic opportunity will have been lost—perhaps forever.'* (SCEC XXI Report §51)

However, the fear that the “second wave” countries might turn their backs on the EU should not jeopardise the current negotiations with “first wave” States. The Lords' Committee approached their representatives to give evidence:

*'We were interested in the views of the first wave applicants on the possible broadening of the field. They agreed at a meeting in Tallinn on 11 October 1999 'that inviting additional countries to begin negotiations—on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria—would help ensure the credibility of enlargement.'* (op. cit. §77)

This also suggests that the rapid accession of the leading “first wave” States into the EU would provide a very good example of the dedication of the EU towards expansion. Therefore, after considering the fears raised by Prodi, the Committee concluded:

*'It would however remain the case that candidate countries must fulfil all the Copenhagen criteria before being admitted as EU Member States.'* (op. cit. §51)

*Results on progress reports - new picture / consequences for accession process / Further EU-monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the acquis in the candidate countries*

The issue of EU-monitoring has been raised in government reports in two ways. The first regarded the reports as an indicator for the EU Member States of the progress being made by applicant States towards accession. In this context they are regarded as sufficient. (SCEC XXI Report § 46) The second use of these reports is by the accession States themselves, as a

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<sup>202</sup> Cf. *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, p. 93.

gauge measuring how the EU considers them to be doing. The comments of the report are taken as the navigational information required to put the accession ship back on course. (op. cit. § 107 re. Slovenia) However, the government has made no statements concerning a desire to change the methodology of the progress reports, nor commented on any shortcomings in them.

*Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria*

Following on from the previous remarks, the British government is anxious to keep in mind the broadest aims of the accession process in the light of the current political situation, even if this is at the expense of strict criteria. The principle example of them taking this position is over their support for the ‘special arrangements’ agreed for Romania and Bulgaria in the aftermath of the Kosovo intervention. (See question 3). Similarly, there has been sympathy felt for the concerns of applicant States concerning single-market expansion to include the purchasing of land in the applicant States. Poland has proposed a 18 year transition period for open access to the land market for fear that farmers will be driven out by inflated land prices. The potential consequences of market liberalisation has led to worries over the applicability of EU law to every area. In this sense, the strict criteria (which include an open market) are sometimes challenged by political concerns. (SCEC XXI Report §130)

*Derogation / transitional arrangements? Development of the positions in the member state*

The British government takes a pragmatic view to the question of transitional arrangements. The SCEC reported on 9 November 1999 that:

*‘The government’s attitude towards transition periods appears to be hardening. In [...] her evidence in December 1998... Ms Joyce Quin MP (then Minister for Europe in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office)*

*said that enlargement should involve ‘as few exceptions and derogations as possible simply because what I would not like to see is some kind of two-tier European Union coming into effect through discriminatory arrangements.’ (SCEC XXI Report §116)*

Fears of creating a ‘two-tiered’ European Union were cited as reason to reduce transition periods. However, the Lords pointed out that transition periods have always been used in the past - indeed Britain gained from having a transition period itself. One should also remember that the *acquis communautaire* is a continually growing legal framework thus making the accession process ever more complex.

*‘... we continue to believe that their [the Commission’s] attitude must be realistic: it is simply not sensible to pretend that no transition periods will be needed. After all, transition periods have been a part of the accession negotiations before every previous enlargement, and it has been accepted that both the European Union and the new Member States might need time to adjust in certain sectors. We recognise that with the completion of the Single Market and the removal of border controls it is now more difficult to permit any special temporary arrangements, but we think that it is important not to appear to be making accession harder for the new applicants than it was when some of the present Member States joined. ‘ (op. cit. §138)*

The government points out transition periods are mutually beneficial, since they allow adaptation on both sides. Applicant States need to protect themselves against the highly efficient industries of the EU, while some EU States wish to quell fears of an (unlikely) migration of labour into their labour markets.

**8. *What is the position of your country's government concerning further developments of the European Conference? Has it served a useful purpose? Should it be (dis)continued, suspended or extended to other countries?***

***Austria***

From the Austrian government's point of view, it is too early to decide about the future development of the European Conference. First of all, the consequences of the decisions of the Helsinki summit concerning enlargement should be awaited and analysed. For the time being a dissolution of the European Conference is not supported. Austria would prefer an expansion of the European Conference to countries whose borders will become EU borders when the "first wave" of enlargement has taken place and that do not have the perspective of EU-membership for the foreseeable future, such as Moldavia or Ukraine. The European Conference could also include countries of the European Free Trade Association. In any case the European Conference should not include a membership perspective.

Concerning the outcome of the European Conference so far, the most obvious observation is that it did not serve its main purpose to appease Turkey after the decision in 1997 not to offer it membership status. The European Conference was, however, a useful forum for the discussion of sensitive topics such as environmental protection and the fight against organised crime.

***Belgium***

From the outset, Belgian diplomatic circles have considered the European Conference as being an adequate vehicle for better mutual comprehension alongside the enlargement process.<sup>203</sup> Overall, Bel-

gium falls in with the intentions tabled by the forthcoming French Presidency on the matter. If, however, it would further evolve into a broad conference dealing with the impact of the eastward EU-enlargement on the Union's relations with the countries of its (new) periphery, duplication with other bilateral channels and/or multilateral fora (such as the OSCE) should somehow be avoided.

***Denmark***<sup>204</sup>

Seen from the perspective of the Danish government the conference has not had a major impact, due to the "empty-chair-strategy" of Turkey. Set up as an alternative to Turkish participation in the actual accession process, the decision to include Turkey in this very process at least raises the question whether it should be abandoned. Denmark here maintains an open attitude. Possibly new life could be breathed into the conference by allowing countries to participate which are not part of the accession process. In practice, such a decision could easily become entangled with the Stability Pact, since the five South-Eastern European countries are part of this process.

***Finland***

The Helsinki European Council conclusions on the European Conference reflect well the Finnish thinking. At a later stage, one needs to come back to this question.

***France***

The French officially continue to support the usefulness of the European Conference and try to put some substance into it. They argue that as there is no longer any "structured dialogue", it stands as the only forum where the representatives of both Member States and applicant countries, including Turkey, can meet and talk at political level. The French are conse-

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<sup>203</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 96.

<sup>204</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

quently against its extension to third countries. During the second ministerial level meeting, in July 1999, Mr. Pierre Moscovici suggested that it should serve as the forum for exchange of views between the Union and the applicant countries on the issue of institutional reform.<sup>205</sup> He also mentioned the project of seminars which would be cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak republics on the promotion of European audiovisual works and on the preparation of the uptake of the Schengen acquis. Since then, debating defence issues was equally considered.

In actual fact, French officials can hardly challenge the relevance of a forum which originates in a French initiative, but they are aware of being isolated. Their objective would seem to try, for the last time, revive it under French Presidency. Indeed, the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council state the “intention” of the French Presidency “to convene a meeting of the conference in the second half of 2000”<sup>206</sup>.

### *Germany*

Initially, the German government appreciated the European Conference as part of the “European Strategy” for Turkey that was decided at the Luxembourg summit. After Helsinki, this special arrangement seems to be overtaken by events. Thus, the European Conference lacks determination and substance.

### *Greece*

Once again, the European Conference has been viewed with quite a lot of suspicion, as a device that would allow for Turkey to be granted a range of political benefits while not undergoing the rigours of effective candidacy. Once the Helsinki arrangements have done away with such concerns, the European Conference has faded away from the focus of public attention. In fact, no mention of the conference could be found in the Greek press of the last months, even before the final preparations for Helsinki.

### *Ireland*

Ireland accepts the idea agreed at Helsinki that the European Conference should be reviewed in the light of the evolving situation.

### *Italy*

Italy has been very supportive of launching the European Conference since its conception at the Luxembourg Council, as it considers it in a context in which all prospective applicants are treated on an equal basis, which corresponded to Italy’s general approach to enlargement. Despite the all-inclusive reach of the Helsinki summit decisions in December, Italy still believes that the conference should be considered as an integral part of the enlargement process, particularly by offering a high-level forum of discussion with Turkey, with which there was no immediate decision to open accession negotiations. Furthermore, while negotiations with candidates (will) proceed on specific chapters, important issues, such as the co-operation between national authorities in the area of combating organised crime, illegal immigration, money laundry, etc., can still be addressed more directly and extensively at the level of the conference. That is the reason why Italy still considers that the European Conference serves a

<sup>205</sup> Ministerial session of the European Conference, Statement by the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, 19 July 1999, (available on the [www.diplomatie.fr](http://www.diplomatie.fr) web site). These were the “exchanges of views with the applicant countries within existing fora” provided for by the Conclusions of the Cologne European Council relative to the Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional Questions.

<sup>206</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 13.

useful purpose.<sup>207</sup>

### ***Netherlands***

The Netherlands government holds the opinion that the European Conference has become redundant in its current form after the positive decision on Turkey's candidacy. The government has therefore proposed in Helsinki to think about new goals and a new composition of this forum. It has suggested that the European Conference can be changed into a forum for relations with the future neighbouring states of the enlarged EU, in particular with the countries of the former Soviet Union.

### ***Portugal***

So far, the European Conference has not proven to be a useful framework. The French Presidency will convene the European Conference in the second semester of 2000 and will probably put forward some proposals to change this exercise. The Portuguese government remains open to analyse any proposals on the European Conference.

### ***Spain***

Spain is supportive of the European Conference as a way of dealing multilaterally with some questions as institutional reform or security that are not dealt with in the accession negotiation, but it should remain confined to the present candidate countries.

### ***Sweden***

The government has a flexible and rather open attitude vis-à-vis the European Conference, according to the section in the Foreign Ministry dealing with the issue. Sweden thinks that the meetings have not contained so much of significance as one may have wished. The representative of the Ministry points out that there is at least

one country which wants to continue while some other prefer the conference to be terminated. Sweden "is standing somewhere in the middle, with a pragmatic position in this matter".

### ***United Kingdom***

The Third Report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs (March 1999) discussed at length the European Conference and possible changes which could turn the conference from an under-utilised resource into a useful policy forum for European enlargement. It saw three issues in which the conference could help enlargement, through a mixture of reform and expansion.

The committee began by pointing out that there is no forum for applicant States and EU States to discuss EU-policies and reforms which will affect them when they join. Since chapters are negotiated bilaterally, there is no forum for applicant States to discuss openly their problems and share solutions. (§62)

*'While it may be a useful forum, we believe that the European Conference, which met once last year and is scheduled to meet once in 1999, does not provide for sufficient cohesion between all applicant States, particularly those in the "second wave" who may be discouraged by the apparent concentration of the EU's efforts on the six "first-wave" countries. [...] We believe that the government should promote further means whereby the EU's sustained commitment to all applicant States may be demonstrated, irrespective of their progress towards accession. ' (§72)*

The second role of the European Conference should therefore be to demonstrate a commitment to all accession States through encouraging cohesion between all applicant States. The final role of the conference would come through its extension to include the States neighbouring applicant States - such as Russia, Belarus and

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<sup>207</sup> Interviews with Italian officials, January 2000.

the Ukraine. Applicant States such as Poland and Hungary would be expected to adopt the border controls implemented throughout the Schengen area. This would mean strengthening visa controls with non-EU neighbouring countries, and would effectively mean building greater barriers on the eastern fringe of the EU while simultaneously dismantling others. The committee wrote:

*'Alan Mayhew (Senior Fellow at the University of Sussex) commented that for Poland to join the EU "on EU terms could involve reversing the vast improvement in relations, political and economic, which have been achieved with Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine." He stressed that the present process of enlargement risked creating new and unwelcome divisions across Europe. ... Professor Wallace also emphasised that "it is crucial to strengthen efforts to build" good neighbours "and cross-border arrangements, and not to disrupt these by creating a new "wall" of discrimination between likely accedents and distanced neighbours." Both Alan Mayhew and Professor Wallace also recommended a strengthening of the role of the European Conference in order to address these issues. The Committee believes that the government should urge the EU to give closer attention to the impact of its current enlargement policies on relations between countries in the region and to ensure they do not exacerbate divisions between countries. (op. cit. §79)*

9. *After the decisions of the Cologne summit, comment on the position of your country's government, parties, pressure groups, etc. on the institutional reforms? Which questions are of high relevance? Should other issues be addressed?*

- *Reaction towards Presidency's report on reform options (see point 54 of conclusions of the European Council of Cologne)?*

### **Austria**

The decisions of the Helsinki summit on the Intergovernmental Conference to work out the necessary institutional reforms to prepare the Union for enlargement did not satisfy the Austrian government. Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel called it a "big mistake" to confine the conference to the Amsterdam "left-overs". Austria favours a broader approach and the widening of the agenda of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) for several reasons:

- a broader agenda of the IGC would provide more room for package-deals and trade-offs;
- the question of explaining the IGC and its results to the public: the negotiations about the Amsterdam "left-overs" will mainly deal with numbers and calculations, which is very difficult to explain and does not appeal to the wider public; therefore, the danger of widespread indifference and misunderstanding of the IGC would be considerable;
- the Austrian government is convinced that the institutional preparation of the Union for enlargement has to include other important topics (see below); yet another IGC within a few year's time to solve these topics should be avoided in any case;
- furthermore, the conference should be open to include Treaty amendments concerning other current issues such as internal security (Justice and Home Af-

fairs) or the Common Foreign and Security Policy;

Austria is content that the Presidency Conclusions of Helsinki include the possibility to extend the agenda<sup>208</sup> and expects such an extension in the course of the IGC.

Which additional topics should be discussed in the upcoming IGC in the opinion of the Austrian government?

- Other institutional questions directly linked with enlargement should be solved. This concerns most of all the size and the composition of all the institutions of the EU, including the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
- The problem of the proliferation of languages should be considered.
- Some sort of "follow-up" to the resignation of the Commission last March seems appropriate. For example, the right of the President of the Commission to dismiss individual members of the Commission could be put down in the Treaty as well as the right of the European Parliament to conduct hearings with the members of the incoming Commission.
- The co-decision procedure should be extended to every case that is decided with qualified majority in the Council.
- Measures should be taken to reduce the workload of the European Court of Justice.
- A mechanism that allows quicker decisions should be conceived.<sup>209</sup>

Regarding the Amsterdam "left-overs" the Austrian position has not changed since the last Intergovernmental Conference.

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<sup>208</sup> See point 16 of the Presidency Conclusions of Helsinki.

<sup>209</sup> Foreign Minister Schüssel mentioned as example that only now money to support the free press in former Yugoslavia was released, which had already been decided in 1996. *Die Presse*, 11 December 1999.



The question of reducing the number of Commissioners to one for each country in exchange for some readjustment of the weighting of votes in the Council is accepted. But Austria does not support any further reduction of the number of Commissioners because it would leave some countries, especially the smaller ones, without a member in the Commission. Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel stated the underlying principle of Austria's position concerning institutional reform as follows: "Under no circumstances must this be permitted to lead to the hegemony of the larger EU member countries. In the past, the key benefits for European integration have always come from the smaller member countries".<sup>210</sup>

The extension of qualified majority voting in the Council is supported in principle. Austria advocates the establishment of qualified majority voting as the general rule in the Treaty and to consider unanimity the exception to the rule. In practice, however, the Austrian government upholds its requests for exceptions to qualified majority voting already put forward in the last IGC.<sup>211</sup> Austria's government is aware of the fact that the combined requests of all the Member States to maintain unanimity in several areas avoids any substantial progress towards the more frequent use of qualified majority voting. A possible solution would be to identify the specific problems the Member States have with majority voting in several areas and to define precisely what kind of decisions should remain under the principle of unanimity. For example, the rule of qualified majority voting could be extended to taxes with the exception of one or two specific taxes where a Member State has well argued objections.

### **Belgium**

It clearly follows from the previous issues

of this survey<sup>212</sup> that Belgium - be it on a state, political party or pressure group level - has taken the imperative stand that actual eastward enlargement can only follow after significant institutional reforms necessary to that effect have been successfully carried through.<sup>213</sup>

In this regard, the Belgian government welcomes the report on the institutional implications of enlargement, prepared for the Commission by (among others) former Belgian Prime Minister Dehaene, as being sufficiently ambitious in terms of warranting the efficient functioning of the Union after enlargement while at the same time taking into account all Member States' interests (and, naturally, those of Belgium in particular) in a satisfactorily balanced manner. Hence, it is recognised as an excellent basis for the negotiations on the institutional reforms necessitated by the perspective of enlargement. Belgium entirely supports this report's call for a comprehensive institutional reform during the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), which is to be concluded by the end of the year 2000.<sup>214</sup>

In the Belgian view<sup>215</sup>, institutional re-

<sup>212</sup> See *Enlargement / Agenda 2000 - Watch*, Pilot Issue, October 1998, p. 41; E/A-W 1/1999, pp. 62-63.

<sup>213</sup> This position has recently been confirmed in the Joint Note. Most information included in the institutional chapter of this survey is drawn from either the Joint Note (p.22) or the Governmental Policy Statement.

<sup>214</sup> Foreign Affairs Minister Michel unveiled that the Belgian government "almost entirely" agrees with the report (Knack, 27 October 1999). Belgian diplomacy has, however, some reservations on the report's assertion that enlargement could not be delayed or postponed because institutional reform is incomplete.

<sup>215</sup> It may be reminded that Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands traditionally consult each other and, to the largest extent possible, co-ordinate their positions on European issues - and those on institutional reforms in particular - within the Benelux framework. One point of difference, however, remains the Dutch stance of being entitled to more votes within the Council than

<sup>210</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Press release, 1 September 1999.

<sup>211</sup> For example regional planning, cultivation and management of water resources.

forms and enlargement are closely linked. Accordingly, the IGC is to be regarded in - and, in fact, largely confined to - the context of preparation for enlargement. Its agenda should reflect this in a way that it should not contemplate a fully fledged treaty revision: except for the distinct item of strengthening the common European Security and Defence Policy<sup>216</sup>, it should be restricted to institutional questions. Within these limits, though, the IGC's agenda should be as large as possible: all institutional reforms<sup>217</sup> should be discussed provided they are necessitated directly or indirectly by enlargement.

As far as the "leftovers" of Amsterdam are concerned, the Belgian negotiators will first of all try to accomplish that the principle according to which each Member State is entitled to appoint at least one Commissioner in the Commission is not modified. As to the re-weighting of Member States' votes within the Council, the Belgian government favours a double majority formula, according to which the existing qualified majority voting system could - if so requested by a Member State - be linked to a majority of the population of the Union. Most importantly, given the

danger that the unanimity rule would paralyse decision-making in an enlarged Union, Belgium will plea strongly for the generalisation of qualified majority voting (QMV) as well as for a parallel extension of the European Parliament's co-decision powers. Particularly as regards matters that are associated with the further development and smooth functioning of the Internal Market and the Economic and Monetary Union (such as the Treaty provisions on social, environmental and fiscal policy) will the Belgian negotiators exert themselves for QMV to be introduced. Still, whilst being in favour of introducing QMV as regards convergence of Member States' fiscal and parafiscal pressures, Belgium will see to it that the creation of European fiscal instruments do not result in an increase of the overall fiscal and parafiscal pressure on the national level.<sup>218</sup> Even in the Belgian view, however, also certain constitutional<sup>219</sup> or quasi-constitutional<sup>220</sup> Treaty provisions should remain subject to unanimous decision-making.

Yet, in the Belgian view the institutional chapter of the IGC should not be restricted to this - intertwined<sup>221</sup> - "Amsterdam triangle". The Belgian government<sup>222</sup> would like the IGC also to examine ways to en-

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Belgium, a claim rejected by the latter (Knack, 8 December 1999).

<sup>216</sup> In the Belgian view, a strong and effective Common Foreign (and Security) Policy implies that the European Union would - taking Member States' transatlantic commitments into account - dispose of a significant strategic autonomy, enabling it not only to deal with crises on the European continent or in its periphery, but also, when such need arises, to defend itself (Foreign Affairs Minister Michel's foreign policy statement - see above).

<sup>217</sup> Belgium thus favours a wide and flexible interpretation of the preliminary agenda set by the Cologne European Council, and of its fourth element in particular: size and composition of the Commission; weighting of votes within the Council; possible extension of qualified majority decision making; other necessary amendments to the Treaties arising as regards the European institutions in connection with the above issues and in implementing the Treaty of Amsterdam.

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<sup>218</sup> The fear that entirely giving up the unanimity requirement as regards tax matters would lead to an increased fiscal pressure is reported to have aroused turmoil within the Belgian Federal Government (Knack, 17 November 1999).

<sup>219</sup> Among which the provisions governing the institutional architecture and balance within the Union (such as, for example, the unanimity requirement within the Council to depart from a Commission proposal).

<sup>220</sup> Such as, for instance, the provisions on the location of the seats of the institutions, as well as those on the use of all Member States' (official) languages as official languages within the Union.

<sup>221</sup> In the sense that the more unanimity is being abandoned, the more indulgent the Belgian position as regards the other two aspects will be (see E/A-W 1/1999, p. 62).

<sup>222</sup> Following the Belgian Parliament's example (see E/A-W 1/1999, p. 62-63).

hance the Commission's practicability, in particular through both reinforcing the role of the Commission's President and circumscribing (and inscribing into the Treaties) the Commissioners' individual responsibility. In addition, considering the various conditions currently formulated upon engaging into a reinforced co-operation among Member States<sup>223</sup> as hampering the efficient use thereof, Belgium would like these conditions to be relaxed.<sup>224</sup> Finally, provided this exercise does not prevent the IGC's 2000 deadline from being met, the Belgian government is also willing to lay the suggestion of dividing the Treaties into two separate (and differently modifiable) parts to heart.

### *Denmark*

The Danish government's attitude to the forthcoming IGC is the same as highlighted in the previous Enlargement/Agenda 2000 watch: The conference shall only deal with the "left-overs" from Amsterdam. Consequently, Denmark is not expected to use the possibility that was left open in Helsinki and add more issues to the agenda.<sup>225</sup> This wish to limit the agenda is mainly due to two reasons. First of all, Denmark fears that a too heavy agenda could postpone enlargement by triggering a long-drawn IGC. Secondly, an ambitious IGC could complicate the government's ability to hold (and win) a referendum on Economic and Monetary Union. A heavy agenda could thus easily

shift the attention away from economics to a discussion on sovereignty and political Union.

The Danish scepticism towards a larger IGC can also be highlighted by the reactions to the Dehaene report. Almost all Danish politicians turned against the report; even the most pro-European party, the Liberals. Eva Kjær Hansen from this party thus criticised the report in the following way: "we should concentrate on preparing the EU for the enlargement and not bring all sorts of other topics onto the agenda. We will risk delaying enlargement, if EU countries first have to negotiate such an ambitious agenda"<sup>226</sup>. This opinion was more or less supported by Lene Espersen from the Conservative party; Anne Bastrup from the Socialist People's Party and Keld Albrechtsen from the Danish Red-Green Alliance. Also the Danish Foreign Minister called the report "not very useful".<sup>227</sup>

### *Finland*

Finland has been in favour of swift preparations and a short IGC in order not to delay the enlargement process. At the same time, it is seen that enlargement should not compromise the level of integration, nor the possibilities of full participation by all, future and present, members. Finland also wishes to find a solution that is durable so that there would be no need to come back to the issues of institutional reform before each enlargement. The most important single issue for Finland is the increase of the use of qualified majority voting in the Council, which is seen as a prerequisite for more efficiency. Finland is also "ready to look into" proposals on reweighting of votes in the Council. As to the Commission, it is necessary that there will always be a national from each Member State.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Particularly the one requiring the participation of a majority of the Member States. Thus, for instance, the pursuit of an existing reinforced co-operation of at least eight Member States after enlargement should be guaranteed, even if - owing to enlargement - the number of participating States would no longer represent a majority.

<sup>224</sup> Yet, whilst considering the tabling of closer co-operation on the IGC's agenda as essential, Foreign Affairs Minister Michel nevertheless conceded that labelling it as a breaking-point would be politically reckless and naive (Knack, 8 December 1999).

<sup>225</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000-Watch*, No.1/1999, pp. 64-65.

<sup>226</sup> *Information*, 19 October 1999.

<sup>227</sup> *Aktuelt*, 19 October 1999.

<sup>228</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs Tarja Halonen at Chatham House on 17 September 1999.

The government has for obvious reasons been attentive to possible alterations as to the position of the smaller Member States. Recently, the government has, however, also emphasised efficiency, while the Centre Party has been more clearly in defence of the small States' position. It stated that in connection with enlargement, the position of present Member States suffering from less favourable conditions - e.g., Finland - must be safeguarded in the EU regional and structural policies while also securing the representation and adequate voting rights of small Member States when developing the EU decision-making system.<sup>229</sup>

After the Cologne summit, the Finnish position might have developed from a minimalistic into a more encompassing one. Instead of stressing the need to limit the IGC agenda to the Amsterdam "left-overs", Finland adopted the position that the incoming Presidency may propose additional issues to be taken on the agenda (see Helsinki Summit Presidency Conclusions, point 16).<sup>230</sup>

Still, however, the Finnish position is that the IGC agenda should focus on the reforms necessary for enlargement.<sup>231</sup> One of them is to increase the use of qualified majority voting to improve efficiency. Finland considers it important to have one national from each Member State in the Commission because of legitimacy and prefers the reweighting of votes in the Council to the adoption of a double major-

ity system. Other necessary amendments may include such questions as the allocation of seats in the European Parliament or the work of the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance. Finland would, however, rather drop from the agenda provisions on closer co-operation and the issue of restructuring the treaties.

### *France*

As regards institutional reforms, French officials can there again be pleased with the decisions made at European level. They have regularly emphasised the need to reform European institutions before enlarging the Union to make sure that the growing number of Member States would not prevent common decision-making. And, a new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) will open as early as next February and specifically address those institutional issues which have not been settled during the previous conference. Better still, in linking the date on which the Union should be "in a position" to welcome new Member States to the end of the process of "ratification of the results" of the next IGC, the European Council acknowledges the need for an institutional preliminary step.<sup>232</sup>

Admittedly, outside government and experts in European matters, the detail of institutional reform is generally overlooked by French public opinion. But it can be assumed that the determination to promote smooth running of an enlarged Europe is shared by all political leaders in France, whether from the left- or the right-wing parties. So, in accordance with a proposal made by the former President of the Republic, Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, now an opposition member of Parliament, the law enabling ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty exceptionally

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<sup>229</sup> The position of the Centre Party of Finland on the future development of the EU stems from the Meeting of the Party Council on 25 -26 November 1995, found at:<http://www.keskusta.fi/tapahtumat/SvenskaEnglish.htm>.

<sup>230</sup> *European Voice* (2-8 December 1999) reports that there was intense pressure on Finland from the European Parliament and the Commission to recommend widening the scope of the talks.

<sup>231</sup> Finland's aim is that it would be possible for Portugal to begin the IGC as soon as possible and that the IGC could be ended at the end of the year 2000 (Minister for Foreign Affairs Tarja Halonen at the European Parliament on 1 December 1999).

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<sup>232</sup> Enlargement as seen by Hubert Vedrine, Foreign Affairs Minister, "Nous allons vers une Europe à géométrie variable", *Libération*, 10 December 1999: "as such, recognition of a reform as preliminary to enlargement is a victory for our ideas".

includes two articles.<sup>233</sup> The second, jointly approved by the Assemblée Nationale and the Sénat expresses the “determination” of the French Republic to “secure, beyond the provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty, substantial progress on the road to institutional reform of the European Union (...) prior to the completion of the first accession negotiations”<sup>234</sup>. An adviser to the Prime Minister whom we interviewed confirms this analysis: both the content of debates within the special European Union Commission of the Assemblée Nationale and of the Sénat, together with some “questions to government”, show that institutional reform of the European Union is a genuine “concern” for French political representatives.

The agenda of the next Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) equally corresponds to French views. In fact, the government stood in favour of strictly limiting the IGC to the three “leftovers” of Amsterdam—that is the size and composition of the Commission, the weighting of the votes in the Council and the possible extension of qualified majority voting in the Council. In response to those who called for a more comprehensive reform so as to start immediately to address the other problems raised by enlargement of the Union<sup>235</sup>, France put forward the following arguments. First, it considered that repeating the errors of the last Intergovernmental Conference should imperatively be avoided and that it should focus on issues which have to be settled as a priority. In addition, extended terms of reference might well delay the conclusion of the

conference and subsequently the date on which the Union would be ready to welcome new members. The French have likewise often underlined that there was a contradiction in advocating an extended conference while at the same time calling for enlargement of the Union without delay.<sup>236</sup>

At the beginning of December, a Presidency’s report on options for the Intergovernmental Conference considered that a consensus appeared in favour of settling the “leftovers” of Amsterdam and a note from the Foreign Affairs Ministry unsurprisingly referred to this development as “globally satisfactory”<sup>237</sup>. The Helsinki European Council followed this line which had already been outlined at the Cologne summit: according to the wording of its conclusions, “the Conference will examine the size and composition of the Commission, the weighting of votes in Council and the possible extension of qualified majority voting in the Council”<sup>238</sup>. Admittedly, the conclusions of the Presidency also include two provisions which may pave the way for an extension of the agenda of the Conference: on the one hand, it shall address the “other necessary amendments to the Treaties arising as regards the European institutions”; on the other hand, it is planned that the incoming Presidency may propose “additional issues to be taken on the agenda of

<sup>233</sup> Institut für Europäische Politik in Co-operation with the Trans European Policy Studies Association, *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch, Pilot issue*, October 1998, p. 45.

<sup>234</sup> Loi n° 99-229 dated 23 March 1999, *Journal Officiel*, n° 71, 25 March 1999, p. 4463.

<sup>235</sup> This is the proposal of the “Dehaene report” (Jean-Luc Dehaene, David Simon, Richard von Weizsäcker, “The institutional implications of enlargement”, Report to the European Commission, Brussels, 18 October 1999).

<sup>236</sup> Refer for instance to the General Affairs Council, press conference of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, Brussels, 6 December 1999, op. cit. (“What I would like to say is that you cannot both advocate the extension of the Intergovernmental Conference (which we do not), announce that the matter is going to be settled under French Presidency and that the Union will be ready to welcome new members by 2003. You cannot have all this at the same time. You have to choose”.)

<sup>237</sup> Council of the European Union, “Efficient Institutions after Enlargement, Options for the Intergovernmental Conference”, 7 December 1999, 13636/99.

<sup>238</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 16.

the conference”<sup>239</sup>. But for the time being, the French seem to consider that those provisions remain acceptable. The “other amendments” “as regards the European institutions” should actually be considered “in connection with” the issues selected.

Among the three “leftovers” of Amsterdam, the new weighting of votes in favour of the most heavily peopled States seems to be a priority for the French government. In particular, it seems determined not to give up having a second Commissioner unless its demands are met. The reduction in the number of Commissioners is in fact another requirement of France. The justification given by government is its concern for the collective running of an institution in charge of promoting common interest. In this respect, the principle of a ceiling number of Commissioners (for instance 20) is an option which seems to be “regaining ground” in France. However, it may be put forward as a means to “put pressure” on the smaller States (so that they accept a new weighting of votes to avoid losing “their” Commissioner). The last Intergovernmental Conference actually showed how the idea of fewer Commissioners than Member States is hard to sell. French leaders certainly know that the most likely option, which is also presented as having a comfortable majority by the above mentioned Presidency report, is one Commissioner per Member State.

As for the extension of qualified majority voting, the French government wishes to set it some limits, in particular for the revision of the Treaties. The suggestion included in the Dehaene report that the Treaties should be divided into a basic Treaty and separate texts which could be submitted to another revision procedure (such as, for instance, a decision of the Council acting on the basis of a new super-qualified majority) was criticised by the French Minister for European Af-

fairs.<sup>240</sup> Admittedly, Mr. Pierre Moscovici first rejected any idea of the “constitutionalization” of the basic Treaty this would entail, as well as any prospect of the IGC being turned into a “constitutional exercise”. And yet there seems to be some measure of contradiction between the calling for a short IGC, limited to a few issues, and the concomitant refusal to facilitate future modification of the Treaties. In view of the characteristics of European construction, it is indeed quite likely that both enlargement and institutional reform will spread over many years and will occur as a relatively continuous processes. The idea of a first limited IGC can consequently be upheld on condition that, in the future, the revision of the Treaties is catered for. The enlargement of the Union points to a less frequent use of the unanimity procedure, including in the field of the Treaties, so that the growing number of States should not result in as many rights of veto.

On institutional issues, there is nevertheless one point on which the French had to make concessions: that of involvement of the European Parliament in the work of the Intergovernmental Conference. This should be underlined as the French are generally speaking more reluctant than their partners to extend the powers of the European Parliament and they are often isolated on this. In that case, the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council go “somewhat beyond” what France would have liked. It wished to retain the status quo with mere exchanges of views with the European Parliament outside the framework of the talks as such. But the solution chosen by the Fifteen stipulates that two “observers” from the European Parliament will participate in the meetings of the preparatory group, the first negotiating level.<sup>241</sup> However, in the French Foreign Affairs Ministry, attempts are made

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<sup>239</sup> *ibid.*

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<sup>240</sup> In *Bulletin quotidien Europe*, 28 October 1999, n° 7582.

<sup>241</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council 10-11 December 1999, *op. cit.*, point 18.

to subdue the impact of this forward step: at ministerial level, the second negotiating level, mere “exchanges of views” are scheduled; the formula approved in Helsinki falls short of the expectations of European Members of Parliament; last, we should wait and see how such provisions actually materialise during the discussions.

### *Germany*

The German government favours a limited agenda for the IGC. It shall deal with the “leftovers” of Amsterdam and include only further items if this does not endanger the completion of the IGC under the French Presidency<sup>242</sup>. Thus, the enlargement calendar clearly determines the breadth and depth of reforms. The government interprets the Helsinki conclusions in such a way that a pending ratification of the Treaty reforms does not rule out the start of ratifying accession agreements.<sup>243</sup> The opposition accuses the government of focusing on “peanuts” instead of promoting a thorough revision of the Treaties, including questions like subsidiarity, catalogue of competencies for the European and national level, redesigning of the Treaties etc.<sup>244</sup> The *Länder*, too, claim a clearly defined assignment of competencies which will certainly open negotiations between the federal level and

the *Länder*.<sup>245</sup>

Because of the challenge of enlargement, the government showed some interest to include questions of making the enhanced co-operation (“flexibility”) provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty more practical. The idea to give more room for flexibility based on an avant-garde concept gains new ground as long as a real breakthrough in extending QMV significantly remains controversial across the line ministries in Berlin (and the *Länder* as well). As it has been the case in the run up and the event of Amsterdam it is difficult for the Foreign Ministry to co-ordinate a consistent German approach. The official German position is to enact a significant extension of majority voting in combination with the co-decision procedure in the EP. Unanimity shall be reserved for questions of vital national interests and constitutional issues. On the concrete proposals for the re-weighting of votes in the Council and the size and composition of the Commission the government does not take concrete positions in order to preserve a maximum of flexibility. The government wants to include criteria and conditions with regard to the Commission's internal structure (e.g. position of President). Moreover, Berlin denies to have already given up the right to nominate a second Commissioner. The government seeks a better balance between big and small countries in the Council and a better representation of Germany's relative size. The minimum threshold for QM should be around 60 %. It does not rule out to combine a modest increase of votes for the big members with the so-called double majority (of population).

Another key point is to improve the legitimacy of the political system of the EU. The government therefore initiated a better involvement of the EP in the preparation of the IGC. Following the programme of the German Presidency and the conclu-

<sup>242</sup> For a general assessment of the priorities of German EU-politics cf. Mathias Jopp / Uwe Schmalz: “Deutsche Europapolitik 2000”, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 6 / 2000, 4 Februar 2000, pp. 12-19.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. speech by Minister of State Christoph Zöpel, “Die Reform der europäischen Institutionen vor der Erweiterung: Die Regierungskonferenz 2000”, on 27 January 1999.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. for opposition's position: Wolfgang Schäuble / Karl Lamers: “An umfassenden Reformen führt jetzt kein Weg vorbei”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 December 1999; *Antrag der Fraktion der CDU/CSU*, 30 November 1999, op. cit.; for Government's positions cf. Zöpel, speech, 27 January 1999, op. cit; Schröder, policy statement at the Bundestag, 16 December 1999, op. cit;

<sup>245</sup> Cf. Resolution of the Bundesrat on the opening of the IGC and institutional questions, Drucksache 61/00, Stuttgart, 1 February 2000.

sions of the Cologne summit the German government strongly supports the conclusion of a Charter on Fundamental Rights. The appointment of the former Federal President, Roman Herzog, as member and Chairman of the Committee underlines the sincere German commitment. The debate on a proper constitutional process is still more an academic exercise and has not gained political momentum so far.

### *Greece*

The Cologne summit discussions and decisions were close to the upheaval created by the Kosovo crisis and subsequent bombings which were a grievous blow to the image of "Europe" in Greek public opinion (who sided heavily with the Serbs or at least against NATO - polls gave 92% to 96% of anti-NATO, anti-bombings feelings, protest rallies and the like were organised and the Simitis government had to keep a very low profile indeed to squeeze through with its policy of hesitant support to NATO intervention). Consequently, only worries about the future of CFSP and its potential "under American domination" were given any attention in the press and in the public discussion of institutional EU overhaul. Whenever the latter issue comes to the fore, concerns about the fate of the sole Greek Commissioner and vote-weighting in Council tend to prevail. The entrenched "veto reflex" of Greece is no longer very present.

### *Ireland*

The emphasis in the Irish debate has been on the retention of a Commissioner. Ireland welcomed the outcome on the IGC at Helsinki, including an agenda focused on the issues unresolved at Amsterdam. There is however, some concern about the pressure on small States in the agenda.

### *Italy*

With regard to discussions on institutional reforms in the aftermath of the Cologne summit, Italy is particularly concerned

with the agenda for the next ICG. In that context the country's government headed by Massimo D'Alema generally supports the EU Commission's President's efforts to agree on an extended agenda covering the three Amsterdam "left-overs" plus additional problems, most of which were raised in the Dehaene report in October 1999.<sup>246</sup>

More specifically, on the question of the number of the EU Commissioners, Italy would support an option for a reduced number of 15 to 20 EU Commissioners, and would allegedly be willing to renounce one of its current two Commissioners, or even consider a rotating option with only 12, "high-profile" Commissioners.<sup>247</sup> Naturally, it would expect "a compensation" for such a policy choice.<sup>248</sup> In addition, it is to be noted that Italians would also tend to appreciate the strengthening of the EU Commission's Presidential powers.

Concerning the weighting of the individual members' votes at the Council, Italy considers that changing the current pattern is not strictly necessary, even if it shows understanding for the concerns articulated by some of the larger members to the effect that votes should be weighted with more regard to population size. While Italy recognises that the weighting of the votes should be reformed with enlargement, it is reluctant to accept the "double majority solution", which it considers too institutionally complex.<sup>249</sup>

On the question of the majority vote in the Council, Italy continues to support a qualitative majority vote, as opposed to an unanimity vote, which should then be confirmed by the European Parliament. Italy considers that an unanimity vote should be retained only when deciding on some "crucial issues", identified as core institutional reforms, the Union's official lin-

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<sup>246</sup> Interviews with Italian officials, January 2000.

<sup>247</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.*



guistic regime (which the Italians would like to see unchanged), the nomination of the Commission's President and High Representative for the CFSP, derogation to the common market agreement, and issues related to individual Commissioners' responsibility.

The additional questions that Italy would like to see addressed at the ICG coincide with the issues raised by the Dehaene report and include the legal review of the European Union Treaties. However, while Italy is generally quite supportive of a Treaty reorganisation of a constitutional type, it opposes the review procedure suggested in the report that would exclude ratification at the level of national Parliaments.<sup>250</sup> Another issue Italy would also like to discuss at the next ICG is the eventual increase of seats in the European Parliament and a reform in the General Affairs Council in view of the new Helsinki dispositions in the security field. Furthermore, Italy persists on what it considers an imperative for an institutional realisation of a Fundamental European Rights Charter that would have a greater weight than that of a political statement, which is why it would like to postpone a decision in that direction after the Nice European Council.<sup>251</sup> In the process of the reform Italy supports an approach of "reinforced flexibility" beyond closer co-operation in all three pillars of the Treaty, but would like to have all decisions approved by the Council.<sup>252</sup>

### *Netherlands*

The government has informed the parliament about its position on the institutional reforms in a policy paper on 15 November 1999.<sup>253</sup> The general policy goal of The

Netherlands in the negotiations, as formulated in the policy paper, is on the one hand to strengthen the European institutions and decision-making in which a good financial, legal and democratic control is guaranteed and on the other hand to maintain the Dutch influence in the EU. In order to avoid the need to organise a second IGC which could disrupt the enlargement process, the coming IGC should according to the Dutch government complete as much decisions on institutional reforms as possible. The IGC should therefore start with a broad agenda that goes beyond the issues mentioned in the conclusions of the European Council of Cologne and is not restricted to the institutional left-overs of the Amsterdam Treaty.

Besides the size and composition of the Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council and the extension of qualified majority voting (the points of Cologne), the government wishes that the IGC deals with four other topics. These topics should together form a parallel process. First, there are issues that are related to the three points of Cologne, like co-decision and individual responsibility for Commissioners. The recent institutional crisis is considered to give reason for improvement of the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the European Commission and the European Parliament. Second, the IGC should deal with questions related to the Treaty of Amsterdam, like the workload of the Court of Justice and good financial control. Third, the Benelux countries have asked, in a joint memorandum, for a central place for flexible, or differentiated, integration on the IGC agenda. Finally, if the co-operation in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy makes it necessary from an institutional point of view to change the treaties, this should also be part of the agenda at the coming IGC.

### *The points of Cologne*

With regard to the size and composition of the European Commission, the Dutch

<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> De IGC 2000: een agenda voor de interne hervormingen van de Europese Unie, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, doc 710/99. An earlier report with the same topic had been made before the Cologne summit on 21 May 1999.

government holds the view that each member state should keep one commissioner. This position is based on the assumption that a change in the weighting of votes of the Council of Ministers will lead the larger member states to give up their second commissioner. The weighting of votes in the Council should be more in accordance with the demographic size of the member states. A proposal by the Conservative-liberal party (VVD) to make the voting weight dependent upon the gross national product of a member state was rejected by the majority of the coalition government. In order to keep the system of majority voting clearly structured, a revision of the relative voting weight of member states is preferred over a double key system. The preference for a connection with the demographic size of a member state can be explained by the fact that The Netherlands will be a more than average-sized Member State after enlargement.<sup>254</sup> A larger voting weight for The Netherlands may be justified on objective grounds, it forms however a sensitive issue, particularly in relation to Belgium. A Dutch proposal during the Amsterdam summit, in which The Netherlands reserved more votes for itself than for Belgium, was strongly rejected by Belgian Prime Minister Dehaene. He argued that The Netherlands should show solidarity with the Benelux countries instead of pursuing more voting weight in the Council. It is therefore not to be expected that the government will stick to this issue at all costs, also considering the importance that the Dutch government attaches to a successful conclusion of the coming IGC.

The government declares that the starting point for the extension of qualified majority voting should be that all decision-making with unanimity becomes subjected to majority voting, but that there can be exceptions to this rule. It is however important to note that the government con-

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<sup>254</sup> Except for Poland and Romania, the candidate countries which have started accession negotiations with the EU all have a smaller demographic size than The Netherlands.

siders all decisions falling in the intergovernmental second and third pillar, as well as decisions with important financial consequences as exceptions.<sup>255</sup> These decisions thus remain to be covered by the rule of unanimity.

#### *Other agenda topics*

The government holds the view that the position of the European Parliament must be strengthened by giving it a right of advice in all cases where the Council decides with unanimity. The extension of majority voting in the Council should moreover be accompanied by an extension of the right of co-decision for the European Parliament and Commissioners should be subject to individual responsibility.

The Dutch government, together with the Belgian and Luxembourg governments, attaches considerable importance to flexible integration. For the Netherlands, as a country that has generally been in favour of further integration and is also able to proceed further than other countries on certain policy fields, flexible integration can be a solution to break the deadlock in policy fields where agreement between all member states is more difficult in an enlarged EU. The government thus stresses the need to lower the threshold for flexible integration by changing the strict criteria for closer co-operation by a group of member states as laid down in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

#### *Portugal*

Institutional reform has been one of the most difficult questions within the Portuguese European policy. Although recognising that some reforms are needed, the government has been stressing the balance which presently exists and which should not be jeopardised. It is up to the Portuguese Presidency of the Council to open the new IGC on the institutional reform,

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<sup>255</sup> Supra note 15, p. 7.

according to the conclusions of the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils. Being the Presidency, the Portuguese government has been stressing the importance of getting an agreement by the end of the French Presidency, therefore allowing the Union to enlarge. The limited agenda can make this target more feasible. On the other hand, the government will try to see whether there is an agreement among the 15 to enlarge the scope of reform, namely to include security and defence issues and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Portuguese government is specially concerned about the re-weighting of votes and the composition of the Commission. These two issues are also the ones more present in the still rather weak public debate, where there is a clear tendency to see institutional reform as a struggle between small and larger Member States. The possible existence of a *directoire* of the larger Member States has been present in the government analysis of the institutional reform, as well as in the majority of the opinion-makers.

### *Spain*

Concerning the decision adopted in Helsinki to launch an Intergovernmental Conference to reform the Treaties, President Aznar said he was happy to see the IGC focusing only on settling the “leftovers” of Amsterdam (the composition of the Commission, the assignment of votes in the Council and the extension of qualified majority voting to new areas). Widening the agenda of the IGC to include other issues, he warned, would jeopardise the Union’s commitment to be ready to accept new members by 2003.<sup>256</sup>

The Socialist Party has criticised the government’s approach to the next Intergovernmental Conference, which it does not consider ambitious enough. Addressing the Parliament, opposition leader, Mr. Almunia (Socialist, PSOE), said he would

rather see the agenda of the IGC widened to focus on the reorganisation of the Treaties, the regulation of the provisions on “closer co-operation” agreed in Amsterdam and the adoption of a Human Rights Charter by the EU. To counter the risk that enlargement will result in the marginalisation of Spain, he argued, Spain needed “more Europe”.<sup>257</sup>

### *Sweden*

There was a very limited debate in Sweden about the IGC prior to the Helsinki summit. The government, at a time when it had not yet worked out any formal positions, sent a report outlining its general objectives to the Parliament.<sup>258</sup> This was a short time after the report by the Dehaene group was published but before the Commission delivered its report about the reform agenda.

The government report declares that, in the preparations for the IGC, an important objective for Sweden is to work for a limited scope of the conference - no more issues on the agenda than necessary. Therefore, the government supports the decisions by the Council of Cologne. Member States wishing to widen the conference with other issues will have to prove that changes of the Treaties in such areas really are necessary and are connected with the main purpose to prepare for the enlargement.

Some other points made in the report are the following: there is no reason to change the constitutional basis for the work in the Union. An important issue for Sweden is to safeguard the smaller Member States’ “possibilities to influence”. Proposals which fundamentally change the existing balance between larger and smaller Member States should be rejected. Sweden advocates an early and permanent solution of the reform issues, particularly issues such as the composition of the Commission and the voting rules in the Council.

<sup>257</sup> DSCD 271/99, p. 15124.

<sup>258</sup> Utrikesdepartementet, promemoria 25 October 1999.

<sup>256</sup> DSCD 271/99, p. 15120.

A month later, the Foreign Minister also declared that each member state should retain the right to nominate a Commissioner. Speaking about voting in the council, she said “even in the future, the weighting of votes must express a compromise between the two principles ‘one country, one vote’ and ‘one citizen, one vote’. If the larger Member States were given full compensation for the size of their population the balance between the Member States would be undermined.” She said that Sweden is ready to discuss majority voting in more areas, but “consensus should be the main rule for important institutional issues and for decisions with big economic consequences for the Member States. Decisions about defence, certain budget issues, own resources and taxation are some examples on this”<sup>259</sup>.

The government is not supporting the idea that decisions about “flexible integration” are made with qualified majority voting. The Foreign Minister said that there are no reasons to amend or change the existing rules, which were introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty.

Finally, an example of the strong criticism against the government which is fairly common in newspapers which support the political opposition. In this case an ironic comment in one of the most pro-federalist newspapers: “In the discussions at the summit, some of the central States of the original European Community were pushing the idea of a larger constitutional conference. Sweden, on the other hand, has been pleased with the little things, to the extent our government has any noticeable opinion on the subject at all, busy as it is with consumer politics and other big issues.”<sup>260</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

The reform package proposed at the Cologne summit accurately matched the pro-

gramme for reform that the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook presented to the House of Commons a week before the meeting. He said: *‘Let me start with the reform of Europe. [...] The fact that we are for Europe does not prevent us from being for reform of Europe. On the contrary, the respect which this government has gained in every capital of the European Union achieves far more than the Conservative party ever secured when it was in government. That respect and credibility gives us a strength when we argue for reform which the previous government never had. At Cologne Romano Prodi will be reporting on his plans for modernising the Commission. We very much welcome his commitment to the guiding principles of transparency, accountability and efficiency, and his pledge to the European Parliament that he wants a culture in the Commission that has ‘zero tolerance of corruption.’ (Hansard, 25 May 1999)*

In a statement given to the House of Commons on the 8 June 1999 the Prime Minister reported on the progress made in Cologne. He drew attention to the co-ordination of economic policy in the pursuit of higher employment as well as the appointment of Javier Solana to the new post of Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. He then mentioned the reform programme:

*‘As for the future development of the Union, the European Council took a number of important steps. It heard a strong statement from the President elect of the Commission about his plans for reform of that institution, and the Council pledged its full support for Mr. Prodi’s approach to reform. The Council welcomed the new European anti-fraud office, whose establishment was agreed at the ECOFIN Council on 25 May, and which will permit the Union to step up the fight against fraud, corruption and mismanagement.’*

The government is keen to promote the reform package because it is seen as a way

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<sup>259</sup> Foreign Minister Anna Lindh informing the Riksdag about the coming IGC, 23 November 1999.

<sup>260</sup> Hans Bergström, *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 December 1999.

of changing public opinion towards the EU. The resignation of the Santer Commission typified the commonly perceived view of corruption and nepotism in the EU and it is hoped that the wind of change through the Commission lead by Prodi and Kinnock will bring an upturn in public appreciation of the EU. The second dimension to this debate is Britain's membership of the Euro. A successful referendum depends upon amicable feelings towards the EU being pervasive. This can only happen as the Commission rebuilds its credibility. Therefore the British government is entirely supportive of the reform programme and endeavours to help President Prodi.

**10. What is the position of your country's government on**

- ***The Implementation of the Common Strategy with Russia and EU-Russian relations?***
- ***The future Common Strategy for the Ukraine? Which contents should be included?***

***Austria***

The Common Strategies are very recent instruments of the European Union.<sup>261</sup> It is, therefore, too early to assess its implementation. In principle, a potential weakness of documents, such as the Common Strategies, is that their authors never read them again after their adoption.

The Common Strategy on Russia came into being under the German Presidency with some difficulty.<sup>262</sup> The Common Strategy is sometimes not focused enough and does not fully grasp the complexity of certain topics such as in the field of energy. This inadequacy of the text makes its implementation difficult.

Austria has been very active in the development of the Common Strategy and is co-responsible for many important points. This concerns, for example, the protection of minorities and the question of nuclear safety.

The Common Strategy on the Ukraine is considered to be "not a bad document". But of course it is too early to assess its value in practice. From the Austrian point of view the priority should be the full implementation of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement of the EU with the Ukraine.

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<sup>261</sup> The Treaty of Amsterdam, which provides in Article J.3 for Common Strategies, came into force on 1 May 1999.

<sup>262</sup> According to an expert in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs the work of the German Presidency in this field could have been better.

***Belgium***

***The implementation of the Common Strategy with Russia and EU-Russian relations***

As reported in the previous issue of this survey<sup>263</sup>, in view of their significant contribution to pan-European security, Belgian foreign policy traditionally attaches paramount importance to a further and balanced development of bilateral relations with Russia and other partners in Europe and beyond to accompany the Union's enlargement process.

Hence, as EU-enlargement should not be allowed to be perceived as erecting new barriers across the continent, Belgium strongly supported the adoption of an ambitious Common Strategy on Russia, which had the additional significant advantage of permitting implementing measures to be taken by QMV. Now that this strategy is in place, the Union should use every means available - the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) in the first place - for its successful implementation, especially as far as supporting the ongoing but difficult process of internal reforms in the country is concerned. In the Belgian view, the bilateral dialogue and institutional framework provided by the PCA also constitute the most appropriate forum for the Union and its Russian partner to discuss the specific issue of the various (economic, geopolitical, etc.) implications of the former's enlargement on the latter.

***The future Common Strategy for the Ukraine? Which contents should be included?***

Following the Russian example, whilst again underlining that the contractual link offered by the EC-Ukraine PCA should remain the main basis for mutual relations, Belgium pushes for an equally ambitious Common Strategy to be elaborated, adopted and implemented as regards

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<sup>263</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, pp. 108-109.

the Ukraine. In terms of content, albeit taking into consideration certain of the country's particularities, this document should be to a large extent similar to its Russian counterpart. As already emphasised above, the issue of offering the country a (distant and/or vague) membership perspective should, however, wisely be left open.

### *Denmark*<sup>264</sup>

Denmark was supportive of the proposals of the Commission. In general, Denmark did not raise any special issues and is satisfied with the Common Strategy that was agreed upon in Helsinki.

### *Finland*

Implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia was earlier on seen as one of the main tasks of the Finnish Presidency, with the aim of making the Union an effective partner in supporting Russia's engagement with the unifying Europe and its institutions.<sup>265</sup>

EU-Russian relations have obviously been central for Finland from the beginning of its EU-membership. Finland's goal has been to "make the Union 'think Russia'"; yet, it is also seen that this is not enough: Russia also needs to "think Europe". Even the Common Strategy on Russia risks "remaining an academic exercise" without a proper response from the Russian side.<sup>266</sup>

It is generally felt that the very concept of Common Strategies should be reviewed and developed<sup>267</sup> (see also the Helsinki

Summit Conclusions, point 57). Yet, the implementation of the Common Strategy on Russia was put in a new light as it became a (potential) tool in influencing Russia: the possibility of revising it was one of the concrete measures the Union envisaged in the Declaration on Chechnya (see the Annex to the Helsinki summit Conclusions). In that declaration, the European Council calls for a revision of the Common Strategy on Russia as a consequence of Russian actions in Chechnya (thus not speaking about the need to revise the strategy for instance on the basis of how the implementation has thus far progressed).

The Common Strategy on Ukraine defines the promotion of the rule of law and the consolidation of democracy as the basis for future relations between the Union and Ukraine. A democratic Ukraine is seen as a strategic partner of growing significance for the Union. At the same time, while the Union aims, through the Common Strategy, at supporting the economic and democratic transition process in Ukraine, it is expected that Ukraine does its own part, too: "The responsibility of Ukraine's future lies with Ukraine itself".<sup>268</sup>

### *France*

In the current context of the Russian intervention in Chechnya, France would like the European Council to deliver a determined message. It was therefore favourable to the "review" of "the implementation of the European Union's Common Strategy on Russia" as decided in Helsinki by the Fifteen.<sup>269</sup> It would even seem that President Jacques Chirac secured a "strengthening" of the initial text so that

<sup>264</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

<sup>265</sup> Secretary of State Jukka Valtasaari at the Conference of the European Parliaments, Helsinki 20-21 July 1999.

<sup>266</sup> Speech by Ambassador René Nyberg, Head of Division for Eastern Affairs, MFA of Finland: "EU Common Strategy on Russia", Moscow 15 July 1999.

<sup>267</sup> Speaking of the strategies on Ukraine and the Mediterranean, the Secretary of State

Jukka Valtasaari emphasised the definition of the objectives and means of each of them (Conference of the European Parliaments, Helsinki 20-21 July 1999).

<sup>268</sup> Speech by Ambassador René Nyberg on Finnish-Ukrainian relations at an Internatum Symposium on Ukraine and the EU Enlargement, Helsinki 5 November 1999.

<sup>269</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., Annex II, point 7.

the “warnings” sent to Russia should be more specific.<sup>270</sup>

As regards the Common Strategy for the Ukraine, France was concerned that it should not include any recognition of “a vocation to accede” or even “a European vocation”. Its demands were met as the Common Strategy approved at the Helsinki European Council simply “acknowledges Ukraine’s European aspirations and welcomes Ukraine’s pro-European choice”<sup>271</sup>.

We shall finally underline that, in France, the instrument of Common Strategies tends to be considered a failure. Some will trace this back to the circumstances in which the first strategy on Russia was worked out. The German Presidency, then heavily involved in other issues, merely presented a “shopping list” and would reportedly have “sacrificed” the exercise. Others will see it as the result of a joint responsibility: so far, Member States have been unable, or unwilling, to define a common vision which would command community and bilateral resources.

### *Germany*

The German government admits that the Common Strategy launched at the Cologne summit lost political and practical momentum because of the war in Chechnya. However, the German government thinks that it is a first rate instrument to co-ordinate the EU policy vis-à-vis Russia. Russia shall not be isolated, on the contrary, the German government looked for proper involvement of Russia when holding the G-8 Presidency. Moreover, it reaffirmed the offer to grant Russia membership in the WTO and OECD in the

longer run.<sup>272</sup>

However, Germany backed a strong wording of the EU-Declaration on Chechnya in Helsinki but thought that sanctions might be counterproductive. The German government follows an active Russia policy which is underlined by Minister Fischer’s trip to Moscow in January to meet the new Interim President Putin. The government would also welcome to hold the regular bilateral summit of Schröder and Putin soon or to continue the triangular summiting Moscow-Berlin-Paris.

### *Greece*

Although decrying any sort of special relationship with Russia (especially so within the context of the Balkans and the Kosovo crisis, but also after the impasse created with the Cyprus SS-300 missiles) Greece has a generally favourable position towards the enhancement of EU -Russian relations. The real content of such relations and the track followed under the Common Strategy for Russia is of less priority, though, than the bilateral relations of Athens with Moscow.

The same goes for the Ukraine. Let it be said that the dense network of economic relations with Russia and the Ukraine, the involvement with infrastructure-building (energy: the Burgas/Alexandroupolis pipeline project, sea transportation in the Black Sea, telecom: participation in overall regional networking) but also, agricultural and ship building ventures in the Ukraine, tourism of newly-developed Russian and Ukrainian elites in Northern Greece, financial and banking facilities (quite often in triangular relations with

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<sup>270</sup> “Tchéchénie: l’Europe adresse de timides mises en garde à Moscou”, *Le Monde*, 12-13 December 1999; “La France pousse les Quinze à durcir le ton”, *La Croix*, 13 December 1999.

<sup>271</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit. Annex V, part I, point 6.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Gerhard Schröder, speech at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Berlin, 2 September 1999, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Ed.): *Bulletin*, No. 55, Bonn, 20 September 1999, pp. 573-577 (p. 577). For a quasi official German view cf. Detlev Wolter: “Gemeinsame Strategie gegenüber Rußland. Ein neues Instrument europäischer Politik”, *Internationale Politik*, 9/1999, pp. 57-64.



Cyprus participation) all generate bottom-up interest that has yet to be crystallised in foreign policy initiatives, especially so in efforts to influence EU positions.

### ***Ireland***

The government response to the Common Strategy with Russia is favourable, as it is regarded as imperative to keep channels of communication between Russia and the EU open and the Common Strategy provides a mechanism for increased dialogue. As regards the Common Strategy for Ukraine, the Irish government considers it important to participate in dialogue with Ukraine and supports the Common Strategy as agreed at the Helsinki summit.

### ***Italy***

While Italy has traditionally tried to maintain privileged relations with Russia, and as a result lobbied intensely for the adoption of a Common Strategy for Russia at the Cologne European Council last June,<sup>273</sup> the government supported the Helsinki summit Declaration on Chechnya, which proposed that the Union review the implementation clauses in light of the Russian bombardments. However, Italy would be reluctant to seriously reconsider its overall support for Russia, even in the light of Yeltsin's resignation and the unfortunate events in Chechnya. For example, Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini showed confidence in Putin's pro-reform and Italy-friendly policy course even if he deplored the humanitarian disaster in Chechnya. He also proceeded to assure that the West will support the territorial integrity of Russia.<sup>274</sup> On the question of the expectations from the Common Strategy on Ukraine adopted by the Helsinki summit last December, Italy might see itself more involved in co-operation with Ukraine than with Russia, due to

Chechen developments. While Italy has tended to privilege relations with Russia over those with Ukraine, it has not shown reluctance in cultivating tighter relations with the latter, also in the framework of EU-enlargement and the implications of a Polish-Ukrainian partnership.

### ***Netherlands***

The government of The Netherlands supports the decision of the European Council in Helsinki to make a reassessment of the Common Strategy with Russia and the TACIS project after the military operations in Chechnya. The dialogue with Russia, in particular in the joint council of NATO, should continue in order to make it clear to Russia that its operations can not be permitted.

The government is willing to put pressure on Russia. The Netherlands, currently a temporary member of the Security Council, has tried to start a discussion about the use of disproportionate violence by Russia. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Aartsen has moreover declared that he supports the idea of submitting an official complaint against Russia in the Council of Europe, under the strict condition that this takes place in co-operation with other countries.<sup>275</sup>

The Dutch government has not changed its support for the Common Strategy for Ukraine in the past six months. As has been explained in the previous issue of the enlargement watch, The Netherlands and Ukraine have good bilateral relations, which becomes particularly visible in the fact that The Netherlands represents Ukraine in its voting group at the IMF and the World Bank.

### ***Portugal***

The implementation of a Common Strategy for Russia is seen by Portugal as an

<sup>273</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, p. 110.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Lamberto Dini, Italy's Foreign Minister by Maurizio Molinari, *La Stampa*, 2 January 2000.

<sup>275</sup> Second Chamber of Parliament, plenary debate, 16 December 1999.

improvement of the strategic partnership between Russia and the EU, which is fundamental to guarantee peace and security in Europe. The Common Strategy for Russia will be developed by the Portuguese Presidency in the first semester of the year 2000. The situation in Chechnya, however, introduced some changes in the relationship and the Portuguese Presidency will have to monitor the developments, in order to make proposals on the implementation of the Common Strategy. The Portuguese Prime Minister, António Guterres, stressed that human rights violation in Chechnya should end as soon as possible, otherwise the EU will have to review its Russian policy, following the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council. The EU should remain open to strengthen the relationship with Russia, but at the same time it must stress that Russia must act according to its own commitments.

The Portuguese Presidency will submit the Action Plan for the Common Strategy on Ukraine. Ukraine has a very special position in the European arena, and the reinforcement of relations between the EU and Ukraine are central for European stability.

### *Spain*

Spain is supportive of both strategies, although the government thinks that the situation in Russia is not the best for going ahead with the implementation of the strategy now, nor is the time for launching discussions about “the limits of Europe”.

### *Sweden*

The Common Strategy with Russia has been adopted, and having it implemented is in line with Sweden’s interest. Even if there were difficulties at the end of 1999, as pointed out at the Helsinki summit, EU-Russian relations is one of the Swedish priorities, and so it will be during the Swedish Presidency in 2001.<sup>276</sup>

### *Ukraine*

Even if a strategy, with general outlines, was adopted in Helsinki, Sweden was keeping a low profile and did not publish any government report with priorities before the summit, as was done concerning the Russian strategy (see previous question). As a matter of fact, by the end of 1999, Sweden did not yet have a clear policy on Ukraine, according to sources in the Foreign Ministry which are dealing with the matter. There are indications that the government is regarding some of the demands from Ukraine as unrealistic, and particularly difficult for Sweden to support is a suggestion to contribute in developing new nuclear power capacity. It has also been pointed out - unofficially - that it will probably be difficult to establish the concrete details of the Ukraine strategy, bearing in mind existing problems within the EU to agree on financing the Russian strategy.

Against this background, Sweden actually adopted a new bilateral development strategy for Ukraine one day before the Helsinki summit<sup>277</sup>, which was said to be a complement to the EU strategy. The Swedish strategy is focused on the social sector and the areas of environment and democratic development.

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<sup>276</sup> Cf. also *Enlargement/Agenda 2000 - Watch*, No. 1/1999, page 112.

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<sup>277</sup> Foreign Ministry, press statement, 9 December 1999.

**United Kingdom***The implementation of the Common Strategy with Russia and EU-Russian relations*

The Foreign Secretary Robin Cook gave evidence to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs on 19 May 1999. His comments may be taken to reflect the opinion of the British government over these issues. A Common Strategy with Russia was the first to be decided upon because of the breadth of issues raised. They span EU-enlargement, financial aid, environmental policy (such as nuclear power stations), market liberalisation and democratic reform and the EU's defensive position with respect to the sensitive issue of NATO expansion. The EU's focus on economic and technical assistance can be extended in the international arena by balancing the role of the US in institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. Mr Cook pointed out that Russia inherited the debt of the entire Soviet Union, not just that of the Russian Federation. (*Evidence given on 19.5.99 §5-10*)

As the accession States join the EU Russia will become a direct neighbour. Tied into the points raised in question 8, the government recognises that co-operation with Russia will help overcome potential difficulties generated by a shared border. A Common Strategy, combined with an institution such as a European Forum, would be the best way to maintain and strengthen long term prosperity and peace in the east.

After the Helsinki summit, Prime Minister Blair told the House of Commons on 13 December 1999 that: *'The conflict in Chechnya was much on our minds at Helsinki. Our relationship with Russia is a vital one, above all for the security and stability of our continent. We want Russia to continue on the path of democracy, the market economy and the rule of law, and will continue to support the transition process. But business as usual is not possible while human rights are being comprehensively abused in a corner of the*

*Russian Federation. The EU called for a political solution to this issue and adopted a series of actions designed to back up the words of strong condemnation.'*

The government remains sensitive to criticism of its much vaunted ethical foreign policy and human rights are therefore likely to feature in its relations with Russia.

*The future Common Strategy with Ukraine*

The government's position has changed little over the last six months. In the last report it was remarked that the government supports the building of stable relations with the Ukraine while understanding that there is little chance of any negotiations over membership in the foreseeable future.

**11. The Cologne summit reaffirmed the intention to draw the Western Balkan countries closer to the prospect of full integration. What is the position of your country's government on the**

- **Common Strategy, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and the Stability Pact for countries of South-Eastern Europe? Are further initiatives needed?**
- **Impact on the ongoing enlargement process?**

**Austria**

The Stability Pact provides a framework for developing peace, security and economic growth in South-Eastern Europe and shall help to integrate the countries of the region “into modern euro-atlantic structures”. The support of the Stability Pact must take the form of efficient projects and transparent co-operation without duplication.

Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel stated on the occasion of the summit meeting of the Central European Initiative in Prague in early November: “Future stability and peace in South-Eastern Europe depends on the gradual creation of an unified economic area in former Yugoslavia and Albania. This area should finally encompass the entire region.” Mr. Schüssel added that Austria would also follow the objectives of the Stability Pact throughout its upcoming OSCE Presidency in the year 2000.<sup>278</sup> According to Mr. Schüssel, the relations between the EU and the South-Eastern European States should be consolidated in the form of individual “association and stability agreements”. Mr. Schüssel also sees the Stability Pact as a first step in the direc-

tion of a “Partnership for Europe”, an idea that the Foreign Minister initiated without much success during the Austrian EU-Presidency in 1998. The “Partnership for Europe” should offer an “overall multilateral framework” for countries “with bilateral EU agreements but no clear prospects for accession in the medium or long term”.<sup>279</sup>

Austria considers Croatia to be a “logical applicant country” and will support any decision of the new political leadership to intensify its relations with the EU.

**Belgium**

*Common Strategy, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and the Stability Pact for countries of South-Eastern Europe.*

According to Belgian diplomacy, the recent crises on the Balkan clearly revealed the imminent need for an European intervention in the region. While, to date, the legal basis for EU military action is still absent - and should therefore be discussed during the next IGC<sup>280</sup> - the Union currently does have a number of (civil) levers to its disposal for fostering stability and prosperity in the Balkan. In the Belgian view, in addition to participating in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the Community could give a particularly strong boost to the reconstruction of the region through, first, the conclusion and, thereafter, the implementation of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the countries of the region, along the lines proposed by the Commission. Whilst a confirmation of the Balkan countries' ultimate European vocation would certainly add to the attractiveness and effectiveness of this action, it is deemed too early to make any concrete steps as regards the membership issue, though. Absolute priority should therefore be given to a full implementation of the Stabilisation

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<sup>278</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Press release, 4 November 1999.

<sup>279</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Press release, 3 September 1999.

<sup>280</sup> Knack, 8 December 1999.

and Association process, whereas concrete form should only be given to the membership perspective once further progress is made towards meeting the Copenhagen membership criteria.

*Impact on the ongoing enlargement process*

Admittedly, the dramatic changes in the European political landscape stemming from the crises in the Balkan region have to some extent influenced the Belgian stance towards the ongoing (pre-) accession process, particularly as regards Romania's and Bulgaria's status therein. The main impact of these conflicts on Belgian foreign policy shaping, however, probably lies in nurturing the conviction that stability in the region can best be fostered by drawing the Western Balkan countries closer to the perspective of full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. As part of this long-term strategy, Belgian diplomatic circles support the Commission's proposal to confirm that these countries have the ultimate vocation to become members of the European Union once all pre-conditions to that aim - with special emphasis on the need for intra-regional integration, both in economic and in political terms - are met.

***Denmark***<sup>281</sup>

In connection with the conflict in Kosovo, Denmark supported the idea of creating institutional structures for the South Eastern European countries which could entice them to embark upon regional co-operation. In practice, Denmark therefore supported the German proposal of a Stability Pact, including the fact that the Pact should contain a membership perspective. Denmark also supported the Stabilisation and Association Agreements.

In general, Denmark shares the opinion of former Commission President Santer and his successor Romano Prodi that there is

now a need to think through how the various parts of the EU's South-Eastern Europe policy fit together. The Stability Pact could here take on the role as a more co-ordinating mechanism.

The Danish government is sceptical of Romano Prodi's virtual membership idea. Instead of embarking upon something new, the EU should stick to the gradual, "Treaty-Ladder" (Partnership Agreements, Europe Agreement and Accession Agreements), which has been highly successful so far.

The effects on the enlargement process have been positive. The conflict in Kosovo shifted the perception of the "regatta" option in many Member States and pushed Bulgaria and Romania forward. It also increased the understanding of the importance of Turkey to European stability and indirectly the role of Russia in this respect.

However, already in the short- to medium term several challenges could emerge. First of all, the EU will have to be careful not to issue promises to the South-Eastern Europeans countries which cannot be met. Secondly, a difficult balancing act could materialise once Croatia or for that matter eventually Serbia agree upon such substantial political and economic reform that they can catch up with Bulgaria and Romania.

***Finland***

It was decided that the preparations of the Common Strategy on the Western Balkans should continue also in order to give the High Representative the possibility of influencing its contents. The strategy should work as a frame for co-ordinating the Union's and its Member States' activities in the region and increase the consistency, coherence and complementarity of their contributions to other initiatives such as the Stability Pact, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements, regional approach, and the strategy of conditionality.

<sup>281</sup> The following is based on interviews in the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

In the Finnish view, no new initiatives are needed in the region; rather, the existing ones should be merged. The great number of initiatives has already led to problems of co-ordination.

In his speech at the Helsinki European Council, President Martti Ahtisaari emphasised that in return for the Union's commitment in the region (where it has a vital strategic interest) to promoting stability, security and democracy, and in return for its ambitious programme of assistance, one has to insist on the unambiguous and visible commitment of the countries of the region themselves. They should be committed to undertake the creation of sound public institutions, to develop and enforce legislation that meets European standards, and to fight organised crime and corruption. The President also affirmed the commitment to include Serbia in this framework as soon as it has a democratic government that is ready to co-operate fully with the international community.

### **France**

As regards the policy of the European Union towards countries of South-Eastern Europe, France is obviously in favour of closer ties which could contribute to modernise and stabilise those countries. It also shares the long term objective of their accession. But such closer ties should, at present, remain clearly distinct from those initiated with the ten Central and Eastern European applicants as well as Cyprus and Malta.<sup>282</sup> So, the French seem actually careful not to "load the boat" of enlargement.

In the context of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, during the German

Presidency, the Fifteen fully agreed on the need to promote a "new type of contract-based relations" between the European Union and the former Yugoslavian countries as regards their "accession"<sup>283</sup>. But when it came to ministerial level decision on the new Stabilisation and Association Agreements tabled to that effect, France is reported to have pressed the German Presidency into avoiding any wording which might give credit to an automatic accession clause. It therefore contributed to the fact that the conclusions of the Cologne European Council merely mentioned the readiness of the European Union "to draw the countries of this region closer to the prospect of full integration into its structures"<sup>284</sup>. During the summer 1999, the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, reiterated that those new Stabilisation and Association Agreements could not, in any event, be viewed as a "short-cut" to accession.<sup>285</sup>

As was the case after the fall of the Berlin wall, in respect to Central and Eastern European countries, France also stands in favour of development of regional co-operation. The two arguments which were formerly put forward still obtain: on the one hand, these are countries faced with similar problems which would benefit from comparing experiences and jointly working out solutions; on the other hand, it makes it possible to "test" the capacity of the countries concerned to co-operate – an indispensable ability for, when the day comes, integrating the European Union. By underlining the "major importance" of "improving relations" and "removing barriers" between the countries of South-Eastern Europe, the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council take the

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<sup>282</sup> Interview of the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, *La Croix*, 21 May 1999; "Economie et démocratie: reconstruire les Balkans", *Le Monde*, 29 May 1999; "Du pacte de stabilité à l'intégration des pays de l'Est à l'Union européenne", *Le Monde*, 31 July 1999.

<sup>283</sup> *Bulletin quotidien Europe*, 20 May 1999, n° 7468, p. 4.

<sup>284</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Cologne European Council, 3-4 June 1999, point 72 (available on the [europa.eu.int](http://europa.eu.int) internet site).

<sup>285</sup> In Ministerial session of the European Conference, Statement by the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moscovici, 19 July 1999, *op. cit.*

French concern into account.<sup>286</sup>

### *Germany*

Given that the stability pact is a German initiative and that the special co-ordinator is a former member of the German government, the commitment for South-Eastern Europe is imperative. The government stresses that South-Eastern Europe is an integral part of Europe which deserves a long term commitment. It is seen as a test case for preventive diplomacy of the Union and of the Union's political credibility.

However, the process is cumbersome and the mood non-euphoric. The German government initiated (together with France) e.g. a Business Advisory Board chaired by top managers from France and Germany to foster the establishment of market economies in the region. The German government welcomed political change in Croatia and is in favour of lifting sanctions against Yugoslavia. It confirms the concrete membership-perspective with regard to the Euro-Atlantic structures for the Western Balkan and thinks that in the cases of Slovakia and Croatia this "carrot" had positive effects.<sup>287</sup> It does, however, not encourage e.g. Croatia to apply for membership within the foreseeable future.

### *Greece*

Greece has played a pioneering role - or at least considers it has played a pioneering role - in getting the EU from the Stabilisation and Association Agreements to a general Stability Pact strategy. The Simitis government even considers itself to have the paternity of the Stability Pact, long

before the Schröder government took the initiative and transformed it into a main EU-policy in the Balkans. The matter of ensuring the seat of the institutional EU presence in the Balkans and of the aid mechanisms to Kosovo in Thessaloniki got to be a "cause celebre" in Greece. In fact, Greece has tried hard for a concerted European position, with emphasis on aid and assistance in the Balkans, as a means of shifting the focus away from the military option in Kosovo, or, when that option was deemed inevitable by the West, as a means of complementing it and providing for its continuation.

Along with the support promised to Bulgaria and Romania for their EU prospects, this Greek interest for the Western Balkans (essentially for what used to be Yugoslavia) gives rise to steady Greek support for an overall Balkan/South-Eastern Europe and EU presence and policy with the perspective of enlargement not far away. Of course, the economic and political soft spots of such an approach are not ignored, but the will to make of "Europe" a factor guaranteeing stability in the region is overwhelming.

### *Ireland*

The Irish government welcomes the strategies, which will lead to increased stability in the Balkan region and will continue to do so. It prefers a rationalisation of existing initiatives and a full commitment to their implementation to the suggestion of any further initiatives. There is a view that if it is to be successful, the political will has to be maintained and efforts have to be made to engage public opinion in the stabilisation process.

### *Italy*

Italy is particularly active in the Framework of the Common Strategy for stabilisation of the Balkans, and is very supportive of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. According to the under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, Umberto Ranieri,

<sup>286</sup> Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999, op. cit., point 59.

<sup>287</sup> Government Declaration on the Stability Pact for South-East-Europe, given by the Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on 27 January 2000 at the Bundestag, available at <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/6%5Farchiv/2/r/r00127a.htm>.

“The Pact’s objectives correspond to the integrated and global strategy proposed by Italy to address the problems of the Balkan region, facilitate the anchoring of the countries from the region to the European Union in view of the prospect for membership, and promote constructive relations, reciprocal trust, security and economic co-operation.”<sup>288</sup> In September 1999 one of the most trusted public and former high ranking official at the Bank of Italy, Fabrizio Saccomanni, was nominated as Chairman of one of the three Working Tables of the Stability Pact, namely, that of Economic Reconstruction, and ensures a high profile Italian commitment to the overall stabilisation of the region. He inaugurated the work of the Table last October in Bari, and soon convened an informal donors meeting in December to explore concrete possibilities for financing the objectives of the Pact. Both, Saccomanni and Roberto Toscano, Head of the Policy Planning Unit at the Italian Foreign Ministry, greatly favour a regional integration approach to the area, as opposed to an ad hoc “discriminatory” one privileging more advanced countries from the area.<sup>289</sup>

It is necessary to underline that the Italian policy-making community continuously stresses on the importance of creating conditions for an early inclusion of the FRY in the Pact’s integrated approach to the region. According to Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, “Serbia is fundamental to the stabilisation of the whole Balkan area not only due to its geographic location, but also due to its history.”<sup>290</sup> In this context, the Italian government sponsored an important initiative under the EU’s program “Energy for Democracy” entitled

“Operazione Città/Città” designed to provide humanitarian aid to five major Serbian cities - Belgrade, Kragujevac, Nis, Novi Sad and Pancevo - whose local administrations oppose the regime of Milosevic. The Italian government has already committed 2.5 billion Italian lire to the initiative and will substantiate it with another 7.5 billion in the course of 2000.<sup>291</sup>

The process of regional integration of the South-East Europe is seen in Italy as a lengthy process, one that would probably evolve over a period of at least 15 years<sup>292</sup> and would require a special emphasis on economic development. As a result, the Italian government has committed a total of 400 billion Italian lire for an initial period of three years to support various initiatives aimed at improving the economic performance of the area. Italy considers such a policy course intrinsic to the overall process of EU-enlargement.

### *Netherlands*

Just after the Cologne summit, the government of The Netherlands expressed its satisfaction with the fact that the Stability Pact is not restricted to the prevention of conflicts and instead takes a broader goal of reconstruction of the whole Balkan region.<sup>293</sup> The Netherlands has played an active role in the development and implementation of the Stability Pact. At the international conference about the Stability Pact in Sarajevo on 30 July 1999, Prime Minister Kok declared that The Netherlands is willing to pay 500 million guilders (238 million Euro) annually. The

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<sup>288</sup> Own translation, Press Communiqué, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, 17 December 1999.

<sup>289</sup> Statement at a public meeting “I Balcani Dopo il Conflitto: Oltre la Ricostruzione, Quale Integrazione?”, 20 January 2000, Rome.

<sup>290</sup> Own translation, Dini’s statement at the inaugural conference “Operazione Città/Città”, 20 December 1999.

<sup>291</sup> Press Communiqué, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, 17 December 1999 and 20 December 1999.

<sup>292</sup> Marta Dassù, Foreign Policy Advisor in the office of the Premier, Statement at a public meeting “I Balcani Dopo il Conflitto: Oltre la Ricostruzione, Quale Integrazione?”, 20 January 2000, Rome.

<sup>293</sup> Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Second Chamber of Parliament, “Zuid-Oost Europa, bouwstenen voor stability”, doc. DEU/828/99, 18 June 1999.



Netherlands also takes part in the High Level Steering Group, which was set up by the G-7 and which co-ordinates the financial contributions of the large donors to countries in south-eastern Europe. The government has moreover declared that it is willing to take initiatives to remove the mutual trade barriers in the region and to help the countries to become members of the WTO and the EU.<sup>294</sup> In July 1999, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs has proposed, together with his Greek colleague, to support the democratic movement in Serbia by supplying energy and fuel through unofficial channels. This plan, called "energy for democracy", has been adopted and carried out by the European Commission.

For the Dutch government, a precondition for a successful implementation of the Stability Pact is the maximisation of the own responsibility for countries in the region. An active participation of private companies from the region is part of this policy. Prime Minister Kok has described the character of the Stability Pact as follows: "it is some kind of a Marshall plan for the Balkan region, which offers financial and economic opportunities for the countries involved in order to make it possible to save themselves in the future."<sup>295</sup> Good co-operation with the international financial institutions (IFI's), in particular the World Bank, is considered as another precondition for success.

Some concern existed about the consequences of the Stability Pact for the developmental aid in general. The Second Chamber of Parliament has demanded in a motion that the government makes sure that the financial support for Kosovo does

not lead to a decline in the developmental aid to countries in Africa.<sup>296</sup>

### *Portugal*

The Portuguese government considers the EU policy towards the Balkans as an absolute priority. The Portuguese Presidency will concentrate on the development of the basic conditions in order to bring these countries closer to the European Structures, and particular attention will be paid to the Stability Pact. For the Portuguese government the combination of political and economic action in this region is essential to stabilise the entire region and therefore is an important mechanism of conflict prevention. Portugal supports the idea that the EU should give an answer to countries such as Albania, Macedonian, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia through the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and a negotiated answer to the specific case of Yugoslavia, according to the respective domestic evolution.

### *Spain*

Spain is in favour of the financial effort agreed by the Fifteen, but is concerned about the possibility that the money needed for the reconstruction of the Western Balkans could be detracted from the budget established for other external policies, like the Mediterranean or Latin American Policies. Spain supports the Stabilisation and Association Agreements offered to these countries and believes that the perspective of accession to the EU could help these countries to cover the long way ahead.

### *Sweden*

As a EU member, Sweden has a positive

<sup>294</sup> Balkannotitie, letter of the Minister of Developmental Co-operation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Second Chamber of parliament, doc. 26433, nr 19, 8 November 1999.

<sup>295</sup> Quoted in the Dutch daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad, 31 July 1999.

<sup>296</sup> Motion initiated by the social democratic PvdA, 14 October 1999. A few months earlier, in June 1999, the director of NOVIB, a Dutch organisation for developmental aid, had made a similar plea in a letter published in a Dutch newspaper, Trouw, 16 June 1999.

attitude towards the above-mentioned instruments. The Stability Pact has an important function as a catalyst for already existing initiatives and as a forum for co-ordination. The SAA-Agreements are a corner-stone in the process. The procedures for political consultation, transfer of the EU acquis, trade liberalisation and the regional approach of the SAA-Agreements are vital parts of the entire Stability Pact process.

A further initiative has already been taken - at the OSCE summit last November, the President of the Commission announced substantial economic resources for the benefit of the nations of the Western Balkan in the period 2000-2006. The precise structure of this package is still unclear, but it gives a signal that the EU is prepared to add financial resources to the Stability Pact - which is mainly a political process.

The Swedish government does not see that the Stability Pact process has any negative impact on the position of the candidate countries. On the contrary, the Pact and the SAA-Agreements will probably create a better stability in the region, and that will be a positive factor for the enlargement process.<sup>297</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

In an interview given to the BBC on 30 July 1999 from Sarajevo the Prime Minister Tony Blair was fully supportive of the Stability Pact and rebuilding process being undertaken in the Balkans. He said:

*'The point is not just to make some concrete commitments about rebuilding the region but to make it clear that the commitment that we had when we were fighting the conflict in Kosovo is a commitment that is now going to be sustained. Having won the war we have got to win the peace, we have got to rebuild the region and if*

*we do that we will in the end save ourselves energy, time and resources and probably future military conflict. [...] There is no doubt at all that the countries in the Balkan region, including probably many forces inside Serbia who want to get rid of Milosevic, want a different future for the Balkans region. They want a future as part of Europe, they want to share in the prosperity and the security that the rest of Europe has and we have got to help them do that. We have got to have the vision and the courage and the determination and the leadership, having fought the conflict successfully in Kosovo, now to win the peace.'* (Transcript available from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk))

His comments clearly show that Blair regards the Stability Pact as being an integral part of the international community's involvement in the Balkans. Clearly the EU is responsible for the largest part of the project - physically re-building the region and helping it integrate into the rest of the Europe. The position of Britain is that it is committed to a long-term programme which will attempt to end the Balkan conflicts and eventually incorporate Serbia too.

### *Impact on the ongoing enlargement process*

On the same day Foreign Secretary Robin Cook laid out in a press conference a three point plan to promote change in the Balkans. He said:

*'First of all, an open-frontiers initiative to break down trade barriers within the region and between the region and Europe - a step that would enable the countries of the region to share in the prosperity of the modern Europe and to build economic progress for their children.*

*Secondly, an investment charter to provide the climate for foreign investment and which will make sure that the technology transfer that follows investment would enable the countries of the region to build a dynamic economy for a skilled*

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<sup>297</sup> Personal communication with the authorities concerned at the Foreign Ministry, end of November 1999.

workforce.

*Thirdly, a commitment to free media and to common freedom standards across the region based on a declaration on the fundamental principles of a free media. Without access to the information, without access to the free exchange of opinion, democracy will always have only shallow roots. ' (source: FCO website)*

These commitments need not infringe on the ongoing enlargement process, since they are simply stating the fundamental principles which the EU is based upon, and which became known as the Copenhagen criteria for membership. The experience gained from the accession of the present applicant States will probably benefit the Balkan States in the long run, for it will provide a 'blue print' for the future expansion of the EU in the future.

**12. Looking at the debate on enlargement and EU-reform in your country what was the most striking observation or trend over the last 6 months? Did the outcome of the European Parliamentary elections impact on the debate?**

**Austria**

Considering the last six months, two characteristics or developments of the public discussion of enlargement deserve mentioning. Firstly, the prevalence of the topic of nuclear safety, especially concerning the nuclear power plant in Bohunice (Slovakia). Secondly, the subtle change of the rhetoric of Jörg Haider, leader of the Freedom Party, after the general elections on 3 October 1999.<sup>298</sup>

Another observation should be added. Austria is the country of the EU which would be most affected by eastward enlargement. In the opinion of the government the overall balance clearly shows mid- and long-term advantages of enlargement for Austria. On the other hand, public support for enlargement in Austria is the weakest of all the 15 Member States. In this case it would be the duty of the government to act in the best interest of the country and to explain and promote the advantages of enlargement. It should try to influence the public debate in favour of enlargement and make every effort to convince the Austrian people. Instead it acts defensively, concentrating on a single issue which it presents as being the biggest and most important question concerning enlargement. In my opinion, nuclear safety is a very important issue but enlargement is much more than that.

The European Parliamentary elections and its outcome did not influence the debate on enlargement. The elections were based

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<sup>298</sup> Both topics are treated in answer to the question concerning the general attitude toward enlargement. See question 6.

on purely domestic policies. The outcome has been interpreted as only having relevance for national politics.

**Belgium**

Having regard to the various and potentially sweeping implications of eastward enlargement on both internal and external national policies in the (relatively near) future, the most striking observation in Belgian policy formation on enlargement and its many related issues consists in a total lack of public debate on enlargement as such. The focus of the internal debate is largely confined to the need for institutional reforms prior to enlargement.

If enlargement as such does not give cause to public debate, this can - at least in part - be explained by the existing overall consensus on the matter among Belgian officials and political parties. Yet, it can hardly be reconciled with the overwhelming public reservation to eastward EU-enlargement.<sup>299</sup> As this public caution is closely linked to the fear for a loss of purpose and manageability of the European Union, the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conference will be fundamental for a change in approval rates for enlargement to occur.

**Denmark**

The most striking observation still remains the same as in the previous Enlargement/Agenda watches - the ability to maintain almost 100% consensus among political parties and the public on the enlargement issue.<sup>300</sup> Even the decision to grant Turkey candidate status does not seem to have changed this considerably. Here, it will however be interesting to wait for the first opinion polls.

**Finland**

The Finnish EU-Presidency obviously coloured this period by directing the Fin-

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<sup>299</sup> See E/A-W 1/1999, p. 113.

<sup>300</sup> See *Enlargement/Agenda 2000-Watch*, No.1/1999, pp. 77-78

nish efforts more at seeking compromises between the Member States than at expressing its own views. At the same time, the Finnish stands were pushed forward. In particular, some change seems to have taken place in the Finnish views on the scope of institutional reforms. The government might now be more open to a wider agenda - yet, after the Presidency, Finland might also align itself with other countries in favour of a shorter IGC and in favour of continuous support for the position of smaller Member States.

### *France*

Looking at the debate on enlargement and EU-reform in France, first of all, we should note that it does not seem to have been influenced by the outcome of the elections to the European Parliament. More generally, one can hardly talk of a genuine debate on these issues as they do not really mobilise French public opinion. In the opinion of an adviser to the Minister for European Affairs, the issues at stake in the Intergovernmental Conference are too technical while enlargement is not yet experienced as a “practical” issue by the population.

Over the past six months, it should however be noted that French leaders seem to have had the impression of having been better heard on such issues: their claims for a “mastered” enlargement, prepared by financial and institutional reforms, are gradually being met. Admittedly, French requests are all the more likely to be taken care of as the enlargement process simultaneously moves forward. The accession negotiations are soon going to involve twelve countries and today, it is widely acknowledged that the Balkan countries will one day join the European Union. This explains why, at the same time, French leaders are concerned by the now tangible prospect of a twofold increase in the number of Member States. To be more precise, there seems to be, in government and in particular in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, a feeling that the question of

knowing how a thirty-member-strong Europe could work should urgently be addressed.

### *Germany*

There is a considerable increase in talking about enlargement in terms of geopolitics and security policy. The Foreign Ministry pushes the perspective of a pan-European enlargement and a broader first round enlargement. This goes hand in hand with ideas of a maximum taking over of the *acquis* and strict observance of the Copenhagen criteria. A tension exists between quality and speed/scope of enlargement. Only the decision on Turkey caught the headlines, while Eastern enlargement generally gains little public attention. The government is not actively explaining the reasons, purpose, problems and benefits of enlargement to the wider public. Thus, the government will have to improve its communication strategy on this vital question considerably if it wants to earn the (informed) support of the electorate. The prospects of a EU of 28 members causes severe doubts, that a mere extrapolation of the status quo is enough. To cope with enlargement, a profound reform of the EU seems inevitable.

### *Greece*

As stated earlier (see points 1,3,4 and 5), the debate on enlargement within the last 6 months in Greece has been essentially focused on the prospect of Turkey being accepted as a candidate country. It could be said that the whole public debate over Europe and European policy has been hijacked by a (major) bilateral issue, which by any standard is situated very much at the periphery of European interest. Institutional reform of the EU has had very much a back seat in this period of time.

European elections have done little, if anything, to illuminate public debate on these issues in Greece. Neither the electoral campaign nor the outcome of the

elections has brought any change in perceptions or, indeed, in public opinion interest.

### ***Ireland***

There has been a certain quickening of parliamentary interest in enlargement and the beginnings of a wider interest in the press. Business is conscious of the CEEC as prospective members of the Union and companies are factoring it into business plans. There has been a greater number of exchanges of personnel and the number of visits by delegations from the candidate countries to Ireland and to the Institute of European Affairs (IEA) has increased exponentially. There has also been a noticeable trend of interest in Ireland's experience as a successful member of the EU, with applicant countries seeking to learn from these experiences. This has been evident from briefings by the Institute of European Affairs to delegations from applicant countries participating in courses organised by the Institute of Public Administration in Dublin, which are sponsored by the Irish government and the Commission.

### ***Italy***

The European Parliamentary elections received reactions that had to do mainly with how indicative they were of voter preferences at the level of Italian domestic politics. Issues such as EU-reform and enlargement are usually not contended among the major political players, and as a result receive little attention even in the aftermath of the elections.

One of the most important developments at the level of EU-enlargement policies has been the high-profile Italian commitment to the reconstruction of the Balkans expressed through the nomination of Fabrizio Saccomanni as a Chairman of the Working Table for Economic Reconstruction of the Stability Pact on 17 September 1999. In addition, President Prodi's continued efforts for devising a rapid and

effective strategy for the stabilisation and the "anchoring" of the Balkans to the EU should be noted. Taken together with a particularly strong governmental support for Italian involvement in the area, these trends indicate that Italy has become one of the most active EU members willing to devise an integrated strategy towards the Balkans.

With regard to EU-reform, Italy has closely followed and supported Prodi's strenuous efforts to devise an ambitious agenda for the next ICG, and the country developed much more articulate positions on specific questions, as compared to its past involvement in EU-politics. Generally, Italy can be said to have a higher profile in the negotiation of EU-affairs.

### ***Netherlands***

The most striking observation in The Netherlands is that there is no serious debate on enlargement and EU-reform among the public opinion and the political elite. This is in sharp contrast with the fact that the Dutch government considers enlargement as a clear priority in its European policy. The Netherlands remains a very pro-European country and there seems to be a widespread consensus about the enlargement as well. Despite the dramatically low turnout in The Netherlands<sup>301</sup>, the European Parliament elections had no direct impact on the ideas about enlargement.

### ***Portugal***

The fact that Portugal is holding the Presidency of the Union has generally increased the importance attached to Europe, namely within the media and opinion makers. Enlargement is not, however, the most present issue. The ICG and the possible consequences of the institutional reform to Portugal - reweighting of the votes and composition of the Commis-

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<sup>301</sup> The turnout of 29,9% was the lowest in history. Only Great Britain had a lower turnout with less than 25%.

sion - are seen as more important. Both the government and the main political parties are stressing the challenge Portugal is facing in the context of the institutional reform.

The European Parliament elections outcome did not have an impact on the debate. With a low turnout (40%) and the predictable victory of the Socialist Party (43%), the elections were not important in widening the European debate in Portugal. On the other hand, enlargement was not a topic of the campaign which concentrated more on internal issues, on the one hand, and on the possibility of Mario Soares being elected as President of the European Parliament, on the other hand.

In the Parliamentary elections of October 1999, the European Union was also quite absent from the debate, especially since the Portuguese Peoples Party has changed a little his positions and is not stating so clearly its opposition to the EU.

### *Spain*

The decision of Helsinki to invite new countries to begin negotiations with the EU has had an impact on opinion leaders, experts on EU-affairs and policy-makers. They are beginning to realise how different Europe will be in twenty years ahead and have begun to debate on the role of Spain in the Community. The newly increased importance of EU-enlargement is also visible in the recent publishing of a special issue on Spain and the EU-enlargement by the leading journal *Economía Exterior*.<sup>302</sup>

### *Sweden*

One of the last days of the old century, an opinion poll in a Stockholm newspaper indicated that the Swedes, after five years in the EU, are disappointed with the

membership. If there was a new referendum, 53 percent would say "no" to EU membership and 39 percent "yes".<sup>303</sup> There may be several reasons behind this anti-EU majority, but the political opposition has one clear answer, namely that the government is too passive, and does not attempt to stimulate public opinion towards more pro-European attitudes.

This criticism is nothing new, it has for some time now been a part in the national debate about the EMU, the dominating topic in most of 1998 and 1999. Maybe it can be said that a new trend in the last months is the emergence of another topic in the debate - not less "hot" than the EMU-discussions - and that is the question of the security and defence dimension. Sweden's role in an extended CFSP, and its relations to NATO, may eventually lead to a reconsideration of the traditional concepts about "neutrality" and "non-alignment". This debate will continue.

Both issues are very sensitive and difficult for the Social Democratic government, which to a large extent depend on the parliamentary support from the two small parties which are the strongest opponents to EMU and CFSP. This means that the government is under attack from two sides - the anti-EU parties and the right-of-center opposition which wants the government to make Sweden a more active EU partner. The problem is not less considering that the Social Democratic party itself is divided on both issues.

### *United Kingdom*

The political debate in Britain over the EU in the last six months has been centred more upon Britain's position in it rather than on enlargement. This is unlikely to change until the fundamental question of Britain's European destiny is resolved in the Euro referendum, apparently still scheduled for but increasingly unlikely, in early 2002.

<sup>302</sup> *Economía Exterior*, "La ampliación de la Unión Europea: los intereses de España", núm 11, 1999-2000, 163 pages (Estudios de Política Exterior, 1999, in <http://www.politicaexterior.com>).

<sup>303</sup> *Aftonbladet*, 28 December 1999.

The European elections produced a victory for the Conservative Party - a party that campaigned on an anti-Europe / anti-Euro platform. Their victory was a loud protest by a minority of the population in the face of apathy from the majority - turnout was less than 25%. Nevertheless the message behind the campaign was 'wider not deeper' - an agenda that would appear at first sight to embrace enlargement. This is so, only to the extent that the Party supports economic deregulation and free trade throughout Eastern Europe while dismantling the social, legal and political framework of the EU. Their vision of Europe is therefore one that is not shared by any of the applicant States. Unless treaty changes embracing greater flexibility are introduced they advocate vetoing every decision which does not go their way, including enlargement. In an interview with *The Times* (22 October 1999), Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Affairs, and a former Conservative Party Chairman stated:

*'[The Conservative party is] now committed to renegotiating the treaty to opt for a pick-and-mix approach like the French on beef. Unless other Member States agree to an amendment on these lines, [it] will block any further treaty amendments.'*

*Which other Members States are rooting for pick and mix? Perhaps Haider in Austria if he was in government.*

*If no other Member States go along with this, let alone a majority, are we saying we will block the treaty necessary for enlargement of the EU after years saying it was our strategic and moral duty to bring in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the others?*

*The Conservative policy now appears to be to stop enlargement unless we get our own way on opt-outs from everything that moves. I just don't understand where we have got to.'*

The European Parliamentary elections

were a great setback to the pro-Europeans in Great Britain. The strength of the Conservative and United Kingdom Independence parties was principally due to a lack of leadership by the Labour Party. The launch of Britain in Europe, the body which will ultimately campaign in the Euro referendum, was delayed and its campaign remit had to be broadened to state the case for EU-membership and dilute its unyielding commitment to the Euro in line with doubts over joining the Euro expressed in current opinion polls. Despite a successful start in October 1999 - with leading representatives from the three main parties - no impact has been made, at least in terms of opinion polls.

It does appear that Blair is having to start with the basics and reassert the case for membership of the European Union. In certain quarters progress is gradually being made. The British government is presenting itself as the leading Member State in the campaign to reform the EU's institutional arrangements, with Neil Kinnock as the Commissioner in charge. This marks a new departure for Britain since it is attempting to introduce the concept of leadership within Europe, rather than the traditional picture of reluctant obligation. Blair, Cook and Vaz repeatedly stress that it is possible to change the EU and that the current climate in the EU has never been more favourable towards reform - and Britain has a chance to influence that change.

In Keith Vaz Britain has a capable and confident Minister for Europe and one that may succeed in changing British perception of the EU. If Prodi's Commission can successfully reform - transparency and efficiency being the crucial aspects - and if Vaz can maintain public interest in the EU, then British opinion will change. Mixing into this equation Blair's gift for presenting grand visions of the future (such as his modernisation of Britain) then the expansion of Europe eastwards will be impressed upon the British as a worthy ideal. If Britain can continue 'engaging'



with Europe rather than confronting it, then enlargement and reform will become increasingly important aspects of the political debate in Britain.



# **ANALYTICAL SURVEY BY APPLICANT COUNTRY**

**1. How did your government assess the work of the German EU-Presidency in the accession negotiations?**

**Czech Republic**

The Czech government appreciates that the German EU-Presidency has managed to maintain the dynamics of the accession negotiations. Further eight chapters have been opened (under the Austrian Presidency the number of opened chapters was seven). Until June 1999, 15 chapters out of the total 31 have been opened. The government also values the decision on Agenda 2000 made in Berlin, according to which the financial resources have been determined for new member countries for the period 2002-2006. It is also seen positively that at the Cologne summit it was agreed that the conference on the necessary institutional reforms would be concluded by the end of 2000.

**Hungary<sup>304</sup>**

The German Presidency of the EU was very positively assessed by the Hungarian government. The accession negotiations advanced according to the agreed schedule and the acceptance by the EU-15 of the Agenda 2000 package (including the budgetary aspects of enlargement) at the Berlin Summit significantly supported this process. Furthermore, the arrangement of the Cologne European Council concerning the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on institutional reforms was also welcomed by the Hungarian government. (Namely, to have a narrower agenda and stick to the deadline of the end of 2000.)

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<sup>304</sup> The Hungarian Report is based on: Hungarian daily and weekly newspapers; S. Meisel - T. Szemler: "Key Issues of the Accession Negotiations between the EU and Hungary", *The Vienna Institute Monthly Report*, November 1999, Interview with a High Official at the EU Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian Republic.

**Poland**

According to the government's position the impact of the German EU-Presidency on the accession negotiations was considerable. The German government was strongly engaged in organising the bilateral experts' meetings in order to clarify additional uncertainties appearing after the screening exercise. Their aim was to accelerate the negotiating process. As a result - under the German EU-Presidency - the official EU-Poland negotiations have been opened in eight negotiating chapters (free movement of goods, consumer protection, statistics, customs union, company law, external relations, competition policy and fishery) and have been temporarily closed in four chapters (industrial policy, telecommunication and information technology, consumer protection and statistics).

Although the ultimate date of the next EU enlargement was not indicated, the European Council claimed during the Cologne summit that the EU would have been able to present all its common positions (in 31 negotiating chapters) until the end of June 2000. Additionally, Mr. Verheugen's words<sup>305</sup> expressed during the Interministerial Conference in Luxembourg confirmed the Polish authorities in the conviction that Germany has been a real advocate of Polish interests in the European Union and that it has tried - using its position - to push the enlargement process ahead.

It is worth noticing that the German EU-Presidency managed to resolve the dilemma of the Agenda 2000, which - at least from the technical point of view - opens the gate for further enlargement of the European Union. The EU financial

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<sup>305</sup> The then Minister of State in the German Foreign Ministry said that "Poland made considerable progress on the way to the EU accession and therefore its objective of becoming an EU member state since 1 January 2003 has seemed to be ambitious but not unrealistic".

perspective 2000-2006 includes a special allocation for enlargement, however this amount cannot be compared with the allocation for the EU-15.

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### *Slovenia*

The government's view on the role of the German Presidency with regard to accession negotiations does not seem to have changed much with respect to what could be discerned during the preparation of the first Enlargement Watch report<sup>306</sup>. The German Presidency has reaffirmed the need to ensure the efficiency of the European Union's institutions after the enlargement, and the Cologne European Council made it clear that an intergovernmental conference to resolve the institutional issues should be convened and completed by the end of 2000. The government certainly welcomes such determination and reaffirms the importance of the goals that have been achieved at the Berlin European Council (agreement on the Agenda 2000). Anyhow, it felt that the issue of firm deadlines on the enlargement had also to be dealt with. However, the question, whether this could have been done during the German Presidency of the European Union has never really arisen for Slovenian political actors, who realised that to an extent, a decision on the enlargement deadline had to be postponed for important and substantive reasons. One should keep in mind that important events took place during the German Presidency, such as the introduction of the EURO, the retreat of the disgraced European Commission, and, most importantly, the negotiations on the financial package for the European Union for the next seven years. It was clear for most Slovenian actors that without an agreement on the latter, the dynamics of the enlargement process could have been jeopardised and, if viewed only from this particular perspective, the German Presidency of the European Union could be assessed as a positive

<sup>306</sup> Cf. *Enlargement / Agenda 2000 – Watch*, No. 1, June 1999, p. 135.

**2. How does your government assess the incoming Commission, the new Commissioner for enlargement, G. Verheugen, and the new administrative arrangements inside the Commission in the light of the enlargement and the negotiation process?**

**Czech Republic**

The Czech government believes that the incoming Commission will contribute, by means of its activities, to the successful conclusion of accession negotiations in such a way that the Czech Republic could enter the EU by the reference date of 01.01.2003. The perception of Günter Verheugen by the Czech government is based on his hitherto activities. It is valued very positively that Günter Verheugen has openly declared his support for enlargement towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic. In general, his attitude towards the Czech Republic is perceived as critical but very friendly by the Czech mass media and many informed Czech citizens. Of particular interest was a recent statement of Günter Verheugen that in December 2000 on the summit in Paris he wants to present the conditions, date and hopefully also the names of the countries which will be accepted in the first wave.

**Hungary**

The appointment of the new Commission headed by Professor Prodi was of course welcomed by Hungary. Moreover, the fact that the Commission's resignation and the almost half year of "interregnum" did in no way disturb the accession negotiations was greatly appreciated by our government. The setting up of a separate Directorate General for enlargement issues and the appointment of Günter Verheugen as the enlargement Commissioner sent a very positive signal to the applicant countries: namely the reinforcement of the EU's pledge for enlargement.

**Poland**

The establishing of the new European Commission in the first place ended the half-year-long institutional crisis caused by the resignation of the former Commission.

The changes within the Commission alter its image considerably and should result in better, more efficient and more transparent, functioning. The still open question is the problem of the Commission's ability to rebuild public trust in European institutions and to solve a number of important tasks and problems facing the European Union, in particular the question of institutional reform and enlargement and internal problems of the Union, e.g. unemployment.

We welcome the proposal by Romano Prodi concerning the fundamental reform of the European Union before accession of new members and his approach to enlargement. In his opinion enlargement is one of the most vital tasks of the Union for which the Union needs a political concept and not a mere technocratic approach in accepting new members. The new President of the Commission seems to guarantee the fulfilment of this task.

The new body of the Commissioners and the changes within the Commission concern different aspects of the issue. Some of them are symbolic, some of them of actual importance for the Commission's works; the consequences of some of them will be known later during the Commission's term in office.

Among the important modifications we should certainly note the altered division of competencies between the Commissioners and relevant DGs. This concerns, on the one hand, the nomination of the special Commissioner for the enlargement issues in the person of Günter Verheugen and, on the other hand, the creation of the DG for enlargement that binds together parts of the former DGI and the Task Force for accession negotiations, which has been strengthened in terms of personnel. Thus, the negotiation process may accelerate toward the fulfilment of the

Commission's priority task - the EU enlargement.

A fact that is worth mentioning here as well is the remarkable statement by G. Verheugen that accession of Poland to the EU on 1 January 2003 is an ambitious target but not an impossible one. The new Commissioner for enlargement is aware of the fact that delaying accession far too long may result in decreasing support for the integration idea in these countries, notwithstanding the difficult reforms in the candidate countries. Another important and positive signal is the proposal by Romano Prodi to fix the date of entry of first candidates of CEECs at the end of the year.

To sum up, we can say that the reconstruction of the European Commission, which plays the key role in the integration process and now in the accession negotiations, has been heading the proper direction. It is the Commission's efficient functioning that will determine the success of this great historic venture of integrating the European continent.

### *Slovenia*

While it is too early to make a substantive assessment, it seems to be clear that the Slovene government has confidence in the ability of the new Commission to evaluate every candidate country's membership aspiration strictly on its own merits. In this respect, the most recent report of the Commission on Slovenia's progress towards the accession (13 October 1999)<sup>307</sup> has received a favourable echo among Slovenian political actors in general, though most of them believe that a note of caution ought to be in place. Both the government and the opposition parties emphasise the Commission's findings such as that structural reforms need to be accelerated, that priority should be given to privatisation of state assets, notably the state banks, etc. Both the government and the opposition agree that a significant pro-

gress in public administration reform is still lacking, but the government expects this reform to be completed by mid-2000.<sup>308</sup>

The government hopes for a constructive dialogue with the Commission and, respectively, with the Commissioner responsible for the enlargement, G. Verheugen. He stated clearly on several occasions that the enlargement process should be kept strictly within the limits set by economic, social, and political standards that are required for an entry of a candidate state. He even went on to say that his vision of Europe is broad enough to include countries such as Turkey, simply because the criteria for accession "are not religious, but those of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and so on".<sup>309</sup> The Prime Minister and the members of the Slovene government have stated on several occasions that in the case of strict application of such standards and criteria, Slovenia might expect to be among the first to become ready for the full membership in the EU. At the same time, however, the Slovene government remains aware that in reality it is not only the Commission but rather the member states with which Slovenia negotiates its terms of membership. In this respect, the possibility of opening some new issues, especially those emerging on a bilateral level and which do not necessarily fall within the context of negotiations, should not be excluded. But the government expresses its confidence that such issues will be satisfactorily resolved in the course of negotiations.<sup>310</sup>

<sup>307</sup> At <http://www.sigov.si/svez/dokumenti/porociloan/slo.pdf>.

<sup>308</sup> See a note by Igor Bavčar, Minister for European Affairs, *Evrobilten*, November 1999, p. 2.

<sup>309</sup> "EU: Verheugen guarantees standards", *Financial Times*, 13 September 1999.

<sup>310</sup> "Naslednjih devet mesecev bo odločilnih", interview with Janez Potočnik, Head of the Slovene negotiating team, *Parlamentarec*, December 1999.

**3. What was your government's position during the Helsinki enlargement summit on the following issues:**

- **Target dates /time limits for the conclusion of accession negotiations;**
- **Widening of accession negotiations; To which countries? And why?**
- **Special arrangements for Romania and Bulgaria.**

**Czech Republic**

According to the Czech government, the Helsinki summit has given clear signals. It takes the conclusions of the summit into account and it believes that there will further be implemented the principle of differentiation.

**Hungary**

Prior to and during the Helsinki Summit the Hungarian government did not expect any target date for the conclusion of negotiations or accession. Nevertheless, Hungary welcomes that the EU set itself the end of 2002 as a target date for "being ready" to accept new members. According to the programmed preparations of Hungary we shall be able to conclude negotiations by the year 2001, so the government perceives this time gap as a "one year reserve" and not a one year postponement.

Hungary as an applicant country but also as a future member welcomes the widening of accession negotiations with six more countries of the Central and Eastern European and the Mediterranean region. Hungary has accepted the Copenhagen criteria as a basic pre-condition for EU-membership and so deems them vital also in the case of the new candidates. At the same time, Hungary understands that after the Kosovo crisis the EU has put strong emphasis on the political criteria and tack-

les the economic and legal criteria with slightly more patience at the initial phase of launching negotiations. The Hungarian government does not see the necessity or the possibility of any special arrangements for Bulgaria and Romania - but of course, this is beyond our competence.

**Poland**

*Target dates/time limits for the conclusion of accession negotiations*

As the European Union has not indicated the ultimate date for eastern enlargement yet, the Polish government took a position to be ready for EU accession by the end of 2002. The government's negotiating strategy as well as the adjustment process has been based on this general assumption<sup>311</sup>. Therefore, 1 January 2003 is the official target date for accession and the Polish government strongly believes that this deadline - although very ambitious - is manageable.

*Widening of accession negotiations*

The Polish government supports the Union's enlargement not only to the first six countries chosen for accession negotiations (Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia and Poland), but also to other countries from the region including those indicated in the Helsinki summit (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia). Undoubtedly, this decision will help to build a stable political and economic structure in the whole region as well as to increase its credibility on the international scene. Widening of accession negotiations cannot however slacken the negotiation process for the most advanced candidate countries by any means. In particular, the Commission's ability to manage the wider negotiation process in an effective way might bear some doubts and anxieties. From this point of view the decision taken in Hel-

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<sup>311</sup> However, in some cases the Polish government asked for transitional periods in certain negotiating chapters.



sinki might put off the date of the nearest EU enlargement. Therefore, although Poland supports all candidate countries on their way to the EU, the right sequence as well as high dynamics of the negotiation process has to be maintained by the European Union.

### *Slovenia*

The Slovene government welcomed the decision of the Helsinki European Council to make every effort to complete the Intergovernmental Conference on institutional reform by December 2000, to ratify the arrangement, and to come into a position to accept new member states from the end of 2002 onwards. At the same time Janez Potočnik, the Head of the Slovene negotiating team, has pointed out that the negotiations between the European Union and the candidate states should not be procrastinated and should be concluded by 2001 at the latest, if the European Union would like to welcome its new members in the years 2003 or 2004.<sup>312</sup> The government also feels that the beginning of negotiations with Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Malta may eventually lead to a more individualised approach in negotiations with candidate states, which has always been Slovenia's preference. So far, the so-called "convoy approach" seems to have been preferred by the Commission *inter alia* because the Commission and the member states of the European Union respectively did not wish to engage into an early classification of candidate countries according to their ability to join the European Union as full members.<sup>313</sup> But, as pointed out in the previous Slovenian report<sup>314</sup>, there was the feeling in the Slovene government, but also among the political parties, that the "5+1 formula" would not hold for much

longer. Even before the Summit, a considerable progress in catching up with the "first-round" candidates has been noted for example in Slovakia.<sup>315</sup> In fact, the Helsinki Summit has removed this barrier between the "first-round" candidates and the rest of the candidate states. It remains to be seen whether this new approach - opening the negotiations with twelve candidate states - may have any consequences for the "convoy approach". As indicated, however, the decision in Helsinki on widening of the enlargement negotiations to twelve candidate states, saying that "[in] the negotiations, each candidate State will be judged on its own merits," and that "[c]andidate States which have now been brought into the negotiating process will have the possibility to catch up within a reasonable period of time with those already in negotiations if they have made sufficient progress in their preparations"<sup>316</sup> seems to call for a , at least partial, moving from the previous approach. At any rate, the government hopes that none of the countries, which fulfil conditions for entering the European Union, will be left waiting for the "rest of the convoy".<sup>317</sup>

<sup>312</sup> "Naslednjih devet mesecev bo odločilnih", interview with Janez Potočnik, Head of the Slovene negotiating team, *Parlamentarec*, December 1999.

<sup>313</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> Cf. *Enlargement / Agenda 2000 – Watch*, No. 1, June 1999, p. 139.

<sup>315</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999.

<sup>316</sup> *Helsinki European Council: Presidency Conclusions*: Available at the website: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/LoadDoc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=76&DID=59750&GRP=2186&LANG=1>.

<sup>317</sup> See also the government's position and views on Turkey below.

**4. How are the results of the Helsinki summit evaluated, by the government, informed public opinion etc. in the light of enlargement?**

***Czech Republic***

In general, the Helsinki summit is seen by the informed Czech public opinion as an important turning point in the process of EU enlargement where many important decisions were made. The Czech government welcomes that in February 2000, accession negotiations will start with Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. It is especially important for the Czech Republic that Slovakia still has a real chance to enter the EU in the first wave of enlargement. If Slovakia would not enter the Union at the same time as the Czech Republic, there would emerge many complications, including problems linked to the customs union existing between the two countries. The Czech Republic also supports the new status of Turkey as a candidate country. The government agrees to the establishment of a "new strategy" towards Ukraine. The Czech government considers as one of the most important results of the Helsinki summit the decision that the institutional reform, which is a necessary prerequisite for enlargement, will be concluded by December 2000 and ratified before the end of 2002. The Czech Republic also fully supports all the decisions which were taken with regard to the Common European Policy on Security and Defence and welcomes the fact that the Union recognises the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Helsinki summit is considered as very successful.

***Hungary***

As it was stressed in question 3, Hungary welcomed the decision concerning the date of readiness of the EU and counts on

accession in 2003 accordingly. Hungary subscribes to both principles of Helsinki: widening the circle of negotiating countries and judging the candidates on their individual performance. Hungary furthermore evaluated very positively the commitment of the EU not to indicate the political settlement in Cyprus as a general pre-condition for enlargement. In all, the Helsinki Summit was positively evaluated by the government as well as by the media.

***Poland***

Following Polish newspapers, the results of the Helsinki summit were mostly evaluated as rather unfavourable for Poland's integration into the EU. The journalists explain that the EU commitment for signing the first new Accession Treaties just after the termination of the EU institutional reform postpones in practice the next Union's enlargement beyond 2003. They claim that the beginning of 2005 is the most probable date for the nearest EU enlargement. Polish Foreign Minister Geremek accused Polish media of spreading the worst possible scenario of Poland's integration into the EU. The Polish government officially states that Poland's accession to the EU in the year 2003 is still possible. Furthermore, Geremek admitted that as a result of the acceleration of preparations to the membership, Poland would be able to finish the negotiation process by the end of 2000 - beginning of 2001.

Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek officially repelled the possibility of postponement of Poland's accession to the EU beyond 2003. He declared in Helsinki that Poland would not drop off in completing the adjustment process in order to be able to join the EU in 2003.

***Slovenia***

Concerning the enlargement, the general view of the Helsinki Summit could be summarised as a positive one, but with a sense of realism. On the consensus side,

many feel that, comparatively speaking, Slovenia is indeed well under way towards the full membership of the European Union which has been confirmed to an extent by the recent Progress Report by the Commission. Yet, there are issues, which need to be considered along this path towards the full membership, and in the view of the Helsinki Conclusions. On the one hand, there is a widespread awareness that the issue of institutional reforms in the European Union is likely to be a tough nut to crack, the one coupled with a slight sense of frustration that there is little candidate states can do to influence these negotiations. In spite of the ongoing integration process, many seem to view the European Union as an organisation of states, first of all, - an organisation, therefore, where individual members should be able to preserve their identity. This issue is particularly delicate for smaller states, such as Slovenia, which, by entering the "bigger systems" such as the European Union, may find it difficult to put forward their own interests. Yet, many would add that it would certainly be rather idealistic to expect any particular favours from the European Union, and that Slovenia will have to do its (lion's) share to assert its interests. Put differently, while the Helsinki Summit has done an important step forward, particularly by setting the target dates for the completion of the institutional reform and the accession of new states as full members, the reform itself is only part of the story. It is widely believed in Slovenia that smaller states are not to be set on the margins of decision-making of the European Union after the institutional reforms have been completed (e.g., should smaller states retain the right to a Commissioner?). At the same time, it has also been stressed that regardless of the course of the enlargement process and the outcome of institutional reforms, both the Slovenian economy and policy-makers should be prepared adequately, so that their knowledge about political, legal and economic processes in the European Union would enable them to be successfully involved in decision-making processes of

the European Union. In this respect, it is important to overcome internal political divisions as far as they represent an obstacle to an efficient assertion of specific interests of Slovenia in the European Union.

**5. What is your government's position on the decisions on Turkey:**

- *Candidate status /pre-in?*
- *How to proceed further? Opening of negotiations or postponement? Are new initiatives necessary?*

***Czech Republic***

The Czech Republic welcomes the candidate status of Turkey. Its position is based on various aspects. From the point of view of security, the matter is all about the strengthening of internal stability and of pro-European and pro-democratic forces in Turkey. A strong, stable and democratic Turkey will be a barrier against the spread of instability from the Middle East and the rest of Asia into the European area. In this respect, the Czech Republic also takes the security interests of the United States into account. The candidate status of Turkey will undoubtedly soften the complications of the entry of Cyprus into the EU in the first wave enlargement and will make Turkey more willing to meet the Greek requirements concerning the solution of bilateral disputes according to international law by means of such neutral institutions as for example the International Court of Justice in The Hague. At the same time, it is necessary that the EU insists on Turkey's strict fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria, especially in the area of basic human rights, before the start of accession negotiations. The political dialogue with Turkey should go in this direction. There should be a stable participation of Turkey with regard to the CFSP. Turkey should gradually meet all the necessary criteria and benefit from the advantages of the accession partnership. However, it should be expected that Turkey's EU membership will probably take place in a very long-term horizon, given some objective and specific cultural-historic, psychological, demographic, geographic and socio-economic aspects which can

hardly be overcome very quickly.

***Hungary***

Regarding Turkey, Hungary agrees with the EU to invite this country to negotiate EU-accession when all Copenhagen criteria are met. Hungary also welcomes that the EU took a decision about the extension of the Accession Partnership to enhance the political dialogue with Turkey.

***Poland***

Poland's position on the decisions concerning Turkey may be interpreted as the abstention from formulation of any specific position at the diplomatic level.

This abstention is not to be interpreted as a result of lack of any diplomatic option but as a result of a deeper analysis in the context of Poland's future membership in the EU. That position seems to be based on some assumptions that may be briefly presented as follows:

- Poland fully accepts the basic Copenhagen criteria but does not feel to be in a position to judge whether those criteria are fulfilled by other countries.

- As a candidate country Poland is interested in a broad support for its membership in the EU. Some common European issues became points of controversy between Member countries. Poland seems to have chosen the strategy of building up a broad coalition supporting the quick and effective enlargement. In that respect, the lack of a specific position on Turkey is a position for enlargement as such, understood as the needed reintegration of Europe as soon as possible.

- It may be admitted that Poland is interested in keeping up good relationships with all Member countries (whose interest may be divergent in that respect, as for instance France, Spain and Germany), as well as with all candidates (Turkey and Cyprus included) without entering into specific conflict (possible controversy may occur in that respect with Greece).

- From the economic point of view, this position seems to be justified by Poland's balanced commercial and financial relations with Cyprus, Turkey and Greece. They absorb proportionally similar shares of foreign trade figures (average of 0.002% of Poland's foreign trade for each of the above-mentioned countries, with emphasis on the positive balance of current accounts for Cyprus and Greece and negative balance for Turkey).

It may be worth mentioning, that Poland's traditional links with Greece led to the absorption of a significant flow of Greek immigrants, who constitute quite an important social group in the country. The specific position of that group is not known due to the lack of relevant research in that matter, however their influence on formulating diplomatic standing in matters concerning the Mediterranean zone cannot be excluded.

### *Slovenia*

The views on Turkey's future in the European Union<sup>318</sup> seem to suggest that political actors in Slovenia were right in saying that Turkey should be comprehended as a factor of stability in Europe, and that in this respect the member states of the European Union had to accept, rather than ignore, Turkey as a potential member state. The decision in Helsinki to accept Turkey as a candidate for membership is thus seen as a step in the right direction. Clearly, the criteria for joining the European Union should not be any different from those other candidate states have to fulfil. In this respect, some major issues such as those concerning human rights in general, the rights of minorities in particular, the political role of the army, and the Cyprus question have to be dealt with.<sup>319</sup> The Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Drnovšek, said quite clearly in an interview that he did not think Turkey could be

avoided in the European integration process. In his opinion, cultural differences as a sort of criterion for the membership in the European Union do not seem to matter much, because "there is already a lot of cultural difference inside the EU". In his opinion, what really matters is an effort to create a stable Europe. If the long-term stability is a goal to be pursued by the European Union, it is difficult to see how this can be accomplished without a due consideration of countries of strategic importance such as Turkey.<sup>320</sup> In this respect, it has been noted that one should not forget, for example, that Turkey has an important influence in the Middle East. Furthermore, Turkey could contribute substantially to the relations between the European Union and the Islamic world in general, and between the European Union and the Middle East in particular.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>318</sup> See *Enlargement Agenda 2000 – Watch*, No. 1, June 1999, p. 146.

<sup>319</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999.

<sup>320</sup> "Slovene Leader Foresees Turkey in EU as a Stabilising Asset", *International Herald Tribune*, 11-12 December 1999.

<sup>321</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999.

**6. Has the general attitude towards enlargement or accession (inside the government, public opinion) changed over the last six months?**

- *Also with regard to basic questions raised in the Finnish EU-Presidency paper on enlargement (ultimate limits of EU, long term consequences of enlargement)?*
- *Impact on external and transatlantic relations*

***Czech Republic***

During the Finnish EU-Presidency, the Czech government had emphasised the importance of EU accession within the framework of main priorities of the Czech foreign policy. The chief negotiator P. Telicka was appointed as the first Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretary for European Affairs with the corresponding powers. The Prime Minister Milos Zeman has become the Chairman of the Government Committee for European Integration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kavan was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of this Committee and also as the Czech Vice-Premier. The general attitude towards enlargement and accession in the Czech Republic has not changed substantially over the last six months. Most public opinion surveys have shown this support to exceed 50%. According to an IVVM (Institute for Public Opinion Research) publication in November 1999, 56% of Czech citizens were convinced of the need to strive for EU membership, 16% of respondents were not convinced, 7% of Czechs were decisively against the country's entry into the EU and 21% of respondents were undecided.

***Hungary***

There is no dramatic change in the Hungarian public opinion concerning EU-membership as compared with data from

1997 when the last general poll was conducted (the new one is expected to be published in March 2000 ordered by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry). According to the interim polls, over 60% of those questioned are pro-EU membership and only around 10% would be against. The percentage of the hesitating citizens grew to over 20%.

***Poland***

In May 1999 the percentage of citizens that would vote for Poland's accession to the EU in a potential referendum was only 55%, while in December 1998 it amounted to 64%. The decrease in support for integration ran alongside the growing conviction that Poland was not yet properly prepared for membership. The strongest impact on the attitude of the Polish society towards Poland's integration with the EU came from the fact that the country was then facing implementation of the major reforms.

The support for integration has recently increased. According to the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) (October'99) the percentage of acceptance of Poland's accession to the EU reached 59%. As the accession negotiations are running, some conditions that Poland should meet before the accession are raising doubts whether they are fair.

The distribution of attitudes among political parties towards the accession has not changed within the discussed period.

***Slovenia***

As it has been indicated earlier, the Slovene government considers the enlargement process as an important step towards stability in Europe and at the same time it remains optimistic about Slovenian chances for an early membership in the European Union. Not all the major political parties share this view, however, the general positive attitude towards the enlargement process, the awareness of its

importance for the European stability, and consensus about the inevitability of the Slovenian full membership in the European Union do seem to hold among them. The criticism of the opposition parties against the government's activities on its way towards a full membership ranges from moderate to highly negative. On the moderate side, the United List of Social Democrats (ULSD) appears to be supportive and displays confidence about the Slovenian chances for an early membership.<sup>322</sup> Next on the list are the Slovene Christian Democrats (SCD), who believe that the prospects for a prosperous development of Slovenia are linked to the full membership in the European Union. But the SCD do not believe that Slovenian negotiators have been particularly successful in protecting and defending Slovenia's priorities and interests. Trade relations with countries from the region of former Yugoslavia have been mentioned as an example.<sup>323</sup> Finally, on the far more critical side is the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (SDPS), which has considerable doubts about Slovenian prospects for an early membership in the European Union, let alone Slovenia being the first candidate for the next round of the enlargement. In the SDPS's view, this was one of the main messages that could be discerned from the most recent progress report issued by the Commission.<sup>324</sup>

The public opinion continues to be favourably disposed towards enlargement in general and the Slovenian full membership in the European Union in particular. According to the most recent research<sup>325</sup>,

the Slovene public remains realistic about the pros and cons of a full membership in the European Union. Most respondents (46.6%) believe that the membership in the European Union will bring both benefits and costs for the citizens of Slovenia. Nevertheless, they feel that the full membership of Slovenia in the European Union will be positive. The most positive expectations about the benefits from the full membership are in the field of economy (60.7%), the development of democracy (63.6%), and security (71.4%).<sup>326</sup> The only concerns are related to the effects the full membership in the European Union may have on Slovenia's sovereignty and its cultural identity. If only these two issues were the criteria for the membership, about 60% of the respondents would vote against it. As it is, the results indicate that at this stage 66.5% of the respondents would likely vote for the Slovenian membership in the European Union.<sup>327</sup> Finally, the respondents were optimistic about Slovenia's entry into the European Union. Almost 60% of them felt that Slovenia could join the European Union sometime between 2002 and 2005, although the relative majority within this group (22.8% of respondents) believed that 2005 is a more realistic date for the accession.

<sup>322</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999. See also: "Poročilo Evropske komisije o napredku za Slovenijo bolj ugodno od lanskega", *Evrobilten*, December 1999.

<sup>323</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999.

<sup>324</sup> "Poročilo Evropske komisije o napredku za Slovenijo bolj ugodno od lanskega", *Evrobilten*, December 1999.

<sup>325</sup> Center za raziskovanje javnega mnenja (Center for the Research of Public Opinion): *Stališča Slovencev o vključevanju*

*Slovenije v EU (Views of the Slovene Public about the Slovenian Accession to the European Union)*, The research has been conducted between 22 October and 3 December 1999 (N=1050).

<sup>326</sup> The high rate of expectations in the field of security may be explained by the fact that the first round of NATO enlargement did not include Slovenia, which caused the public to look towards the institutions of the European Union.

<sup>327</sup> The similar survey, conducted in 1997, showed that 64.9% of the respondents would vote for Slovenian accession to the European Union.

**7. General assessment of accession negotiations so far. Which positions can be identified on:**

- **The importance of Copenhagen criteria;**
- **Results of progress reports - new picture /consequences for accession process;**
- **Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria?**
- **Derogations / transitional arrangements? Development of the Positions in the Member States?**
- **Should the EU further develop the monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the acquis in the candidate countries?**

**Czech Republic**

The Czech government does not attempt to put into doubt the importance of the Copenhagen criteria and considers its fulfilment as a necessary condition for the entry into the EU. It does not have any objections to the general formulation of these criteria. However, it may have reservations about how these criteria are applied by the Commission in concrete cases when evaluating the country's performance.

In the Czech case, the progress report has been very critical and the government is very well aware of this fact. It appears that, out of the six negotiating countries, the Czech Republic has made the smallest progress since the last report. This is certainly a cause for concern. For this reason, the Czech authorities intend to make efforts to speed up the legislative process and at the same time, to undertake some non-legislative measures, in 2000. The next progress report which should appear

in autumn 2000 is considered to be a crucial one for the prospects of the Czech Republic to be in the first wave of EU enlargement.

As far as derogations are concerned, the Czech Republic has indicated the following requests for transitional periods in its position papers:

a) Chapter "Culture and Audiovision" - a two-year transitional period (until 2005) for the application of article 4.5 of the directive "Television without frontiers". While maintaining the flexibility enabled by the directive, the Czech Republic should achieve the required quotas of the volume of broadcasting of European works and works of independent producers in the Czech television stations by 1 January 2003, or in the case of cable and paid TVs by 1 January 2005.

b) Chapter "External Relations" - continuation of the customs union with Slovakia. If the Czech Republic becomes EU member earlier than Slovakia, the Czech Republic will require the continuation of the customs union according to the terms, which exist at the time of the entry of the Czech Republic into the EU and under the condition of full integration of the Czech Republic into the internal market.

c) Chapter "Energy"- transitional periods for the implementation of the EC directives related to the opening of the market for gas and electricity, creation of a 90-day supply of crude oil and oil products. The Czech Republic is asking for these transitional periods because of the costs of creating huge oil supplies according to EU requirements and because it is concerned about probable social unrest in the Czech Republic.

d) Chapter "Environment" - preliminarily there are 7 transitional periods considered. They concern:

- recycling of wrappings and package waste



- cleaning of waste water from towns
- protection of water from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources
- discharging of dangerous materials into the water
- participation of the Czech Republic in the network of protected territories NATURA 2000
- integrated prevention and curbing of the pollution
- quality of drinking water.

The Czech government requests transitional arrangements because of the considerable investment costs for a proper implementation of the respective EC regulations.

e) Chapter “Free Movement of Capital” - transitional period for the acquisition of the so-called secondary residences and agricultural land and forests by foreigners. At the same time, the Czech Republic asks for a transitional period for the preservation of all the present restrictions in relation to the non-member countries of EU. The reason for this request is namely the considerable difference in real estate prices and incomes between citizens of the Czech Republic and of EU member states, Austria and Germany in particular, and the respective concerns of the Czech public.

f) Chapter “Taxes” - transitional period for the preservation of the reduced rate of the value added tax in case of thermal energy supplies, construction works and telecommunication services. The Czech Republic requests the exemption of those persons liable to the tax from VAT registration, whose turnover is lower than the equivalent in national currency of 35 thousand EURO. As far as consumer taxes are concerned, the Czech Republic requests the preservation of lower rates of consumer taxes in case of fuel and cigarettes and tobacco products. The Czech Republic will also request a special arrangement of the consumer tax from spirit in the case of grower distilleries with the aim to preserve the traditional home production of fruit distilled liquors. The main

purpose of this request are possible social consequences, like a sudden increase of the tax burden on the Czech citizens.

g) Chapter “Financial and Budget Arrangements” - the Czech Republic will request a gradual flow of levies to the EC budget. This correction is requested in order to decrease the economic and financial burden connected with the time lag between the contributions of the Czech Republic for the EC budget immediately after the entry into the EU and revenues of the Czech Republic from the EC budget which will only return gradually (It mainly concerns revenues from the EU structural funds which will depend primarily on the quality of the proposed projects and the ability of the Czech Republic to co-finance these projects).

h) Chapter “Free Movement of Persons” - further to the request in the chapter “Free Movement of Capital”, the Czech Republic requests a transitional period for the acquisition of the so-called secondary residence (flats, houses, etc.) by migrant workers who do not permanently reside on the territory of the Czech Republic.

i) Chapter “Co-operation in the Area of Justice and Interior; Schengen” - the Czech Republic requests a transitional period for the technical safety of the Ruzyně airport in such a way that it would correspond to the Schengen security standards.

j) Chapter “Agriculture” - the Czech Republic requests transitional periods in the veterinary area (carrying out of border controls, for the lower capacity of slaughterhouses than in the EU, protection of animals for experimental and other scientific purposes) and in the sector of wine.

### *Hungary*

Until now, accession negotiations proceeded according to schedule which means the tackling of average 7 chapters per presidency (going in the same rhythm

with all the 6 candidates up to now). The *acquis* screening has practically been concluded and 9 chapters were temporarily closed (small and medium sized enterprises, research and development, education and training, statistics, industrial policy, telecom, information technologies, fisheries, consumer protection, economic and monetary union). 14 chapters have recently been discussed (including customs, free movement of goods services and capital, social policy or common foreign and security policy). Under the 5 remaining chapters (agriculture, free movement of persons, justice and home affairs, regional policy and financial control) Hungary has recently handed over her position papers on which negotiations can start in the first half of 2000. The last two chapters (budget and institutions) will be discussed after the EU will have met final decisions on these topics.

The compliance with the Copenhagen criteria was vital in the launching of negotiations. Later on it is the status of legal harmonisation as well as the actual implementation of the *acquis* that counts. Thus the politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria cannot and did not occur. Moreover, the EU has further strengthened the monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* in Hungary just like in all candidate countries.

Regarding the Commission's Progress Report on Hungary, the major consequence for its accession process was that Hungary is on the right track and complies with most of the membership criteria required by the EU. The removal of remaining problems mentioned by the Report (e.g. the improvement of the situation of the Roma population, fighting corruption or accelerating the restructuring of the steel industry, the railways and the airways, as well as accelerating the harmonisation of the environmental or phytosanitary *acquis*) is actually part of the revised National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* which was welcomed by the

EU.

Hungary has asked for 36 derogations. The most important ones concern the buying of land by EU-citizens, free movement of services in airways, liberalisation of the transport sector and introduction of some EU-norms there, the maintenance of certain state aids, the harmonisation of the tax refund system, as well as several items concerning the environmental *acquis*.

### *Poland*

The membership of Poland in the EU is an important historic event. Rapid accession is definitely Poland's vital national interest, but requires extensive changes in the economic and social sphere. In this context the efficiency of membership negotiations is of fundamental importance.

So far the Polish side has presented - generally spoken, in accordance with the set timetable - all position papers, but only ten chapters have been closed so far. What is needed is a new dynamic in the process and a certain flexibility that would make the process more effective in particular taking into account the fact that the domains still awaiting negotiations are the most difficult ones: agriculture, purchase of real estates by foreign actors, environment, free movement of persons, competition policy and the necessity of adjustments not only on the Polish but on the EU side as well.

The membership criteria established at the Copenhagen Summit are in general fulfilled. As regards the political criteria Poland has met them fully, as far as the economical ones are concerned we observe considerable progress achieved. The latest Regular Report can be perceived as balanced and fair, however with regard to some issues it seems a bit too critical. The Report has been carefully analysed in terms of differences in assessment of integration progress and constitutes a significant element in defining and undertaking further adjustment measures and determi-

nation of the directions of the integration process. Common interests should be secured and the integration idea itself maintained. Compromise will be needed then because too rigid positions may impede the entire negotiation process and bring about all the negative consequences thereof. In some areas interim periods will be inevitable in order to secure a proper rate of economic growth and competitiveness of the candidate countries.

The negotiations are currently beginning to concentrate on more specific and practical issues. From the political point of view it is vital to find satisfactory solutions in the course of the negotiation process. The progress in the negotiation process is to some extent as well an indicator of the popular support for integration.

It is worth discussing the political will for EU enlargement and the will to solve practical problems in a mutually beneficial way, so that the whole process of integration is perceived as beneficial for both sides. This will require more flexible positions than "the rigid traders' approach" because the enlargement and accession of CEECs should be viewed in a wider and long-term perspective of integrating the whole European Continent.

### *Slovenia*

#### *The importance of the Copenhagen criteria*

As an addition to the views of political actors and the publicity in Slovenia as introduced in the present report, it is important to note that the only criterion of accession was formally laid down in the original Treaty of Rome - namely that the new members should be "European". All other criteria (notably the need for democracy and respect for human rights, and the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*) have "developed" as the subsequent enlargements were taking place. In the early 1990s, the criteria have been further extended, with requirements such as a

functioning and competitive market economy and an adequate legal and administrative system in the public and private sector. In addition, new members are required to subscribe to the emerging *acquis politique*, and to the *finalité politique*.

The list of criteria may seem to give a precise indication to prospective members of what they need to accomplish to become eligible for the membership in the European Union. However, few (if any) of the criteria prove to be clear in practice, and much is coming down to the interpretation of what is and what is not within the scope of the set criteria. There is ample scope for "fudges" of all kinds - something, which participants in the European Union's decision-making are all too familiar with. Objectivity (in terms of the set criteria) may thus well be in short supply and decisions on the timing of accessions of individual candidate states may be more a political issue than an issue of meeting the formally required criteria. Specifically, answers to questions such as whether a candidate state has influential allies within the European Union, or the extent to which the candidate member state is able to influence the negotiation process, are likely to matter and, indeed, are significant for the dynamics of the accession process.

#### *Results of progress reports - new picture/consequences for the accession process*

The progress reports on Slovenia are a good example of the problem of interpretation of the set criteria, which are to be accomplished by every candidate state. The first report (on Slovenia) clearly signals to domestic policy makers that the adoption of the *acquis* is of high importance, in fact a top priority as far as the European Union is concerned.<sup>328</sup> But the second report goes a step further by indi-

<sup>328</sup> It will be recalled that in the first report of the Commission, Slovenia was reprimanded for its lack of progress in the fulfilment of those criteria.

cating that the adoption of the existing laws in the European Union is necessary, but not sufficient. Slovenia thus gets a bad grade because of the insufficient implementation of the accepted laws especially in the field of privatisation and denationalisation. Slovenia argues that not only is the matter of denationalisation its internal affair, but it does also not belong to the framework of the implementation of the *acquis*. It remains to be seen whether the Commission and the member states respectively will share this view. However, if one considers the Copenhagen criteria such as the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the European Union, one might easily find the slow process of denationalisation in Slovenia as not being in accordance with those criteria.

*Politicisation of negotiations at the expense of strict criteria*

As indicated earlier, the formal criteria are likely to represent just a part of the whole negotiation story, and politicisation of accession negotiations is unlikely to be avoided. This kind of awareness does seem to be represented in the government circles, too. Some hold the view that the European integration is essentially a political process, in which political considerations are likely to play an important role in the accession negotiations. Put differently, in spite of official declarations that send different signals<sup>329</sup>, countries with important “political arguments” (however the latter may be defined) might

enter the European Union with more concessions as regards their compliance with the criteria set for the full membership in the European Union. Those candidate states with lesser political weight simply need to do all they can to comply with those criteria, because the full compliance may be their only argument for entering the European Union as full members.<sup>330</sup> However, as argued earlier, even if all accession criteria are fulfilled, it might be a matter of interpretation to which extent such compliance is satisfactory. In other words, the terms of accession might differ from state to state. Slovenia, for its part, has already experienced a situation when the opening of the negotiation on its Europe Agreement was conditioned by an “unresolved” bilateral problem with Italy (regarding the purchasing by the Italian citizens of the real estate in Slovenia). It remains to be seen whether a similar situation might appear with Austria with respect to the Krško nuclear power plant and the German speaking minority in Slovenia, and whether such a situation will affect the Slovenian accession process.

*Derogations / transitional arrangements. Developments of the positions of the member states*

In addition to the findings on Slovenia made in the Enlargement / Agenda 2000 - Watch No. 1, the following observations may be in place. New member states are expected to adopt the entire *acquis* with a minimum of transitional arrangements, both in time and in scope. Yet, can the transition arrangements be kept at such a minimum? It has to be borne in mind that the European Union prefers to “deepen” before it “widens”. This of course compels the states that will join the European Union at a later stage to accept the “deepening” as a part of the *acquis communautaire*. Since the accession procedure is long, difficulties are likely to arise on this front. Further, the problem of transitional

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<sup>329</sup> In an interview to the *Financial Times*, Mr. Verheugen presented himself as “something of a policeman, keeping watch over the economic, social and political standards for entry: The political momentum for enlargement is now so strong that we as a European Commission must try to guarantee that the criteria are still the criteria...Otherwise the Union could pay a heavy price,” “EU:Verheugen guarantees standards”, *Financial Times*, 13 September 1999.

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<sup>330</sup> Interviews with government officials, November-December 1999.

periods is related also to the access to structural funds, but the present budget could not be stretched much more (there is no motivation to increase the present national contributions to the European Union). Thus, and to keep the idea of a relatively quick and smooth enlargement “alive and kicking”, the European Union should probably come to terms with the likelihood of long transitional periods (for instance in the agricultural sector).

*Monitoring of progress in transposition, implementation and enforcement of the acquis in the candidate countries*

Before tackling this issue, the European Union must consider following things. First, a number of cases before the Court show that the problem of implementation of the acquis is a considerable one even for the present member states. Second, the adoption of the acquis does not seem to be a major problem per se. Technically, what is needed for the candidate states is to adapt the national legislation according to the standards that are in force in the European Union. But the implementation of the acquis is a very painful process for those candidate states whose economic, political and social structures are deep in the process of transition. Introduction of the acquis and the development of the market economy cause numerous social problems for citizens of most candidate states. Third, the implementation of the European Union’s standards also depends on the availability of financial resources. The financial assistance coming from the European Union should play an important role in narrowing the gap between normative requirements and the actual ability of individual candidate states to carry out such requirements. On the other hand, the European Union and its member states need to understand the gist of the implementation problem, too. Most candidate states, which get a very positive Commission’s opinion regarding the progress, will sooner or later face ever-greater problems that are related to the implementation of the European Union’s legislation. In sum,

therefore, a further development of mechanisms for e.g. implementation monitoring and enforcement is desirable, but it should be designed carefully, and on an individual basis, by taking into account the difficulties that each candidate state faces on its way to a full membership.

8. *What is the position of your country's government concerning further developments of the European Conference? Has it served a useful purpose? Should it be (dis)continued, suspended or extended to other countries?*

will never be eligible for a full membership in the European Union but are important for the stability of Europe (e.g. the Middle East countries, most of the countries from the former Soviet Union, etc.).

### ***Czech Republic***

The Czech government perceives the European Conference as an important multilateral forum which enables the discussion of topical questions and problems on the European level. It has served a useful purpose and for this reason, it should be continued.

### ***Hungary***

Hungary is of the opinion that the European Conference did not bring about any significant added value to the accession/enlargement process. In this respect the accession fora (different levels of negotiations, pre-accession strategy, etc.) proved to be the most useful and successful tools and they do not seem to have any alternative. Moreover, the European Conference was invented and launched mainly with the intention to involve Turkey, but as it is well known this has failed. If the political criteria can be met by Turkey as a potential candidate country, Hungary feels that the European Conference could definitely lose its significance.

### ***Slovenia***

The European conference provides a multilateral framework which brings together all the countries that wish to accede the Union and share its values and aims. As the forum of exchange of information, it is very useful for both sides - for member states of the European Union as well as for candidate countries. But the European conference should change its purpose and extend to include other countries, for instance those which for different reasons

9. *After the decisions of the Cologne summit, comment on the position of your country's government, parties, pressure groups, etc. on the institutional reforms? Which questions are of high relevance? Should other issues be addressed?*
- *Reaction towards Presidency's report on reform options (see point 54 of conclusions of the European Council of Cologne)?*

### ***Czech Republic***

The Czech government does not formulate an official position with respect to the institutional reforms. However, it wants to be well informed in this regard. The Czech Republic is monitoring the process of institutional reforms, especially by means of the Czech permanent mission in Brussels. There is a clear interest from the Czech side that the institutional reforms will be successfully concluded so that necessary conditions for enlargement are created.

### ***Hungary***

Hungary welcomed the Cologne as well as the Helsinki decisions on the institutional IGC. Hungary is highly interested in a narrower agenda, in reforms that are absolutely necessary for the next round of enlargement, so that a deeper debate would not postpone accession. On the other hand Hungary understands that the special institutional structure of European integration needs an overarching reform enabling the EU to work with as many as 25-30 members. Hungary therefore hopes to be able to forge this future reform as a full member later on.

### ***Poland***

The decisions of the Cologne summit are generally considered as beneficial for Poland. First, they mean that the negotiations

will not be delayed because the EU has not been prepared for enlargement. The reform should be finally accepted in December 2000 and Poland expects to become a member on January 1, 2003. Second, the reform will potentially guarantee Poland, as a large state, more influence on decision making in the EU. On the other hand, some doubts remain, however. How long will it take the EU to put the reform into life? Will it start operating in 2001 or later? The crucial problem is that most of the member states may escalate the postulates concerning institutional reform in order to block the enlargement.

### ***Slovenia***

It is worth noting that the candidate countries will be involved, albeit indirectly and indeed only to a limited extent, in the negotiations on institutional reforms. Namely, the current fifteen member states will think in terms of a prospective membership of some 25 to 30 states. Given the diversity in the current membership ("small" and "big", "rich" and "poor", member states), the negotiators will at least to a certain degree represent the views of individual candidate countries. The latter should, of course, use every opportunity to be heard and consulted.

From the political point of view, it will be necessary to broaden the scope of the negotiations. The "Bermuda triangle" of institutions (the extension of qualified majority voting, a reform of the Commission and the reweighting of votes in the Council) should become a "Bermuda square" (that is, the extension of the European Parliament's powers should be included). In this respect, it is important to keep such weighted voting in the Council which would not, as indicated earlier in the report, completely sideline smaller member states. Smaller states will lose on formal influence in other institutions of the European Union, and if a balanced constitutional system is to be retained, and as long as states as political entities play a role in the integration process, some for-

mal protection for the smaller member states in terms of their influence in decision-making is necessary.



**10. What is the position of your country's government on**

- ***The Implementation of the Common Strategy with Russia and EU-Russian relations?***
- ***The future Common Strategy for the Ukraine? Which contents should be included?***

***Czech Republic***

The Czech Republic does not take part in the Common Strategy but it is regularly informed about it. As far as major foreign policy issues in general, and the attitude towards Russia and Ukraine in particular, are concerned, the Czech government takes the position of the EU into account. If some co-ordination forum is created in this respect, the Czech Republic will be glad to participate in it. On several occasions Foreign Minister J. Kavan has declared that relations with Russia are one of the main priorities of the Czech foreign policy. At the same time, the importance of Ukraine among the priorities of the Czech foreign policy has also increased. This is partly due to the strategic importance of Ukraine, but also to the fact that many Ukrainians come to work in the Czech Republic, both legally and illegally. In general, the establishment of a "new strategy" towards Ukraine is considered as an important step in the right direction.

***Hungary***

Hungary fully agrees with the EU's Strategy towards Russia and the Ukraine (consolidation of democracy, rule of law and public institutions especially in Russia, integrating these countries into a common European economic and social space etc.). Hungary has formulated its own strategy in the light of that of the EU. Hungary is ready to be actively involved into any future EU action as laid down in the Strategies.

***Poland***

Russia is an extremely unpredictable and unstable country. One can hardly expect to settle down relations with Russia by international treaties since nobody knows which treaties will be observed by the next Russian government. The surprise resignation of president Yeltsin has only proved that fact lately.

Russia is too large to be successfully stabilised from the outside. The EU policy towards Russia should be calm but free from illusions and wishful thinking. Black scenarios as far as the internal developments in Russia are concerned are very probable. More attention should be paid to the observation of the human rights in Russia (War in Chechnya). However, the effectiveness of the European pressure shall not be overestimated. The strategy "Russia first" at the expenses of the other CIS countries should be abandoned (Belorussian opposition, Georgia, Moldova and the problem of Transdnistria should be addressed as well).

***The future Common Strategy for Ukraine***

Ukraine is considered to be a key country for the security of Poland. The independent existence of Ukraine by that very fact constitutes the indispensable element of the stable international environment of Poland and makes any effective revival of Russian/Soviet Empire impossible. This is why the independence of the Ukraine is treated as a factor of equal importance for Poland as the Polish membership in NATO. The maintenance of good relations with Ukraine and the occidentalization of that country are therefore crucial for the future Polish-Ukrainian relations.

The Common Strategy of the EU for the Ukraine adopted on December 10th 1999 in Helsinki is a step in the right direction but still needs a modification as follows up e.g.:

1. The Ukraine should be treated as a separate entity different from Russia (no

colonial wars, no coups d'état as in 1991 and 1993 in Moscow, no imperial ambitions, no opposition to NATO enlargement, pro-European ambitions not only among the important part of the political élite but also among the significant part of the population, - mainly in the west of the country - former Austro-Hungarian and Polish territories that have the constitutional and parliamentary tradition comparable to the Polish one). Therefore, the EU Strategy for the Ukraine should stress that differentiation. The Ukraine is a big country for European standards, its population and territory is more or less as large as the French one. Russia is a continent itself. The integration of the Ukraine into the EU is unthinkable however in the foreseeable future. The integration of Russia is unthinkable, in general. That crucial difference should be reflected in the EU strategy towards Ukraine.

2. Poland will soon become EU member. Thus, the Polish-Ukrainian border will turn into the external border of the EU. This fact should be considered and the conclusions should be included into the EU strategy for Ukraine.

The Ukraine is the largest country of Central-Eastern Europe and Poland is the largest one among those invited to the accession negotiations in the first wave of the EU enlargement. That situation leads to the conclusion that the relation between our two states will determine the minimum standards of the relation between future EU member states and those countries which will not enter the Union in the first stage. Saying minimum just means the fact that what will be successfully solved in the Polish-Ukrainian relations will - due to the scale of both countries - serve as a minimum standard making solutions for other smaller neighbours. This brings a special responsibility to our two countries.

The future Polish-Ukrainian border will not be just the present German-Polish one moved to the East. Neither Poland nor the

Ukraine has enough money to invest in the partner country in the scale that would have any considerable impact on reality. Therefore Poland should consider the possibility to engage European money to finance those enterprises that are in the interests of Poland and the Ukraine as well as in the interest of the EU.

### *Slovenia*

The implementation of the (comprehensive) Common Strategy, which the European Union has adopted with respect to Russia, has become jeopardised because of the Russian action in Chechnya, as it was made clear by the member states of the European Union at the Helsinki Summit. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Drnovšek insisted that "the EU had to remain on good and constructive terms with Russia"<sup>331</sup>. Many political actors in Slovenia would adhere to such an opinion. Indeed, as far as Russia is concerned, positive political and economic changes cannot be expected overnight. It remains to be seen whether the parliamentary and presidential elections will make a considerable difference, but Russia is likely to remain a centralised, ineffective and corrupt state, with many of its internal problems continuing to be unresolved. Investments from the West cannot be expected until the corruption in the Russian government has been reduced and until the political stability is accomplished and sustained. Yet at the same time it goes without saying that Russia, too, is an important factor of stability in Europe, and should be dealt with accordingly.<sup>332</sup> As for Ukraine, the successful adoption of the Common Strategy at the Helsinki Summit represents an important step forward in bringing this country to the European integration process. The possibility of a full Ukrainian membership in the European Union should not be excluded either, es-

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<sup>331</sup> "Slovene Leader Foresees Turkey in EU as a Stabilising Asset", *International Herald Tribune*, 1-12 December 1999.

<sup>332</sup> Interviews with members of the National Assembly, November-December 1999.

pecially once the European Union starts sharing its external borders with Ukraine, which will certainly further enhance Ukraine's strategic importance for the stability of Europe.

**11. The Cologne summit reaffirmed the intention to draw the Western Balkan countries closer to the prospect of full integration. What is the position of your country's government on the**

- **Common Strategy, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and the Stability Pact for countries of South-Eastern Europe? Are further initiatives needed?**
- **Impact on the ongoing enlargement process?**

**Czech Republic**

The Czech Republic supports the efforts of the EU to get the countries of Western Balkans closer to the Union by means of Stabilisation and Association Agreements as well as by the Stability Pact where the Czech Republic wants to acquire the role of a facilitator. The Czech Republic is strongly in favour of looking for ways to prepare conditions for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to participate in the democratisation and stabilisation processes in the region. It is not possible to achieve the stability of the region without a democratic FRY. The Czech Republic assumes that the development in the Balkans will accelerate the ongoing enlargement process, because its slowdown would put the stimulation effects of the stabilisation agreements into doubt. In general, the Balkan countries need real prospects that the situation will improve in the foreseeable future.

**Hungary**

The Hungarian government is convinced that the intention of the EU to draw the Western Balkan countries closer to the prospect of full integration is an extremely positive move which will contribute to the peace and stability in that region. Hungary would welcome the respect for the Co-

penhagen criteria by the countries concerned. The Stability Pact is perceived by Hungary as an adequate means for the recovery of the region but would like to see it filled with content: unfortunately until today no concrete projects have been launched yet.

Hungary does not see a direct influence of the Stability Pact on enlargement, in contrary: the Kosovo crises impacted on the EU's decision to widen the circle of candidate countries. In the future Hungary is interested in both: the involvement of the Balkans into European integration but without slowing down the present pace of accession process.

**Slovenia**

The south-eastern part of Europe is a region, which is of extreme importance for the European Union. Moreover, it could prove to be potentially extremely dangerous for the Western European integration. There appears to be ample evidence in support of this thesis. World War I was triggered by the events in Sarajevo. The most recent developments in the former Yugoslavia turned into the worst security crisis in Europe since World War II. The events in the former Yugoslavia, which occurred between 1991 and 1999, seriously threatened the security and stability of Europe as a whole. Therefore, the European Union should consider the stabilisation of the Western Balkans as one of its top and immediate priorities because if the situation in this region is underestimated again, the consequences will be even more dangerous. The European Union should undertake economic and political steps with the aim of successful stabilisation of the Western Balkans, but at the same time, one should know that economic and political measures are inherently interconnected.

A common strategy for South-Eastern Europe should have both its economic and political component. As far as economic measures are concerned, the European

Union should finally show the countries of the Western Balkans that it really cares about their development and prosperity and that it does not consider this part of Europe as a kind of “grey zone”, incapable of sustainable economic and social life. This means that the European Union members should allocate significant economic (financial) resources to the region and provide viable reconstruction and development programs. In addition, they should accelerate their direct investment in the region. As regards the Stability Pact for the South-Eastern Europe, the plan has not lived up to the initial expectations. The financial scheme is unclear, and the implementation structure has not been built yet. In this respect, the Slovenian free-trade agreements with the countries of the former Yugoslavia do appear to be in the interest of both the European Union and Slovenia, since the cancellation of those agreements would likely affect the already rather fragile economies of the war-torn countries in the Balkans. The Slovene government thus hopes for a ten-year transitional period to adapt its trade regime towards these countries with that of the European Union.<sup>333</sup>

As to the scope of political action in the area, the European Union should not repeat its mistakes, made at the beginning of the Yugoslav crisis. Traditionally, large members of the European Union (notably France, Germany and the United Kingdom) have always tended to pursue their own foreign policies towards the Balkans, looking for gains in terms of their own national interests. Such a non-policy of the European Union as a whole has proved counterproductive, especially in the light of what seem to be the European Union’s aspirations to become a major political actor in the Old Continent and beyond. The Fifteen should genuinely embark on exercising the much-proclaimed Common Foreign and Security Policy vis-à-vis the Balkan region. For instance, the fate of

Bosnia and Herzegovina as an unified state, and of Kosovo as a genuinely autonomous region within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, may prove an extremely important litmus test for the member states of the European Union, especially if the United States withdraws its soldiers from the troubled region in the near future. Then, the European Union will have to prove - alone or in co-operation with the United States - that it is capable to provide a corresponding military support for the stabilisation of South-Eastern Europe. One should bear in mind that the reason why the European Union began to consider the possibility of creating a more independent European military structure was partly due to its inferiority vis-à-vis the United States’ forces during the Bosnian crisis and especially in handling the Kosovo crisis. Thus, it may not be an exaggeration to anticipate that the determination of the member states, expressed at the Helsinki Summit, to “be able, by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least 1 year military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg task”<sup>334</sup> may be tested soon - in the Balkans.

<sup>333</sup> Interviews with government officials, November-December 1999.

<sup>334</sup> *Helsinki European Council. Presidency Conclusions*, Point 28. Accessed at: [http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/Load\\_Doc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=76&DID=59750&GRP=2186&LANG=1](http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/Load_Doc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=76&DID=59750&GRP=2186&LANG=1).

**12. Looking at the debate on enlargement and EU-reform in your country what was the most striking observation or trend over the last 6 months? Did the outcome of the European Parliamentary elections impact on the debate?**

**Czech Republic**

The European elections have been noticed but their impact on the debate was marginal. The most discussed topics were the low participation of voters, the victory of the right-wing parties and the defeat of the left. The main implications were identified within the national politics of the member states (e.g. resignations of the chiefs of the defeated parties) and as such they did not seem to be important for the Czech relationship with the EU.

The first steps of the new Commission got much more attention. In general, Prodi's effort to impose new rules of the game was highly praised. But the attention was focused on Günter Verheugen, the commissioner in charge of the enlargement. He was greeted with a cautious optimism and his opinions have been monitored and analysed in a considerable detail.

There were several constant features in the debate during the period:

- the criticism of the government for not doing enough for the successful integration, focusing on the shortcomings in public administration (e.g. a lack of competent civil servants), on insufficient adoption of new laws and on lack of efficient co-ordination. The specific criticism also aimed at the inability to prepare viable projects which could get support from the EU funds;
- the discourse reflected the negotiated chapters. There was a discussion about the transitional period in the area of real estate which would prevent foreigners from acquiring the Czech real estate for some time after the acces-

sion; it was often discussed as trade-off, since the EU will in exchange claim transitional constraints on the free movement of workers from the CEE;

- comparisons with Poland and Hungary concerning negotiating positions, money transfers from the EU funds and the Regular Report by the Commission;
- two differing images of German speaking EU members, a traditional image of Germany as the keenest supporter of the enlargement in the EU and a recently-developed, opposite image of Austria as the least keen supporter (caused by Austrian demands concerning the nuclear safety, by the fears of the free movement of persons voiced by Austria as well as by the success of Haider in the previous general elections);
- the issue of the Roma minority whose fair treatment became connected with the integration effort;
- regular macroeconomic comparisons with the poorest EU members suggesting that the Czech Republic is not doing that bad;
- demands to the EU to set a firm date of enlargement.

Several media events are worth mentioning. Four smaller opposition parties prepared a critical analysis of the Czech integration effort concluding that the government was not doing enough. They presented it both to the public and to the EU representation in Prague which was in turn heavily criticised by the two biggest parties. The publication of the Regular Report did not bring any surprises as the negative evaluation was widely expected. It was considered as the last warning. A few weeks after that the Chairman of the Parliament expressed his dissatisfaction with the Czech-EU relations comparing them with the relationship between pupil and teacher. The year ended in a slightly more positive mood when the country concluded the difficult chapter on free movement on goods ahead of other CEECs which was deemed the first suc-

cess after many months.

### ***Hungary***

Regarding the progress of enlargement and the ongoing reforms of the EU, no dramatic change in Hungary's attitude towards the EU or the perception of the EU by the public opinion could be registered. Since Hungary's official preparations for EU-conformity, as well as the progress of negotiations are going on as pre-planned and the feedback it got from the EU until now is satisfactory and enables a very constructive dialogue, there is nothing that could have troubled this process. A more lively debate can be expected however during next year when the most sensitive topics will be treated in the negotiations: in case the EU would not cede Hungary some of the most vital derogation claim.

### ***Poland***

The most striking event during that period seems to be the visit of our agriculture unions' leaders to Brussels and their positive opinions on accession after talks with the Commission representatives.