

Press release 28 December 2006

Two new members join the EU family

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Brussels, 28 December 2006

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On 1 January 2007 the EU welcomes two new Member States and 30 million people, when Bulgaria and Romania join the European Union. This completes the EU's historic fifth round of enlargement peacefully reuniting Western and Eastern Europe after decades of division.

To mark this important day in European history President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso said: “The 1 January 2007 is a historic day to celebrate. I congratulate the people and leaders of Bulgaria and Romania for the courage, determination and work in preparing for membership. I thank the people and the leaders of the EU for their vision in supporting this project. I also welcome the two new Commissioners, Ms Kuneva and Mr Orban, I look forward to working with them.”

Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn added: "My warm welcome to the people of Bulgaria and Romania. They deserve congratulations for impressive reforms in strengthening democracy, modernising their countries, making their justice systems more efficient and independent. EU accession will bring concrete improvements to the every day life of citizens – such as safer food, cleaner environment, and better roads.”

Bulgaria and Romania applied for EU membership in 1995 and both countries started their accession negotiations in February 2000. The negotiations were successfully concluded in December 2004 and the Accession Treaty was signed in April 2005. In its last monitoring report on Bulgaria and Romania of 26 September 2006, the Commission concluded that both countries are sufficiently prepared to carry the obligations of EU membership. To address the limited number of areas where further work will be necessary, the EU has adopted a package of accompanying measures. Meanwhile the ratification process of the Accession Treaty has been completed by all EU Member States as well as Bulgaria and Romania.

Commissioner Rehn will participate at the official celebrations in Bulgaria and Romania. He will be travelling together with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Foreign Minister, representing the Presidency.

31 December 2006, Romania

- visit to Sibiu, Cultural Capital of 2007
- Bucharest, 19:30: ceremony of raising the EU flag in front of the headquarters of the Government of Romania ; followed at 20.30 by the New Year's concert at the Athenaeum Hall and at 23.45 by the New Year's party in the Revolutiei Square.

1 January 2007, Bulgaria

- Sofia, 15.30: ceremony of raising the Bulgarian and the EU flags at the "Alexander Nevski" Square.
- 18.00: Gala Concert at the National Palace of Culture

Contacts for the celebrations:

In Romania: Daniela ROSCA +40 724 232 197

In Bulgaria: Doichin CHOLAKOV +359 885 877422

or the Romanian and Bulgarian authorities responsible for the events

For further info on the accession process of Bulgaria and Romania:

DG Enlargement website:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_fr.htm

26 September Monitoring Report:

[MONITORING REPORTIP/06/1257](#)

[MEMO/06/345](#)

[MEMO/06/346](#)

[MEMO/06/347](#)

Safeguard clauses in the Accession Treaty:

[MEMO/05/396](#)

Safeguard clause against Bulgaria on aviation safety:

[IP/06/1860](#)

[MEMO/06/504](#)

New official languages in the EU:

[IP/06/1854](#)

Free movement of labour:

MEMO/06/513

Commission staff from Bulgaria and Romania:

IP/06/1882

Veterinary and food safety measures:

IP/06/1537; IP/06/1535

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