

Brussels, 26 September 2006

## **Commission confirms Bulgaria's and Romania's EU accession on 1 January 2007, completed by a rigorous package of accompanying measures**

*Today the Commission adopted its final monitoring report on the preparedness of Bulgaria and Romania for EU membership. Based on the solid progress achieved, the Commission considers that both countries will be in a position to take on the rights and obligations of EU membership on 1 January 2007. To address the limited number of areas where further work will be necessary, the Commission proposes a package of rigorous accompanying measures.*

In May 2006 the Commission considered that "Bulgaria and Romania should be prepared for EU membership on 1 January 2007, provided that they address a number of outstanding issues." Since then both countries have made far reaching efforts and addressed many of the challenges. This has sufficiently brought them into line with prevailing standards and practices within the Union. As for the limited number of outstanding issues the Commission's report demonstrates that the EU disposes sufficient remedies to ensure that the interests of the Union and its citizens are protected.

Commenting the Commission's decision President José Manuel Barroso stated: "I congratulate the people and the leaders of Bulgaria and Romania for this historic achievement. Our objective assessment demonstrates that the accession of these two countries, as scheduled, with the accompanying measures, we propose, is a chance to complete the EU's fifth enlargement. This enlargement has consolidated peace and brought more prosperity in Europe. This is the right decision for Bulgaria and for Romania and this is the right decision for Europe."

In fact, since May, the two countries have successfully addressed about half of the identified open areas. Based on the current momentum, it is reasonable to expect that the majority of the remaining issues will be resolved during the months to come.<sup>1</sup>

To avoid any potential risks, the Commission has determined a number of measures to accompany the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The Commission will set up a mechanism for cooperation and verification of progress in the area of judicial reform, fight against corruption and organised crime. For the protection of the EU's financial interests a special regulation has been adopted today for agricultural spending. EU rules provide for comprehensive measures to counter risks, in areas such as food safety.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on the results achieved and the remaining shortcomings, see [MEMO/06/345](#) and [MEMO/06/346](#)

<sup>2</sup> For more details on accompanying measures, see [MEMO/06/347](#)

Commissioner for enlargement, Olli Rehn added: “Our approach is fair and rigorous. It is fair because we recognised the progress that has been achieved and we gave credit where it is due. It is rigorous because we established the necessary mechanism to accompany Bulgaria and Romania on their reform path, in the interest of the two countries and of the EU as a whole.”

Subject to the outstanding ratification processes in 4 EU Member States<sup>3</sup>, on 1 January 2007, Bulgaria’s and Romania’s accession will bring 30 million people into the EU, thus completing the EU’s historic fifth round of enlargement and creating a Union of almost half a billion citizens.

For further information see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key\\_documents/reports\\_sept\\_2006\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/reports_sept_2006_en.htm)

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<sup>3</sup> Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France