



# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2005/2029(INI)	Procedure completed
Republic of Bulgaria: application for accession to the European Union		
Subject 8.20.01 Candidate countries		
Geographical area Bulgaria		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	AFET Foreign Affairs		Appointed 18/01/2005
			PPE-DE <a href="#">VAN ORDEN Geoffrey</a>
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	DEVE Development		Appointed The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	INTA International Trade		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	BUDG Budgets		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	CONT Budgetary Control		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	REGI Regional Development		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		Appointed 20/01/2005
			PPE-DE <a href="#">MAAT Albert Jan</a>
	PECH Fisheries		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	CULT Culture and Education		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	JURI Legal Affairs		The committee decided not to give an opinion.

	<b>LIBE</b> Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	<b>AFCO</b> Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	<b>PETI</b> Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.

### Key events

10/03/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/03/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
01/04/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A6-0078/2005</a>	
12/04/2005	Debate in Parliament		
13/04/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
13/04/2005	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T6-0117/2005</a>	Summary
13/04/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		

### Technical information

Procedure reference	2005/2029(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/26435

### Documentation gateway

Committee opinion	<b>AGRI</b>	<a href="#">PE353.653</a>	15/03/2005	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A6-0078/2005</a>	01/04/2005	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T6-0117/2005</a> OJ C 033 09.02.2006, p. 0322-0404 E	13/04/2005	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2005)2124</a>	19/05/2005	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2005)2323</a>	22/07/2005	EC	

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Geoffrey VAN ORDEN ( EPP-ED , UK ) on Bulgaria 's application to become a member of the EU. MEPs said that the country had made "excellent progress" so far, but that there were still a number of steps its government needed to take. For example, they regretted the Bulgarian parliament's failure to adopt new penal codes for fighting corruption more effectively and also called for greater efforts to combat organised crime. The committee warmly welcomed the recent launch of the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion', and measures to improve housing in city areas mainly populated by Roma, but it pointed out that more needed to be done to end segregation of Roma children in schools, reduce high unemployment rates and provide better health care.

MEPs commended Bulgaria 's economic performance, the enlargement of the private sector and the progress made in liberalising key industries. They also welcomed the government's plan to re-run the auction for Bulgartabac subsidiaries. The report expressed concern, however, that due to the agreement on the closure of the Kozloduy nuclear plant, there was a risk of energy blackouts in the entire region. It therefore urged the EU Council of Ministers to be more flexible with regard to the closure dates.

Lastly, MEPs called on the Commission to set aside appropriate funding for information campaigns in order to improve public understanding of the implications of Bulgaria 's accession.

## Republic of Bulgaria: application for accession to the European Union

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution by 522 votes in favour, 70 against and 69 abstentions on the application of Bulgaria to become a Member of the EU. The report was drafted by Geoffrey VAN ORDEN (EPP-ED, UK). Parliament stated that it shared the Council's conclusion that Bulgaria will be able to assume all the obligations of membership. Bulgaria was encouraged to continue with the reforms necessary, thereby removing any possibility that "safeguard clauses" might be invoked. With regard to the Copenhagen criteria, Parliament made the following points:

### Political criteria:

- Parliament noted the stability of democratic institutions in Bulgaria, the fresh commitment of political parties to effective political coalitions, and the adoption of the amendments to the Constitution, as well as the adoption of the new Political Parties Act in December 2004;
- reform of the judiciary will be a key factor in Bulgaria's readiness for accession and in establishing real confidence in national institutions and processes, with significant knock-on effects in other areas. Parliament applauded the critical steps Bulgaria has taken in this regard, but felt that concerns about the pre-trial phase of the judicial process and the role of the Public Prosecutor should be further addressed. Parliament regretted that the planned reform of the penal judicature, which provides for the development of entirely new codes of penal procedure, is not scheduled for adoption by the current parliament due to the failure to secure a sufficient majority;
- continued tangible improvement must be made in reforming the police so as to enable them to deal effectively with organised crime, people trafficking and corruption;
- Parliament congratulated Bulgaria on hosting the launch of the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion' and welcomed measures to improve housing in city areas mainly populated by Roma but also pointed out that more needs to be done to end segregation of Roma children in schools, reduce high unemployment rates and provide better health care. Parliament also asked the Commission significantly to improve its programmes relating to Roma;

### Economic criteria:

- Parliament commended Bulgaria's economic performance (one of the highest GDP growth rates among EU candidates and Member States) which is the result of substantial structural reforms. It also congratulated Bulgaria on the reduction in unemployment levels;
- Parliament expressed disappointment at the failure of the sale of Bulgartabac subsidiaries and welcomed the Government's plan to re-run the auction for Bulgartabac subsidiaries before its mandate ends. The Bulgarian Government needs to maintain the momentum of privatisation and take steps to guarantee that procedures are transparent and fair.

### Acquis communautaire:

- the capacity to ensure control over the future external border of the EU and to prevent human trafficking and smuggling remains an issue of the utmost importance for the citizens of European countries;
- Parliament expressed concern about environment and consumer protection and deplored the practices of illegal logging taking place on an extensive scale in Bulgaria;
- there are difficulties in enforcement of intellectual property rights, in particular as regards media piracy and infringement of copyright, which continues to affect the commercial interest and investment of both Bulgarian and foreign copyright industries;
- Bulgaria is congratulated on the steps taken to ensure a high level of nuclear safety at the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant but Parliament expressed concern that a considerable decrease in the region's reserve generating capacities has now been forecast for 2010-2012;
- Parliament called on the Commission significantly to improve the management, targeting and transparency of Community funding, noting that the Community programmes (PHARE, SAPARD, ISPA and nuclear decommissioning) consisted of an allocation of EUR 495.7 million in 2004, EUR 399.5 million in 2005 and EUR 432.1 million in 2006, while it is expected that the post-accession financial package will provide some EUR 4.6 billion during the years 2007-2009.

Parliament gave its assent to the signature of the accession treaty in April 2005, but insisted that its views should continue to be taken into account in monitoring the progress of reform in Bulgaria following signature of the accession treaty and before any consideration is given to invoking safeguard clauses.