



## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH  
DIRECTORATE A  
DIVISION FOR INTERNATIONAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### FACTSHEET

#### THE CZECH REPUBLIC

#### Chapter 21 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

##### 1. The *acquis* <sup>1</sup>

This chapter covers mainly administrative and programming capacity and eligibility for funding. The *acquis* under this chapter does not define how the specific structures for the management of the structural and cohesion funds should be set up, but leaves it up to the individual Member States. The administrative structures required also differ depending on the size and degree of regionalisation of the country concerned. Candidate countries will need to put the necessary structures in place by the time of accession in order to benefit from the funds.

A framework regulation (Council regulation (EC) 1260/1999) lays down the general provisions concerning the structural funds. There is also a series of implementing regulations and decisions which do not have to be transposed into national law. However, on accession, the new Member States will have to comply with certain requirements which have been addressed in the accession negotiations:

- *Legislative framework*: the candidate countries need to have the appropriate legal framework allowing for implementation of the specific provisions in this area;
- *territorial organisation*: the candidate countries need to agree with the Commission on a provisional NUTS classification for the implementation of the structural funds;
- *programming capacity*: the candidate countries need to design a development plan; put in place appropriate procedures for multi-annual programming of budgetary expenditure; ensure implementation of the principle of partnership at the different stages of provision of structural fund assistance; comply with the specific monitoring and evaluation requirements;
- *administrative capacity*: the candidate countries have to define the tasks and responsibilities of all bodies and institutions involved and ensure effective inter-ministerial coordination;

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<sup>1</sup> Information largely drawn from the European Commission, DG Enlargement  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/chapters/index.htm>

- *financial and budgetary management*: the candidate countries need to comply with specific control provisions applicable to the funds and provide information on their co-financing capacity and on the level of public or equivalent expenditure for structural actions.

## 2. The negotiations

The chapter has been closed with ten countries and remains open with Bulgaria and Romania.

**Chapter opened** April 2000

**Status** Closed December 2002 (provisionally closed in April 2002).

## 3. Position of the European Parliament

In its resolution of 4 October 2000<sup>1</sup>, Parliament:

- reminds the Czech Republic that the administrative capacities for transposing and monitoring agricultural, environmental and regional and structural development legislation must be consistently developed, in particular to ensure successful implementation of the SAPARD and ISPA programmes;
- draws the Czech Republic's attention to the fact that rapid development of instruments for ensuring effective regional policy may serve to tackle the socio-economic problems associated with accession, especially in rural and peripheral areas; calls upon the Czech authorities to further social and economic cohesion by closely involving social partners, local and regional authorities as well as NGOs in policy-making processes.

In its resolution of 5 September 2001<sup>2</sup>, Parliament:

- notes the improvement with regard to regional policy and territorial organisation, and also the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the ministry of Regional development (MRD); welcomes the boost that the establishment of Czech regions has provided for the development of a stronger transnational orientation on the part of the Czech Republic, and, in particular, the intention of the regional governors to pursue their interests independently of the central government and in interaction with other partner regions in Europe;
- regards this as a clear sign that the modern concept of a Europe of the regions has also established itself in the Czech Republic.

In its resolution of 20 November 2002<sup>3</sup>, Parliament calls on the Czech Republic to enable its regional bodies to exploit regional development fund and cohesion fund resources to the full immediately after accession by devising and implementing high-quality, environmentally sustainable projects; points out to the Czech Government that this is the best way to turn theoretical net recipient status into a real status.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution on the state of negotiations with the Czech Republic, § 4 & 5: [A5-0245/2000](#)

<sup>2</sup> Resolution on the state of accession negotiations with the Czech Republic, § 23 & 24: [A5-0255/2001](#)

<sup>3</sup> Resolution on the progress of the candidate countries towards accession, § 57: [A5-0371/2002](#)

#### **4. Latest Assessment by the European Commission <sup>1</sup>**

In its 1997 Opinion, the Commission concluded that the Czech Republic still needed to establish a legal, administrative and budgetary framework for an integrated regional policy and ensure its compliance with EC rules. The Commission added that, given the Czech Republic's administrative capacity and the necessary political awareness, the Czech Republic should, in the medium term, be ready to apply the Community rules and channel funds from the EC structural policies.

Since the Opinion, the Czech Republic has made important progress in legislative terms, and, more recently, has moved forward with developing the necessary administrative capacity. Overall, legislative alignment is well advanced, although further efforts are required on public procurement. As regards administrative capacity the implementing structures are in place but further efforts are needed to make them fully operational.

Negotiations on this chapter have been provisionally closed. The Czech Republic has not requested any transitional arrangements in this area. The Czech Republic is generally meeting the commitments it has made in the accession negotiations in this domain.

In order to complete preparations for membership, the Czech Republic's efforts should now focus on clearly defining the final implementation structures and further reinforcing their administrative capacity, strengthening inter-ministerial co-operation and partnership, and further reinforcing systems and procedures for effective monitoring, financial management and control.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, Regular Report 2002, p. 103 & 104 :  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2002/cz\\_en.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2002/cz_en.pdf)