Dear Readers

To start I would like to wish you a happy 2007.

The accession of Bulgaria and Romania will take European Union membership to 27 countries. This is a historic time for the EU and we are proud to welcome Bulgaria and Romania into the EU family.

This issue tries to address all aspects of enlargement of the EU as well as the enlargement of the Euro zone. We are also happy to announce that from now on all the future issues of the “EU - Nepal News” can be read and subscribed at our official website (www.delnpl.ec.europa.eu). It is a pleasure to present this special issue of our newsletter to all our readers.

Eduardo LECHUGA-JIMENEZ
Charge d’Affaires
The Fifth Enlargement of the European Union

1st of January 2007 marks a historic moment—the accession of Bulgaria and Romania completed the fifth enlargement of the European Union. As has been the experience from the four previous enlargements, this event will not only contribute to the cohesion and stability of the European continent, but will also make it more prosperous socially, economically, and culturally. This accession will make the two new countries the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh members of the European Union. The memberships of Bulgaria and Romania will bring a new dynamism to the European Community.

The Enlargement Commissioner Mr. Olli Rehn has said, “The EU accession process is rather like the Orient Express, a train which takes its time where the quality of the service and comfort comes first, before hurry. Yes, it is a slow, slow train coming, and not precisely up around the bend. But it is indeed essential that the train remains on track, and thus enables us to maintain our soft power of democratic and economic transformation in our future home territory”.

Enlargements till the date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>ECSC: France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Denmark, Ireland, and UK</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Spain and Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Austria, Finland and Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Romania and Bulgaria</td>
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"We arrived in Europe, welcome to Europe. This is an enormous chance for new generations."
Traian Basescu
The President Of Romania.

"The day we are welcoming - 1 January 2007 - will undoubtedly find its place among the most important dates in our national history."
Georgi Parvanov
Bulgarian president

"EU accession will bring concrete improvements to the everyday life of citizens, such as safer food, cleaner environment and better roads."
Olli Rehn
The Enlargement Commissioner
Benefits of Enlargements

Benefits of the 5th Enlargement

- Extended the **zone of peace, stability** and **prosperity** and set durably stable democracies in Europe
- 75 million new potential consumers and producers in rapidly growing economies
- Improved environment and food safety as new members have adopted EU environment and food safety policies
- Joint efforts to fight against: Crime, Drugs, Illegal immigration.
- Strengthens the Union’s role in world affairs:
  - Global governance
  - Great impact on business:
    - Level playing field for economic operators extended
    - Same EU rules and standards across the 25 countries.
    - Goods, services, capital and people circulate freely (transitional periods on the free movement of workers)
    - More market opportunities and job creation
    - Continued economic integration and growth will lead to further changes in production structure and strategies

Future Enlargements

Candidate Countries
- Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Negociations not yet started), Turkey

Potential Candidate Countries
- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244

EURO: Single Currency for Europe

Slovenia joined the euro area on 1 January 2007, less than three years after joining the EU on 1 May 2004. A new Member State adopts the euro once it achieves the high degree of sustainable economic convergence with the euro area required for membership of the single currency. The Euro was introduced on 1 January 2002, and today the currency is used in 13 European countries.

The current **EURO** zone: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Slovenia, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland

“Courage, determination and work in preparing for membership”.
Commission President José Manuel Barroso, congratulating the people and leaders of Bulgaria and Romania for their accession to the European Union.

“It was hard, but we arrived at the end of the road. It is the road of our future. It is the road of our joy.”
Traian Basescu, The Romanian President.
Enlargement for a Stronger and Wider Europe
Enlargement and the EU Parliament

European Parliament and the 5th Enlargement

The European Parliament is gravely affected by the enlargement but also influences on it. From 1997 the European Parliament closely monitored and supervised enlargement preparations. They visited the candidate countries regularly, went on fact-finding missions and talked to politicians, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and others. From 1999 they presented annual reports to the full Parliament once a year. Parliament then adopted resolutions in which it raised important concerns.

Thus, the views of the European Parliament have also been taken into account throughout the accession process of Bulgaria and Romania. Members of Parliament’s delegations to the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Bulgaria and the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Romania, as well as all members of Parliament, contributed considerably to exchange of views to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union.

The Parliament adopted the final resolutions welcoming the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on November 30 2006.

According to José Manuel Barroso “It is the first time that an accession treaty explicitly foresees a consultation of the European Parliament on the appointment of Commissioners from new Member States”. That is a very important role given to the European Parliament as it increases both the democratic rights of Parliament and the European Commission’s accountability.

Another task the parliament played was to give its assent to the appointment of Commissioners and members of the Court of Auditors from the new Member States. The Commissioners assigned by their respective countries have to pass through a strict test from the Members of the European Parliament. The European Parliament voted to approve the nomination of the Bulgarian and Romanian Commissioners in an almost unanimous show of support for the Bulgarian and Romanian nominees for the post of European commissioner. Both Meglena Kuneva and Leonard Orban obtained almost 600 votes each in the parliamentary vote. Both of them were deeply involved in the negotiations for their respective countries’ membership.

The portfolios assigned to the new Commissioners are multilingualism and protection of consumer rights. The portfolios given to them are of great importance as the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in the European Union touches the very substance of European values and identity and is the prerequisite for communicating Europe and the multicultural dialogue. The protection of consumer rights also is central to the interests of each and every one of the EU citizens and affects them greatly.
Enlargement and the European Commission

**European Commission and the Fifth Enlargement**

The European Commission is the institutional motor for enlargement and integration. Any candidate country wishing to join the EU must meet the political and economic criteria and has to fully transpose and implement EU laws and standards. The so-called **Copenhagen criteria** look at the administrative, economic, legal and political sphere and include the following criteria: stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities.

During the accession negotiations the progress achieved by the candidate country is reviewed annually in regular reports. After the conclusion of accession negotiations, the European Commission continues to monitor the follow-up of the preparation up to accession.

It is vitally important for the EU to ensure a carefully managed enlargement process that extends peace, stability, prosperity, democracy, human rights and the rule of law across Europe. The Commission is convinced that a carefully managed accession process contributes positively to the European idea. A well-functioning Union is in the interests of both present and future members. The Union’s capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the strength of European integration, is an important element for both the Union and the candidate countries and that is the goal of the European Commission.

The fifth enlargement of the EU has been very positive. Bulgaria and Romania applied for EU membership in 1995 and began accession negotiations in 2000, which were successfully concluded in 2004. On 26 September 2006 the European Commission approved the Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania. On 17 October 2006 the Council officially approved the two countries to join the EU on 1 January 2007. Full EU membership for Bulgaria and Romania was completed on 1 January 2007 and brought 30 million people into the EU, creating a Union of almost half a billion citizens.

The accession of Romania and Bulgaria has naturally brought two new Commissioners extending the family of commissioners and cabinets to 27. The Bulgarian Commissioner **Meglena Kuneva** who was given the consumer protection portfolio sees her main tasks would include working to complete the review of the consumer protection. The Romanian Commissioner **Leonard Orban** will work to promote multilingualism through his portfolio legislative framework, to improve the enforcement of laws already in place, to consolidate and further the enforcement of product safety rule, and to raise the capacity of consumer organisations.
European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Micro-projects Programme

Reference: EuropeAid/124944/L/ACT/NP
Deadline for receipt of applications: 28 February 2007

For the fifth consecutive year the European Commission is seeking proposals for Micro projects in Nepal funded through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In this 2006 Call for Proposal, € 375,000.00 (approx. NRs 34,500,000) is available for grants to the Nepalese NGOs to implement small (micro) projects.

The general objectives of EIDHR are to respond rapidly to requests for small-scale financial supports for initiatives designed to promote and protect human rights and democratization as well as efforts aimed at conflict resolution. Nepal is one of the 68 focus countries for the EIDHR worldwide.

Under the current call, the EIDHR funding will cover two priority areas of “fostering a culture of human rights” (earmarked at € 250,000.00, equivalent to NRs. 2,30,00,000.00) and “advancing equality, tolerance and peace” (earmarked at € 125,000.00, equivalent to NRs. 1,15,00,000.00).

Applicants may apply individually or as part of a consortium for a project with 6-24 months periods and requesting Commission contribution between 50-90% of the total project costs, which can not be less than € 10,000 and more than € 50000.

Asia-Invest Programme 2006-2007

Reference: EuropeAid 122960/C/ACT/Multi – Deadline 9 March 2007

The overall objective of the Programme is to promote and facilitate direct business cooperation between Europe and Asia. In addressing this overall objective, the Programme has the following specific objectives at an Asia-wide level:

- Strengthen mutual trade and investment flows between the regions; Assist SMEs to internationalise their business strategy; Reinforce private sector and new business development opportunities; Promote European know-how and technologies within the private sector and in intermediary business organisations with a view to reinforce micro and meso-level links between the two regions; Exchange of best practices and experiences of Europe and Asia intermediaries and/or companies with a strong regional dimension; Promote invest and trade, with regard for south-south business links; Favour the participation of less developed countries and emphasise support to these countries to increase their international market knowledge and access; Enhance Europe’s political and economic presence across Asia.

The EC grant request must fall between € 100,000.00 and € 600,000.00 (maximum 90% of total costs for projects including Nepal). The planned duration of an action should be less than 36 months.