

**3- An extract of the presidency conclusions: Essen European Council, 9 and 10 December 1994**

**PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS**

**Relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe**

The European Council confirms the conclusions of the European Councils in Copenhagen and Corfu that the associated States of Central and Eastern Europe can become members of the European Union if they so desire and as soon as they are able to fulfil the necessary conditions.

The European Council has decided to boost and improve the process of further preparing the associated States of Central and Eastern Europe for accession. It is doing so in the knowledge that the institutional conditions for ensuring the proper functioning of the Union must be created at the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, which for that reason must take place before accession negotiations begin. The European Council has decided on a comprehensive strategy submitted by the Council and the Commission at the request of the European Council in Corfu for preparing these countries for accession to the European Union (see Annex IV).

That strategy is tailored to the needs of the countries with which Europe Agreements were concluded and will be applied to other countries with which such Agreements are concluded in the future.

The European Council requests the Commission and the Council to do everything necessary to ensure that Europe Agreements can be concluded with the Baltic States and Slovenia under the French Presidency, so that these States can be included in the accession preparation strategy.

The strategy adopted by the European Council is being politically implemented by the creation, between the associated States and the Institutions of the European Union, of "structured relations" which encourage mutual trust and will provide a framework for addressing topics of common interest.

The key element in the strategy to narrow the gap is preparation of the associated States for integration into the internal market of the Union.

The European Council requests the Commission to submit a White Paper on this subject in time for its next meeting and to report annually to the General Affairs Council on the progress of implementation of the accession preparation strategy that has been adopted, in particular on the gradual adoption of the internal market rules.

In addition, the European Council requests the Commission to submit as quickly as possible the detailed analysis desired by the Council of the effects of enlargement in the context of the Union's current policies and their future development.

The European Council further calls on the Commission to submit a study of means of developing relations between the EU and the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the agricultural sector during 1995, with a view to future accession.

Preparation for the internal market is to be backed up by a variety of measures designed to promote integration through the development of infrastructure and of cooperation in fields

having above all a trans-European dimension (including energy, environment, transport, science and technology, etc.), in the fields of common foreign and security policy and of justice and home affairs. The PHARE programme, appropriately funded within a multiannual financial framework in accordance with the preparatory strategy agreed upon, will provide financial support for the purpose.

Being aware of the role of regional cooperation within the Union, the Heads of State and Government emphasize the importance of similar cooperation between the associated countries for the promotion of economic development and good neighbourly relations. The Council has therefore approved a programme to promote such cooperation. That programme will also contribute to the objectives of the Stability Pact.

It is the European Council's belief that this strategy by the Union and the associated countries will help to prepare for accession and to make the associated countries better able to assume their responsibilities as future Member States.

The European Council regards the narrowing of the gap between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the EU and WEU as a contribution to security and stability in Europe. The European Council welcomes the intention of the WEU to initiate deliberations on the new security situation in Europe, including the suggestion that a White Paper on security in Europe should be prepared.

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