



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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

FACTSHEET

LITHUANIA

Chapter 16 - Small and medium-sized Enterprises

1. The *acquis* ¹

This chapter covers the area of enterprise policy, distributive trades, tourism and social economy. The *acquis* consists largely of decisions setting up consultation procedures and Community programmes, or of recommendations. These do not require transposition into the national legal order nor implementation and enforcement measures, except in respect of the Directive on tourism statistics (95/97/EC).

The subject of the chapter is important in the context of economic development and the capacity to withstand competitive pressure. Three areas are of particular significance:

- overall enterprise/SME policy formulation and implementation;
- the general business environment in the country concerned;
- the adoption and application of the definition of SMEs.

In April 2002, the candidate countries endorsed the 'European Charter for Small Enterprises', which was adopted in June 2000.

2. The negotiations

The chapter has been closed with ten countries and provisionally closed with Bulgaria and Romania. There are no transitional arrangements.

Chapter opened: May 2000

Status: closed in December 2002 (provisionally closed in May 2000)

Transitional arrangements: none

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

3. Latest Assessment by the European Commission ¹

In its 1997 Opinion, the Commission concluded that the basic structures for SMEs were in place in Lithuania, but that it was necessary to further strengthen the support structures as well as simplify the legal and administrative environment so as to make it more SME-friendly, and to make efforts to improve SMEs' access to financing.

Since the Opinion, Lithuania has made good progress in formulating an SME policy that is in line with the approach promoted at EU level. Recently, there have also been improvements in the business environment, particularly with regard to access to finance.

Lithuania's policy towards SMEs is generally in line with the principles and objectives of EU enterprise policy and the basic institutional structure is in place. Negotiations on this chapter have been provisionally closed. Lithuania has not requested any transitional arrangements. Lithuania is generally meeting the commitments it has made in the accession negotiations in this field.

In order to complete preparations for membership, Lithuania's efforts now need to focus on reinforcing the delivery mechanisms for promoting entrepreneurship and on continuing the simplification of the legal and administrative conditions for enterprises.

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¹ European Commission, Regular Report on Lithuania 2002, p. 97:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2002/lt_en.pdf