

Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1997/2173(COS)	Procedure completed
Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995		
Subject 8.20.02 Enlargement 2004: new Member States		
Geographical area Slovakia		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense		07/11/2000
		PSE WIERSMA Jan Marinus	
	Former committee responsible		
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy		23/09/1999
		PSE WIERSMA Jan Marinus	
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy		23/06/1997
		PSE WIERSMA Jan Marinus	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets		24/04/2001
		PPE-DE BÖGE Reimer	
	CONT Budgetary Control		29/05/2001
		PSE BÖSCH Herbert	
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs		29/05/2001
		PPE-DE OOSTLANDER Arie M.	29/05/2001
		PSE BERGER Maria	
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		21/03/2001	
	PSE GLANTE Norbert		
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		12/04/2000	
	PSE ETTL Harald		
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		27/03/2001	
	PSE GÖRLACH Willi		
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport		11/04/2001	
	ELDR ANDREASEN Ole		
AFCO Constitutional Affairs		24/01/2001	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration

Meeting

Date

Culture

[2427](#)

23/05/2002

[General Affairs](#)[2078](#)

30/03/1998




European Commission

Commission DG

Commissioner

[Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations](#)

Key events

15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2004	Summary
18/07/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/11/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
18/11/1998	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A4-0427/1998	
02/12/1998	Debate in Parliament		
03/12/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0713/1998	Summary
23/05/2000	Additional information		Summary
14/09/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
14/09/2000	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0244/2000	
03/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0423/2000	Summary
09/07/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
09/07/2001	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A5-0256/2001	
04/09/2001	Debate in Parliament		
05/09/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0432/2001	Summary
05/09/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/03/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2173(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/5/13767; AFET/4/10603; AFET/4/09122

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1997)2004	15/07/1997	EC	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0427/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0003	18/11/1998	EP	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0713/1998 OJ C 398 21.12.1998, p. 0019-0052	03/12/1998	EP	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(1998)0703	17/12/1998	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(1998)0712	17/12/1998	EC	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1999)0500	13/10/1999	EC	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		COM(1999)0511	13/10/1999	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		31999D0853 OJ L 335 28.12.1999, p. 0022	06/12/1999	EU	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0244/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0007	14/09/2000	EP	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0423/2000 OJ C 178 22.06.2001, p. 0071-0143	04/10/2000	EP	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0711	08/11/2000	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2000)0700	08/11/2000	EC	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A5-0256/2001	09/07/2001	EP	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T5-0432/2001 OJ C 072 21.03.2002, p. 0082-0185 E	05/09/2001	EP	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0700	13/11/2001	EC	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		SEC(2001)1754	13/11/2001	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2001)0661	13/11/2001	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		32002D0093 OJ L 044 14.02.2002, p. 0092-0100	28/01/2002	EU	
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2002)0700	09/10/2002	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2002)1410	09/10/2002	EC	

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

OBJECTIVE: AGENDA 2000: presentation of the Commission's opinion on Slovakia's request for membership (27 June 1995). CONTENT: All the requests for membership were assessed using a single method based on the criteria established at the Copenhagen European Council (June 1993). These criteria are as follows: - political criteria: the candidate countries must have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, human rights and respect for minorities, - economic criteria: these countries must have a functioning market economy, as well as the ability to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union, - criteria relating to the ability of the countries to take on the obligations of membership (in particular integration of the acquis, to a greater or lesser extent, and respect for the criteria concerning economic and monetary union). In the light of all these criteria it emerges that Slovakia does not fulfil in a satisfactory manner the political conditions set out

by the Copenhagen European Council because of the instability of its institutions and the shortcomings in the functioning of its democracy (in particular, its disregard for the rights of the opposition, use made by the government of the secret services, corruption, etc.). There are also problems with regard to the respect for minorities (the Hungarian minority, in particular). This situation is all the more regrettable since Slovakia could satisfy the economic criteria in the medium term and is firmly committed to take on the *acquis* with regard to the internal market. Considerable progress is still required to ensure the effective application of the *acquis*. In conclusion, the Commission considers that accession negotiations can be opened with this country only when Slovakia has made significant progress in the political area and with the implementation of the *acquis*. The first objective will therefore be to strengthen the pre-accession strategy and to concentrate on dealing with these two key problems.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The committee adopted the report by Mr WIERSMA (PSE, NL) on Slovakia. Slovakia was the only country which did not meet the Copenhagen criteria at the last assessment round. The committee was therefore glad to report the change of government in Slovakia following the holding of free elections and noted that the new government had said that it intends to comply with the Copenhagen political and economic criteria. This positive political trend must continue. The Council and the Commission were asked to adopt a flexible approach so that the Council could reassess the situation in Slovakia before the end of the German presidency.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

In adopting the report by Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PSE, NL) on Slovakia's application for membership of the European Union, Parliament reaffirmed a position already expressed in its resolution of 4 December 1997 according to which all countries should be placed on the same footing even if it was logical to open negotiations with the most advanced countries. It stressed the need for the advancing accession process to cover all the countries with which the European Union had signed a Europe Agreement and underlined again its firm conviction that there should be no closed groups of accession candidates. It also stressed that the opportunity for a smooth transition to the phase of intensive negotiations should remain open at all times. Considering, in general terms, that the integration of the candidate countries into the Union would substantially contribute to security in Europe, Parliament hoped that Slovakia would be able as soon as possible to join the group of countries with which the Council had decided to open accession negotiations. Considering that the political development of Slovakia was proceeding satisfactorily, it called on the European Council to adopt a flexible approach by reconsidering Slovakia's application. It therefore called on the Commission to reassess the situation in that country so that the negotiations could start at the latest before the end of the German Presidency. Parliament considered that the Council should give its decision to start negotiations during the first half of 1999. Nonetheless, the positive political developments in Slovakia must be maintained. Parliament thus expected that this country would manifest the will to undertake the political reforms required to make it a state subject to the rule of law and respecting democratic principles, human rights and the rights of minorities. Slovakia should also speed up the process of preparing for accession, in particular speeding up the adoption of the Community *acquis* and taking the measures required to restore its macro-economic balance. The country was also asked to envisage closing its technologically outdated nuclear power stations as soon as possible. Slovakia was asked in general terms to speed up the process of preparing for accession with a view to reducing the length of future negotiations. Lastly, the two sides were called on to make full use of the Europe Agreement and the Accession Partnership to develop their cooperation with a view to the future accession.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

This composite paper presents an outline of the progress made towards accession by all of the candidate countries in relation to the Copenhagen criteria since the publication of the Commission's opinions in July 1997. These regular reports for each of the candidate countries concentrate on all aspects of the adoption of the Community *acquis* and establish a precise assessment of the capacity of each of the candidates to fulfil the political and economic criteria required for accession. Overall, the Commission's analysis of the progress achieved by each of the candidate countries since July 1997 has not persuaded it to amend its general assessment of the candidates. Therefore, it does not consider it necessary, on the basis of the reports being presented, to make new recommendations "on the conduct or extension of the negotiations", as envisaged by the European Council. Nonetheless, the Commission stresses the increasing importance of revising the national programmes for adoption of the *acquis* in order to further accelerate the process of alignment with European legislation and strengthen the administrative capacity of the candidate countries, with a view to efficiently implementing all the regulations necessary for admission to the Union. The document ends by specifying that the preparatory measures undertaken must determine for now, the assistance of the Union to these countries and, subsequently, the timetable for the first accessions. For this reason, the Commission intends to submit further progress reports to the Council at the end of 1999 to allow it, if appropriate, to take decisions on the conduct or extension of the negotiations.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

PURPOSE : To present the 1999 Regular Report on Slovakia's progress towards accession. **CONTENT :** The report looks at Slovakia's relations with the Union and analyses the situation in terms of both the political and economic criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council. It addresses the question of Slovakia's ability to take on the obligations of membership and looks at administrative and judicial capacity as requested by the Madrid European Council. Relations with the Union: Slovakia's trade with the EU has continued to grow. Several trade issues have been resolved, such as the resumption of automatic licensing for coniferous wood. The Commission has, however, initiated anti-dumping proceedings on certain imports. The impact of the Phare programme has been positive, with particular importance for civic education during the 1998 elections and development of the SME sector. In the years 2000-2002, total financial assistance available will be 49M EUR for Phare, 18.3M for SAPARD and between 35M and 55M EUR for ISPA, per year. Copenhagen political criteria: Slovakia now fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria thanks to the changes made since the parliamentary elections of September 1998. The process of consolidating democracy has regained momentum. With respect to the Parliament, the main weaknesses identified by the last Regular Report have been addressed. Problems on judicial independence, which the 1998 Composite Paper saw as one of the main challenges to democracy

and the rule of law, have been remedied. The situation must be further improved, mainly through an amendment to the constitution eliminating the probation period for judges and modifying the nomination and removal procedures. The fight against crime and corruption needs to be intensified. Particular attention must be paid to continuing discrimination against Roma. In spite of some positive developments, further measures are needed, including at local administration level. Roma living conditions must be improved, and police and state attitudes need attention. Copenhagen economic criteria: Slovakia is close to being a functioning market economy thanks to the courageous policy decisions and the impressive reform agenda of the new government. Continued progress towards sustainable macroeconomic stability and the implementation of the structural reform programme should enable Slovakia to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the medium term. In the course of 1999, Slovakia has adopted measures to reduce external and internal imbalances. Plans for privatisation have been adopted. Particular efforts need to be put into the capacity of the banking sector to perform its financial intermediary function by completing privatisation in a transparent manner. Ability to assume the obligations of membership: Legislative alignment in internal market matters have progressed with legislation on public procurement and standards and certification. In other sectors of the acquis, there has been little concrete progress in terms of adopted legislation. Administrative capacity: Certain improvements have been made in internal market matters, but the civil service reform law has not been adopted. In other key areas such as regional development, financial control and justice and home affairs, the establishment of relevant institutions has been delayed. Given the delays that Slovakia has experienced in preparing for membership, it is important that legislation be accompanied by the strengthening of related administrative capacities.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

PURPOSE: presentation of the second accession partnership for Slovakia. **CONTENT :** Like its previous version, this partnership for the accession of Slovakia resembles a work programme proposing priorities and objectives to be attained by the country in the short and the medium-term in order to become a member of the Union. These objectives take into account the regular report on Slovakia (1999). The short-term priorities (end of 2000) concern political criteria (improvement of the situation of the Roma) and economic criteria (re-establishment of budgetary stability, improvement in competitiveness of companies); the internal market (principally progress in the alignment process); agriculture; transport; energy (drawing up of a decommissioning plan for the Bohunice nuclear plant and re-establishing the safety of the Mochovke plant); environment (overall realistic plan for alignment with EU legislation); social affairs and employment; justice and home affairs (implementation of the Schengen agreement) and the strengthening of administrative and judicial capacity (in particular the management and control of European Union Funds). In the medium term, the measures concern the follow up of the implementation of legislation regarding minority languages. On the economic front, the reforms concern the privatisation process and the introduction of a budget monitoring process. With regard to the internal market, data protection legislation is priority, as well as alignment and the strengthening of the customs administration. Other measures are awaited which will deal with agriculture, fishing, energy (in particular, in the nuclear sector), transport, environment and improvement in the operation of the legal system. With regard to the programming of financial resources, the partnership confirms aid granted in line with AGENDA 2000 and the various instruments provided therein (Phare, SAPARD and ISPA) in accordance with the rules already foreseen. It should be noted that assistance is only granted if the country respects the provisions of the EC-Slovakia Association Agreement, makes progress towards satisfying the Copenhagen criteria and assures in the year 2000 the achievement of the specific priorities of this accession partnership.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

On the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee for External Relations, Mr. Elmar BROK (EPP, D) and of Mr. Patrick COX (President of the ELDR group), the conference of the presidents of the political groups in the European Parliament decided to have annual debates on enlargement as of the first plenary session of October 2000. This decision was adopted against the view of the Socialist Group, which opposed the setting of a specific calendar laying down from the present the work allocation of the various parliament committees. The decision of the Conference of presidents grants an exclusive competence to the External Relations Committee to take responsibility for the preparation of the 13 reports that will be discussed in October 2000: one report for each of the 12 candidate countries and a general report that cover all the horizontal questions. This composite report will be prepared on the basis of contributions from the other parliamentary committees on: - convergence and stability in the candidate countries; - the rule of law in the candidate countries and their adaptation to the single market; - employment and social aspects; - the environmental aspects of enlargement; - health and consumer protection; - agricultural aspects; - regional policy; - transport and tourism policy; - equal opportunities and enlargement. The other annual debates would also involve 12 reports drawn up on the basis of the regular reports of the European Commission on the progress of the candidate countries towards enlargement. As the next set of regular reports will be published by the Commission in November 2000, the second annual debate may take place before the end of the first semester of 2001.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The committee adopted the report by Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PES, NL) on Slovakia's application for membership of the EU and the state of the negotiations. The report congratulated Slovakia on its progress in the fields of constitutional and administrative reform and felt that full implementation of its "ambitious reform programme" would put it back into the vanguard of the accession process. Slovakia should continue the speed of alignment to the EU "acquis" in order to ensure a speedy negotiation process. The report took the view that Slovakia could soon be regarded as a functioning market economy thanks to the decisive steps the government had taken on the path of economic reform. However, it urged the Slovak Government to continue its efforts to fight corruption and organised crime and also called for measures to tackle the increasing problem of trafficking in women.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PES, NI) on Slovakia's membership application to the EU and the state of the negotiations. This resolution congratulates the progress made by Slovakia in the fields of constitutional and administrative reform. However, there is still need for improvement in its national minorities policy, particularly in the fields of language, education and culture. The

Parliament trusts that the provisions of the Law on the Use of Minority Languages of 1999 will be implemented. Moreover, the Commission and the Council are called upon to make sufficient funds under Phare available to assist Slovakia in tackling these problems. Finally, the Parliament supports the agreement reached with the Commission to shut down the two reactor units of the Bohunice nuclear power plant in 2006 and 2008 respectively.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

This Regular Report for 2000 on Slovakia is largely similar to that of the Commission's 1997 Opinion and of the subsequent regular reports; however, it differs from that used in previous years on three minor points. Firstly, the part of the present report assessing Slovakia's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of 29 negotiating chapters covering the *acquis*. Secondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Slovakia's administrative capacity to apply the *acquis* under each of the negotiating chapters (previously discussed in a separate section of the report). Thirdly, the report includes, for the first time, a section assessing the progress made by Slovakia in translating the *acquis* into its official language. This Regular report takes into consideration progress since the 1999 regular report and looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 1999 regular report have been carried and it also examines new initiatives. With regard to the relations between the EU and Slovakia, Slovakia has continued to implement the Europe Agreement correctly and contributed to the smooth functioning of the various joint institutions. Moreover, Slovakia's trade with the EC has remained high and continued to grow in 1999, while it has not shown any significant changes in the first six months of 2000. The Council decided to terminate without the imposition of measures the proceeding concerning imports of solutions of urea and ammonium nitrate originating in the Slovak Republic, since it was found that Slovak exports had no material impact on the injury caused to the industry. The safeguard measures on the imports of pigmeat that had been introduced in April 1999 were discontinued according to schedule. In April 2000 Slovakia introduced quotas on exports of corn (till the end of October) and barley (till the end of July). In late July it was decided, on the grounds of a severe drought, to prolong the quotas till the end of 2000, while extending them, for the August-December period, to other products. With regard to Community aid, in the years 2000-2002, total annual financial assistance to Slovakia will amount to EUR 49 million for Phare, EUR 18.3 million for SAPARD and between EUR 36.4 million and EUR 57.2 million for ISPA, per year. It should be noted that Slovakia continues to meet the political criteria for accession which the last report had recognised, for the first time, as having being fulfilled. Slovakia has further advanced in the consolidation of its democratic system and in the normal functioning of its institutions. However, the speed of the reform process has lost some momentum due, in part, to dissension within the ruling coalition. Certain legal steps were taken to strengthen the independence of the judiciary. However, key parts of the reform have not been adopted. Progress was also achieved in the fight against crime and corruption and in developing approaches to tackle the problems of minorities, but there still remains a gap between policy formulation and implementation on the ground. Tangible improvement of the situation of the Roma minority in particular by implementing specific measures. Slovakia has also made progress in the following areas: market economy, macroeconomic stability; legislative alignment; statistics; industrial sector; telecommunications and the audiovisual sector and justice and home affairs. Whereas further progress is needed in areas such as: the adoption of the civil service law; public administration reform; health, pension and social security; agriculture, transport, regional policy, company law; the environment and financial control. ?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The committee adopted the report by Jan WIERSMA (PES, NL) which stated that Slovakia had made significant progress in restructuring its industrial and financial sector, thereby adapting itself to meet the requirements of the single market, and had also made some progress in the areas of public administration reform. The committee went on to encourage the government to develop national approaches to the problem of minorities and noted a gap between policy formulation and its practical implementation. All levels of government should tackle this issue, particularly the ongoing discrimination against the Roma. The committee welcomed progress in the area of the internal market but noted that there were certain weaknesses in such areas as financial control, agriculture, environment and justice and home affairs. It welcomed steps taken to tackle these problems by significantly strengthening staffing in the relevant ministries. Other issues taken up in the report included the environment, in particular the ongoing problem of the nuclear plants at Bohunice and Mochovce, and the need to tackle corruption and crime. ?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PES, NI) on Slovakia's application for membership to the European Union. (Please refer to the previous text).?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

In line with the previous strategy papers from the Commission which aim to set out the steps to be followed for the next enlargement, the Commission has published a new general document which sets out the progress made by all of the candidate countries with regard to accession to the European Union. If, on the one hand, certain countries have made substantial progress, considerable efforts still have to be made in order to ensure the effective application of EU legislation and standards ("*acquis communautaire*") before their accession. This is why the Commission announces that it shall present an important action plan in order to help the candidate countries strengthen their institution building capacities. The negotiations are conducted on the basis of the existing *acquis*, applying the principles of own merits and catching-up. It shall continue to follow the road map (please refer to the previous Commission working document for the year 2000) and the calendar approved by the European Council, which foresees the conclusion of the negotiations with the better prepared candidate countries before the end of 2002. In this context, the Union does not create new conditions for accession, which signifies that for all the subjects to come (in particular those which have important financial implications such as agriculture, regional policy and the budget, shall be dealt with throughout the first semester of 2002), the Commission shall present negotiation proposals based on the *acquis* and the existing budgetary framework. The Commission considers that this framework provides a sufficient basis for the accession of up to 10 new Member States in 2004. The accession negotiations can be concluded independently of decisions for financing the EU after 2006. Given the present pace of negotiations and the progress made so far, the Commission should be able to make recommendations on those candidate countries ready for accession on

the basis of its 2002 Regular Reports. It should also be noted that the countries which should be ready for accession on this date may be able to participate as Members of the Union in the 2004 European Parliament elections. In addition, it should be noted that the Commission's important action plan aiming to reinforce institution building should mobilise EUR 1 billion for the year 2002 alone (drawn mostly from the PHARE programme). In conclusion, the Commission announced that from November 2002, the Regular Reports that it presents shall identify which candidate countries are ready to become full Members of the European Union. The countries which do not conclude the negotiations in 2002 shall become subject to a new updated road map and eventually, a revised pre-accession strategy.?

Slovakia: membership application and partnership, 27 June 1995

The Commission has prepared this fourth series of Regular Reports with a view to the Laeken European Council in December 2001. This Report takes into consideration progress since the 2000 Regular Report. It looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 2000 Regular Report have been carried out, and examines new initiatives. The Report contains a separate section examining the extent to which Slovakia has addressed the Accession Partnership priorities. As regards the pre-accession instruments (Phare, SAPARD and ISPA), for the years 2000-2002 total financial assistance amounting annually to around EUR 78 million from Phare, EUR 18 million from SAPARD and between 3.5 and 5.5% of the overall ISPA budget was provided to Slovakia. With regard to the three main Copenhagen criteria for membership: 1) Political Criteria : Slovakia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. Significant progress was achieved with regard to the structure and functioning of the administration. The legal framework for the decentralisation of public administration was adopted, and so was the civil service law. Due implementation of the legislation is now required to ensure that the public administration adequately fulfils the key role it has to play in a functioning democracy based on the rule of law and in support of the accession process. Important steps were taken to strengthen the independence of judiciary. In particular, the constitutional amendment abolished the four-year probationary period for judges and provided for by setting up a Judicial Court. This amendment now needs to be implemented by primary legislation and at a practical level to guarantee the judiciary's professional impartiality and political neutrality. Further progress can be noticed in the fight against corruption, notably in translating and implementing the government policy into concrete actions and transporting international obligations. Corruption, however, remains a serious cause for concern. In order to continue improving the fight against corruption Slovakia should rigorously carry on the implementation of the action plans, strictly enforce existing legislation and complete planned legislation as well as strengthen administrative capacities and coordination among the bodies involved. The constitutional reform also created the basis for strengthening of Slovakia's institutional structure in the field of human right. However, there is a need to address police behaviour, notably with regard to reported cases of ill-treatment. The short term priorities of the 1999 Accession Partnership related to the modernisation and decentralisation of the public administration were fulfilled. Important steps were taken in strengthening the independence of the judiciary, which constituted a short term priority, as well. Despite further positive measures, tangible improvement of the situation of the Roma minority, another short term priority, was achieved only to a limited extent. So were the medium term priorities for the political criteria of the 1999 Accession Partnership, calling for continued implementation of minority language legislation and strengthening policies and budgetary means towards the Roma minority. 2) Economic Criteria : Slovakia is a functioning market economy. Provided that it makes further substantial efforts in medium term fiscal consolidation and in developing and fully implementing the announced structural reform programme, it should be able to cope with the competitive pressure and market forces within the Union in the near term. Overall, macroeconomic stability has been maintained. There has been further good progress in bank privatisation, which is nearing completion. Further progress was also made in restructuring and towards privatisation of the remaining state-owned utilities and transport enterprises. Further progress was made in setting the framework for private sector development. However, the substantial widening in the current account deficit will require a more prudent fiscal policy stance. Unemployment is high and rising. Some parts of the legal and institutional framework for enterprise development are in need of further improvements and effective implementation. Financial sector supervision has to be further strengthened. Steps must be taken to ensure the medium-term sustainability of public finances. The authorities need to comply with their fiscal targets, by implementing medium-term public expenditure reforms, in particular in the health, pension and subsidy areas. Macroeconomic stabilisation will need to be consolidated by a continued prudent combination of fiscal and monetary policy. Further progress in privatisation, in the administrative and legal framework and in financial sector reforms will set the stage for future private sector development. Growth in employment will further require fundamental reforms of the labour market. 3) Legislative Alignment with the *acquis* : Slovakia has continued to make good progress in legislative alignment with the *acquis*. Significant progress has been achieved in areas such as free movement of goods, company law, social policy and employment as well as customs union. Structural weaknesses have persisted in a number of sectors, namely in agriculture as well as regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments. While further progress in strengthening administrative capacities was made, reinforced and sustained efforts are needed across all sectors. - concerning internal market legislation : further progress has been achieved, notably in free movement of goods and free movement of services. In the area of free movement of persons, progress continues to be limited. In company law, with exception of trademarks, significant legislative progress has been made, especially through further alignment with the company directive and adoption of a new patent law. Appropriate strengthening of administrative and judicial bodies involved in all areas of intellectual property rights should be continued. In competition policy, the amendment on the Act of State Aid has brought the legislative framework largely in line with the *acquis*. In contrast to the anti-trust area, however, the enforcement record in line with the field of state aid remains rather sketchy and non-transparent. Administrative capacities in the internal market domain need reinforcing, in particular as regards the supervision of financial services. - as regards agriculture : overall steps both in aligning and implementing the *acquis* have been limited with the exception of veterinary issues, where significant progress was made. - in the energy sector : further positive steps have been taken in the energy sector with the decision to substantially open the domestic electricity market and the launching of the privatisation of major energy companies; - in the field of social policy : considerable progress has been made in the field of social policy and employment; - concerning the environment : legislative alignment - with the exception of water quality, nature protection and industrial pollution and risk management has well advanced although substantial alignment is still lying ahead. - in the field of justice and home affairs : further progress in terms of alignment has been achieved notably with regard to the external border control by *inter alia*, adopting a Schengen Action Plan. 4) Administrative Capacities : while good progress was made in a limited number of domains in strengthening the relevant institutions, overall progress in this area has been limited. The measures to strengthen the administrative capacities should be rigorously pursued. It should be noted that the Government has started to implement the result of the state audit approved last year. Its aim is to enhance the quality, reduce the costs and promote the transparency of the central state administration. In July 2001, the Government approved a plan to increase the number of staff dealing with EU integration by approximately 1200 in 2001 and 2002. 5) Accession Partnership : the short term priorities of the 1999 Accession Partnership have been met to a large extent in the field of internal market and social policy and employment; they have been partially met in the field of energy as well as co-operation in the fields of justice and home affairs and only to a limited extent in agriculture and environment. All medium term priorities have been partially met, with the exception of transport policy, regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments as well as the environment, where priorities were fulfilled only to a limited extent.?

