

**EUROPEAN COUNCIL**  
**14 and 15 December 2001**  
**LAEKEN**

**PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS**

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**Enlargement**

7. The Commission document entitled "Making a success of enlargement", the regular reports and the revised partnerships for accession are a solid framework for the success of the accession process, which is now irreversible. The Berlin European Council established the financial framework permitting enlargement.
8. In recent months considerable progress has been made in the negotiations and certain delays have been made good. The European Union is determined to bring the accession negotiations with the candidate countries that are ready to a successful conclusion by the end of 2002, so that those countries can take part in the European Parliament elections in 2004 as members. Candidacies will continue to be assessed on their own merits, in accordance with the principle of differentiation. The European Council agrees with the report of the Commission, which considers that, if the present rate of progress of the negotiations and reforms in the candidate States is maintained, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Slovenia could be ready. It appreciates the efforts made by Bulgaria and Romania and would encourage them to continue on that course. If those countries are to receive specific support, there must be a precise framework with a timetable and an appropriate roadmap, the objective being to open negotiations with those countries on all chapters in 2002.
9. The candidate countries must continue their efforts energetically, in particular to bring their administrative and judicial capabilities up to the required level. The Commission will submit a report on the implementation of the plan of action for strengthening institutions to the Seville European Council in June 2002.
10. The roadmap drawn up by the Nice European Council remains fully applicable. At the beginning of 2002 the Commission will propose common positions on the agriculture, regional policy and budgetary chapters on the basis of the present acquis and of the principles decided on in Berlin. Proceedings on the drafting of the accession treaties will begin in the first half of 2002.
11. The European Council welcomes the recent meetings between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and would encourage them to continue their discussions with a view to an overall solution under the auspices of the United Nations consistent with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.
12. Turkey has made progress towards complying with the political criteria established for accession, in particular through the recent amendment of its constitution. This has brought forward the prospect of the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey. Turkey is encouraged to continue its progress towards complying with both economic and political criteria, notably with regard to human rights. The pre-accession strategy for Turkey should mark a new stage in analysing its preparedness for alignment on the acquis.

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