

Brussels, 14th February 2005

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: another step forward on the road to accession

On 22 March 2004, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia applied for membership of the European Union. The European Commission was subsequently requested, on 17 May 2004, by the Council of Ministers to prepare an Opinion on the application, thus setting in motion the process which could lead to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia joining the EU. Among the sources of information used by the Commission in the preparation of this Opinion will be the answers to the Questionnaire which the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will hand over to President Jose Manuel Barroso and Olli Rehn, Commissioner for Enlargement today in Brussels.

Q: What is a Questionnaire?

A: The Questionnaire is a working tool that allows facilitating the dialogue the Commission is conducting with the authorities to find out whether the country is ready to undertake the rights and obligations of EU membership. The replies expected should be as concrete as possible so that the Commission is able to assess fairly the situation and the level of implementation of the reforms. It covers the political criteria for membership to the EU (concerning notably the functioning of democracy, rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities), the economic criteria (existence of a market economy and capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union) as well as all areas of the EU legislation grouped in 35 chapters. The replies to these questions will provide material which will help the Commission to analyse if the country is ready to assume the obligations related to membership.

Q: When was the Questionnaire handed over?

A: The Questionnaire was handed over in Skopje on 01 October 2004 by the then President of the EC, Romano Prodi.

Q: What other sources of information are used in the preparation of the Opinion?

A: The Commission uses feedback from its Delegation in Skopje, from the international organisations active in the country, and statistical and economic information from sources such as the OECD and the IMF.

Q: When will the Commission present its Opinion to the Council?

The deadline is very much depending on the quality of the information handed over by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia authorities, and subsequently the necessity for further clarifications or consultations.

Q: When is it expected that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will join the European Union?

A: The timing of accession of each country to the EU depends on the progress that it makes in preparing for membership, according to the criteria laid down by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993 and the conditions set for the Stabilisation and Association Process, notably regional cooperation. The Copenhagen criteria require:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

Q: Is the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia advanced on the road to European Integration?

A: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has reached an advanced stage in the process of European integration. On 01 April 2004, the [Stabilisation and Association](#) Agreement between the country and the EC entered into force and the first meetings of the Stabilisation and Association Council and Committee have already taken place in Brussels. A European Partnership¹ with the country which was adopted by the EU on 14 June 2004 as foreseen by the [Thessaloniki Agenda](#), is under implementation.

For further information see:

[The EUs relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#)

¹ Official Journal L222 of 23.06.2004 Page 20 et seq.