

The Delegation of the European Commission to Albania celebrates European Week

From 2 to 9 May, the Delegation of the European Commission to Albania in co-operation with the EU Member State Embassies in Tirana, EU Presidency, the Ministry of European Integration and civil society organizations celebrated the European Week 2008 in Tirana. Under the slogan "It is not them and us, but you and me" it included a series of political, social, educational and cultural activities with the sole intention of transmitting messages of peace and solidarity, principles that constitute the foundations of the European Union. These activities kicked off with a Press Conference by the Head of the EC Delegation to Albania Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, the EU Member States ambassadors and the Albanian Minister of European Integration.

Explaining the aim of these activities Ambassador Lohan underlined that "we would like to reach you directly, the citizens of Albania, bringing you information on the EU. But, we want to listen to your thoughts and suggestions on Albania's road towards the European integration".

The Albanian Minister of European Integration highlighted the fact that these celebrations could not have happened at a better time for Albania. "We are invited to join NATO; the SAA is in the process



2008.05.02 - Eu Info Bus in Durres

of being fully ratified by all EU Member States; the Interim Agreement, in force since December 2006 is creating the legal basis for the further improvement of EU-Albania relations. We have signed the visa facilitation agreement and the political dialogue on full liberalization has already started", said Mrs. Majlinda Bregu.

The festivities of the European Week

2008 included 30 different kinds of activities. The Head of the Delegation on behalf of the European Commission hosted a concert of the Albanian well known violinist Ervis Gega and the chamber orchestra "Rheinisches Kammerensemble Mainz", at the National Theatre. The concert was attended by the Commissioner for Science and Research, Mr. Janez Potočnik. The Italian, the Hungarian and the Dutch Embassies organised concerts of classic, Baroque and chamber music, performed by local and European artists, which were widely followed by the Albanian public and attracted positive acclaim in the media.

The Delegation organised for the first time a National Competition for the Design of an EU mascot for the Albanian children, aiming to draw the attention of the younger generation on the European Union through the launch of the first step of an information campaign dedicated to them. The competition was addressed to both design artists and students of art schools around the country and more than 30 applications became part of this competition. The awarding ceremony for the best mascot was organised at the Gallery of the Academy of Arts.

"Good Morning Europe", a get-together of high school children in the main square

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of Albania's capital to celebrate Europe Day with musical tones and dances was organised on the 9 May. The event started with a bike racing under the slogan "With a bike towards Europe without smog" in the main boulevard of Tirana where the President of the Republic and the Head of the Delegation participated as well.

The cultural and academic world took part in the programme of the European Week 2008 through a series of events, mainly dedicated to the challenges of integration for Albania. On the occasion of the latest published edition of the "Sarajevo Notebooks" entitled "The



2008.05.05 - National Theatre, concert of the Albanian violist Ms. Ervis Gega, organised by the Delegation of the European Commission to Albania



2008.05.07 - Ambassador Lohan, Head of the EC Delegation, at the event Europe and Me

Best of All", the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union, the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Skopje in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Commission in Tirana organised a roundtable with writers from the Western Balkans and European Perspective". Besides the authors and editors, the presentation was also attended by the European Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik.

The Spanish Embassy organised an International Colloquium on: "The European construction process and the future for the Euro Mediterranean relation", given by Vicent Garcés, Member of the European Parliament. The British Embassy organised a first screening of the Top Channel television documentary "Albania and the UK: European Partners", followed by a reception. The Czech, Austrian, Polish and French Embassies

contributed the best recent production of their respective countries into a European Film Week organised from 2-9 May.

In the frame of the European Week 2008 festivities and on Europe Day, the Albanian Parliament, the OSCE Presence in Albania and the European Movement organised the conference "Two years after the signing of the SAA - the role of the Albanian Assembly". The event brought together the highest political representatives of the country. Keynote speakers included Assembly Speaker Jozefina Topalli, Prime Minister Sali Berisha, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lulzim Basha, Socialist Party Chair Edi Rama and Ilir Meta, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on European



2008.05.09 - "Two years after the signing of the SAA - The role of the Albanian Assembly" Conference with Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, Head of the European Commission Delegation, Prime Minister Sali Berisha, Albanian Assembly Speaker Jozefina Topalli, Ambassador Robert Bosch, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, and Socialist Party Chair Edi Rama



2008.05.07 - Ambassador Lohan, Head of the EC Delegation, awards the prize to the best designed Mascot for an EU campaign for the Albanian children

Integration, as well as Head of the EC Delegation Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, and Ambassador Robert Bosch, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

Finally, the Delegation followed up on the intention expressed last year to extend the scope of the activities beyond the limits of the capital city. Although this posed a challenge in terms of organisation and management the Delegation organised for the first time a tour of an EU Bus around the main cities of the country. The bus toured across five Albanian towns: Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Korça, and Tirana. In each town, the programme envisaged lectures and debates in universities where different speakers from both the EC Delegation and the Member States Embassies addressed a selected public. Ambassadors of the EU Member States to Albania actively participated in this activity.

Commissioner Potočnik visits Albania



The European Commissioner Mr. Janez Potočnik

Albania's decision to join the European Community's Seventh Framework for Research (FP7) from 1 January 2008 will allow Albanian Researchers to collaborate with scientists and engineers across the EU Member States and the other Balkan countries on an equal footing.

Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner responsible for Science and Research, who was in Tirana on 5 and 6 May to meet Albanian authorities and scientists, explained that this is a step in the right direction:

"By engaging more in research Albania will not only improve the quality of life for its citizens, it will also shift to a more competitive knowledge-based economy based on new products and services."

During his visit Commissioner Potočnik discussed the importance of investing in research with the President, the Prime Minister and the Albanian Minister of Education and Science. He also spoke to 100 scientists, engineers, researchers and policy makers at an Information Day on FP7 organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science.

Commissioner Potočnik believes that all Western Balkan countries have much to gain from research cooperation with the EU. This is not only because of access to European research funding, but also from effective integration into the "European Research Area" (ERA). "By working with scientists and companies throughout the European Research Area, which now includes virtually the whole Balkan region, Albania can get many benefits: scientific, socio-economic and political". Research cooperation with the Commission's Joint Research Centre

will also help Albania meet European technical requirements and standards in food safety, public health, environment and energy. This will in turn enhance Albania's prospects of joining the European Union.

But in order to gain maximum benefit from these new research opportunities, the Albanian government will need to take measures to strengthen national research capacity. The main purpose of the European Commissioner's visit was to encourage Albania to put research policy on the political agenda and to commit more means to strengthening national research.

Commissioner Potočnik's first state visit to Albania followed less than 5 months after the signature of the Memorandum

of Understanding associating Albania to FP7 took place in Brussels on 17 December 2007. This visit is part of a tour to all Balkan countries to discuss with the authorities the importance of research and cooperation with the European Union.

On 5 May, Commissioner Potočnik participated in two events that were part of the European Week 2008. The Commissioner attended a roundtable with writers from the Western Balkans region entitled "Western Balkans and European Perspective", organised by the Slovenian EU presidency; and he also opened the concert organised by the Delegation of the European Commission to Albania for the European Week festivities.



2008.05.04 – "Sarajevo Notebook" round table with Mr. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, at the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Youth

EURALIUS II: THE MISSION GOES ON

The European Commission is continuing to support financially and with know-how the Albanian Justice system, which still remains problematic. That is the reason why it offered 4.5 million Euros for the new European Assistance Mission to the Justice System in Albania referred to as EURALIUS II. Its main scope is to facilitate, through the building of the required capacities within the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary system, the development of a more independent, impartial, efficient, professional, transparent and modern justice system in Albania. Through this process it can contribute considerably to the restoring of people's confidence in their institutions and to the consolidation of democracy and rule of law in the country. Another major objective will be to facilitate the fulfillment of the Stabilization and Association Agreement requirements in the field of Justice Reform, by making the leadership of the Ministry of Justice and of the Judiciary fully acquainted with EU practice and standards.

During the next two and a half years, EURALIUS II will focus on the areas of Justice Organization and Reform, Inter-Institutional Dialogue, Development of management capacities, Law Drafting, Legal Approximation, Penitentiary Issues, Enforcement of Rulings, Court Administration and Criminal Justice. It will also take a coordination and observation role in the area of land administration and immovable property rights.

"The reform and development of the Albanian justice system is one of the



key priorities in the SAA. The rule of law is a fundamental pre-condition for membership. Setting the mechanisms that permit the rule of law to be implemented properly is a fundamental task for all political forces, and we are pleased to help with another important assistance mission", said Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, the Head of the European Commission Delegation. He went on to explain that: "A first step on the reform path has been made with the adoption of amendments to the judicial power law. I understand that there is wide agreement that this was a first step only and that reform of the judiciary needs to be comprehensive in order to be effective. The discussion of reform legislation and the discussion of legislation that is intended to reflect the acquis of the EU should therefore also take account of the very practical, day to day issues that concern its implementation

and enforcement in order to meet the "standards". EURALIUS II stands ready to give its support on all outstanding reform elements".

During the launch event the Minister of Justice, Enkleid Alibeaj spoke about the contribution of this mission. "EURALIUS I has considerably contributed in improving our Justice System. We are on the process of extensively and intensively reforming it so as to bring it closer to the standards required by the SAA. We are privileged to be assisted by the professionals of EURALIUS II", he said.

The Head of the Mission, Roland Miklau presented its newly recruited team, which consists of 9 long-term international experts from different EU Member States, 3 local experts and a number of local administrative staff. The project is implemented by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice in consortium with the German Federal Ministry of Justice.

President Barroso "Track record is what counts now for Albania"



The President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso with the Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso met on 5th of May 2008 in Brussels with the Albanian Prime Minister, Sali Berisha. They discussed about Albania's track record of integration reforms which are necessary to join the European Union, as well as on other sensitive regional developments.

President Barroso noted that progress had been made in terms of political

decisions, but only when it is possible to see those decisions implemented will it be possible to fix a date for Albania to apply for EU membership. "I assured him that the European Commission is committed to enhancing the European perspective for Albania and the Western Balkans. I also encouraged PM Berisha to press ahead with difficult reforms and to strengthen the rule of law. And he gave me his assurance that his government is prepared to undertake the hard work required to do so successfully," he said.

The President of the European Commission was quite straightforward as well when he underlined the necessity of putting correctly into practice all the reforms. "A sustained record of successfully implementing the SAA should be established before Albania can move further towards the EU. The European Commission will continue to provide substantial financial support to help Albania meet this objective and realise its European future," said Mr. Barroso.

Finally, the EC President said that he felt positive on Albania's progress, which as he said gave room for optimism. "There has been real progress. Albania has

shown ambition. Now the EU is awaiting evidence of consolidation of reforms, and of putting political, institutional and administrative reforms into practice. There are still some difficulties. So it is necessary to continue working on this area", said Barroso.

Following the meeting with the EC President the Albanian Premier said that Albania is determined to carry on in implementing all the necessary reforms. "We shall carry on the fight against organized crime and corruption. It will be tackled with zero tolerance. I would like to assure President Barroso that my government is ready to sign every agreement with the EU member countries and to take every necessary step so that in the near future the Albanian nationals can enjoy the free movement as European citizens," said Mr. Berisha.

The President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha discussed in their meeting on regional developments as well. President Barroso spoke highly of what he referred to as "Albania's constructive role in the region" and asked Mr. Berisha "to proceed like this in the future".

Milestones on Albania's Road to Europe

1992: Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the European Union and Albania. Albania becomes eligible for funding under the EU PHARE programme.

1997: Regional Approach. The European Union Council of Ministers establishes political and economic conditionality for the development of bilateral relations.

September 1999: The European Union proposes a new Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) for five countries of South-Eastern Europe, including Albania.

September 1999: The Feasibility study on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) starts.

November 1999: The above Feasibility Study is adopted by the Commission.

January 2000: Adoption of the Feasibility Report by the General Affairs Council (GAC).

1999: Albania benefits from Autonomous Trade Preferences with the European Union.

2000: Extension of duty-free access to European Union market for products from Albania.

June 2000: Feira European Council states that all the countries under the SAP are "potential candidates" for European Union membership.

2001: First year of the new CARDS programme specifically designed for the SAP countries.

June 2001: The Commission concludes that it was now appropriate to proceed with a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania.

June 2001: The Göteborg European Council invites the Commission to present draft negotiating directives for the negotiation of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania.

2002: Council Negotiating directives adopted.

December 2002: Copenhagen European Council confirms the objective of the fullest possible integration of the Western Balkans countries into the political and economic mainstream of Europe and recognises the countries as potential candidates for European Union membership.

January 2003: Official opening of the SAA Negotiations in Albania.

February 2003: First Round of the SAA Negotiations.

March 2003: The Brussels European Council in March 2003 states that "the future of the Western Balkans is within the European Union" and invites "the Council and the Commission to examine ways and means, based also on the experience of the enlargement process, to further strengthen the Union's policy towards the region."

May 2003: First Round of Readmission Agreement Negotiations.

May 2003: A communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Western Balkans and European Integration proposes to develop the Stabilisation and Association Process further by introducing certain elements inspired by the pre-accession process.

June 2003: Thessaloniki Council Meeting reaffirms the integration perspective for the Western Balkans and confirms the high priority of the region in the European Union's agenda.

December 2003: Readmission Agreement initialed.

April 2005: Ratification by the Albanian Parliament of the European Union-Albania Readmission Agreement

June 2006: The European Union and Albania sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement

January 2008: Visa Facilitation Agreement between the European Union and Albania



OVERVIEW - THE ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE

THE ACQUIS IS THE BODY OF COMMON RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS THAT IS BINDING ON ALL THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. FOR THE SCREENING AND SUBSEQUENT MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS, THE ACQUIS IS BROKEN DOWN INTO A NUMBER OF CHAPTERS, EACH COVERING A SPECIFIC POLICY AREA.

Chapter 1: Free movement of goods

The principle of the free movement of goods implies that products must be traded freely from one part of the Union to another. In a number of sectors this general principle is complemented by a harmonised regulatory framework, following the "old approach" (imposing precise product specifications) or the "new approach" (imposing general product requirements). The harmonised European product legislation, which needs to be transposed, represents the largest part of the Acquis under this chapter. In addition, sufficient administrative capacity is essential to notify restrictions on trade and to apply horizontal and procedural measures in areas such as standardisation, conformity assessment, accreditation, metrology and market surveillance.

Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers



The Acquis under this chapter provides that EU citizens of one Member State have the right to work in another Member State. EU migrant workers must be treated in the same way as national workers in relation to working conditions, social and tax advantages. This Acquis also includes a mechanism to coordinate national social security provisions for insured persons and their family members moving to another Member State.

Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services

Member States must ensure that the right of establishment of EU national and legal persons in any Member State, and the freedom to provide cross-border services, is not hampered by national legislation, subject to the exceptions set out in the Treaty. The Acquis also harmonises the rules concerning regulated professions to ensure the mutual recognition of qualifications and diplomas between Member States; for certain regulated professions a common minimum training curriculum must be followed in order to have the qualification automatically recognised in an EU Member State. As regards postal services, the Acquis also aims at opening up the postal services sector to competition in a gradual and controlled way, within a regulatory framework which assures a universal service.

Chapter 4: Free movement of capital

Member States must remove, with some exceptions, all restrictions on movement of capital both within the EU and between Member States and third countries. The Acquis also includes rules concerning cross-border payments and the execution of transfer orders concerning securities.

The directive on the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing requires banks and other economic operators, particularly when dealing in high-value items and with large cash transactions, to identify customers and report certain transactions. A key requirement to combat financial crime

is the creation of effective administrative and enforcement capacity, including co-operation between supervisory, law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities.

Chapter 5: Public procurement

The Acquis on public procurement includes general principles of transparency, equal treatment, free competition and nondiscrimination. In addition, specific EU rules apply to the co-ordination of the award of public contracts for works, services and supplies, for traditional contracting entities and for special sectors. The Acquis also specifies rules on review procedures and the availability of remedies. Specialised implementing bodies are required.

Chapter 6: Company law

The company law Acquis includes rules on the formation, registration, merger and division of companies. In the area of financial reporting, the Acquis specifies rules for the presentation of annual and consolidated accounts, including simplified rules for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The application of International Accounting Standards is mandatory for some public interest entities. In addition, the Acquis specifies rules for the approval, professional integrity and independence of statutory audits.

Chapter 7: Intellectual property law

The Acquis on intellectual property rights specifies harmonised rules for the legal protection of copyright and related rights. Specific provisions apply to the protection of databases, computer programmes, semiconductor topographies, satellite broadcasting and cable retransmission. In the field of industrial property rights, the Acquis sets out harmonised rules for the legal protection of trademarks and designs. Other specific provisions apply for biotechnological inventions, pharmaceuticals and plant protection products. The Acquis also establishes a Community trademark and Community design. Finally, the Acquis contains harmonised rules for the enforcement of both copyright and related rights as well as industrial property rights. Adequate implementing mechanisms are required, in particular effective enforcement capacity.

Chapter 8: Competition policy

The competition Acquis covers both antitrust and state aid control policies. It includes rules and procedures to fight anticompetitive behaviour by companies (restrictive agreements between undertakings and abuse of dominant position), to scrutinise mergers between undertakings, and to prevent governments from granting state aid which distorts competition in the internal market. Generally, the competition rules are directly applicable in the whole Union, and Member States must co-operate fully with the Commission in enforcing them.

Chapter 9: Financial service



The Acquis in the field of financial services includes rules for the authorisation, operation and supervision of financial institutions in the areas of banking, insurance, supplementary pensions, investment services and securities markets. Financial institutions can operate across the EU in accordance with the

"home country control" principle, either by establishing branches or by providing services on a cross-border basis.

Chapter 10: Information society and media

The Acquis includes specific rules on electronic communications, on information society services, in particular electronic commerce and conditional access services, and on audio-visual services. In the field of electronic communications, the Acquis aims to eliminate obstacles to the effective operation of the internal market in telecommunications services and networks, to promote competition and to safeguard consumer interests in the sector, including universal availability of modern services. As regards audio-visual policy, the Acquis requires the legislative alignment with the Television without Frontiers Directive, which creates the conditions for the free movement of television broadcasts within the EU. The Acquis aims to the establishment of a transparent, predictable and effective regulatory framework for public and private broadcasting in line with European standards. The Acquis also requires the capacity to participate in the community programmes Media Plus and Media Training.

Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development

The agriculture chapter covers a large number of binding rules, many of which are directly applicable. The proper application of these rules and their effective enforcement and control by an efficient public administration are essential for the functioning of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Running the CAP requires the setting up of management and quality systems such as a paying agency and the integrated administration and control system (IACS), and the capacity to implement rural development measures. Member States must be able to apply the EU legislation on direct farm support schemes and to implement the common market organisations for various agricultural products.

Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy

This chapter covers detailed rules in the area of food safety. The general foodstuffs policy sets hygiene rules for foodstuff production. Furthermore, the Acquis provides detailed rules in the veterinary field, which are essential for safeguarding animal health, animal welfare and safety of food of animal origin in the internal market. In the phytosanitary field, EU rules cover issues such as quality of seed, plant protection material, harmful organisms and animal nutrition.

Chapter 13: Fisheries

The Acquis on fisheries consists of regulations, which do not require transposition into national legislation.

However, it requires the introduction of measures to prepare the administration and the operators for participation in the common fisheries policy, which covers market policy, resource and fleet management, inspection and control, structural actions and state aid control. In some cases, existing fisheries agreements and conventions with third countries or international organisations need to be adapted.

Chapter 14: Transport policy

EU transport legislation aims at improving the functioning of the internal market by promoting safe, efficient and environmentally sound and user-friendly transport services. The transport Acquis covers the sectors of road transport, railways, inland waterways, combined transport, aviation and maritime transport. It relates to technical and safety standards, security, social standards, state

aid control and market liberalisation in the context of the internal transport market.

Chapter 15: Energy



EU energy policy objectives include the improvement of competitiveness, security of energy supplies and the protection of the environment. The energy Acquis consists of rules and policies, notably regarding competition and state aids (including in the coal sector), the internal energy market (opening up of the electricity and gas markets), promotion of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, nuclear energy and nuclear safety and radiation protection.

Chapter 16: Taxation

The Acquis on taxation covers extensively the area of indirect taxation, namely value-added tax (VAT) and excise duties. It lays down the scope, definitions and principles of VAT. Excise duties on tobacco products, alcoholic beverages and energy products are also subject to EU legislation. As concerns direct taxation, the Acquis covers some aspects of taxing income from savings of individuals and of corporate taxes. Furthermore, Member States are committed to complying with the principles of the Code of Conduct for Business Taxation, aimed at the elimination of harmful tax measures. Administrative co-operation and mutual assistance between Member States is aimed at ensuring a smooth functioning of the internal market as concerns taxation and provides tools to prevent intra-Community tax evasion and tax avoidance. Member States must ensure that the necessary implementing and enforcement capacities, including links to the relevant EU computerised taxation systems, are in place.

Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy

The Acquis in the area of economic and monetary policy contains specific rules requiring the independence of central banks in Member States, prohibiting direct financing of the public sector by the central banks and prohibiting privileged access of the public sector to financial institutions. Member States are expected to co-ordinate their economic policies and are subject to the Stability and Growth Pact on fiscal surveillance. New Member States are also committed to complying with the criteria laid down in the Treaty in order to be able to adopt the euro, in due course, after accession. Until then, they will participate in the Economic and Monetary Union as a Member State with a derogation from the use of the euro and shall treat their exchange rates as a matter of common concern.

Chapter 18: Statistics

The Acquis in the field of statistics requires the existence of a statistical infrastructure based on principles such as impartiality, reliability, transparency, confidentiality of individual data and dissemination of official statistics. National statistical institutes act as reference and anchor points for the methodology, production and dissemination of statistical information. The Acquis covers methodology, classifications and procedures for data collection in various areas such as macro-economic and price statistics, demographic and social statistics, regional statistics, and statistics on business,

transport, external trade, agriculture, environment, and science and technology. No transposition into national legislation is needed as the majority of the Acquis takes the form of regulations.

Chapter 19: Social policy and employment

The Acquis in the social field includes minimum standards in the areas of labour law, equality, health and safety at work and anti-discrimination. The Member States participate in social dialogue at European level and in EU policy processes in the areas of employment policy, social inclusion and social protection. The European Social Fund is the main financial tool through which the EU supports the implementation of its employment strategy and contributes to social inclusion efforts (implementation rules are covered under Chapter 22, which deals with all structural instruments).

Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy

EU industrial policy seeks to promote industrial strategies enhancing competitiveness by speeding up adjustment to structural change, encouraging an environment favourable to business creation and growth throughout the EU, as well as domestic and foreign investments. It also aims to improve the overall business environment in which SMEs operate. It involves privatisation and restructuring (see also Chapter 8 – Competition policy). EU industrial policy mainly consists of policy principles and industrial policy communications. EU consultation forums and Community programmes, as well as communications, recommendations and exchanges of best practices relating to SMEs, aim to improve the formulation and co-ordination of enterprise policy across the internal market on the basis of a common definition of SMEs. The implementation of enterprise and industrial policy requires adequate administrative capacity at the national, regional and local level.

Chapter 21: Trans-European networks



This chapter covers the Trans-European Networks policy in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures, including the Community guidelines on the development of the Trans-European Networks and the support measures for the development of projects of common interest. The establishment and development of Trans-European Networks and the promotion of proper interconnection and inter-operability of national networks aim to take full advantage of the internal market and to contribute to economic growth and the creation of employment in the European Union.

Chapter 22: Regional policy and co-ordination of structural instruments

The Acquis under this chapter consists mostly of framework and implementing regulations, which do not require transposition into national legislation. They define the rules for drawing up, approving and implementing Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund programmes reflecting each country's territorial organisation. These programmes are negotiated and agreed with the Commission, but implementation is the responsibility of the Member States.

Member States must respect EU legislation in general, for example in the areas of public procurement, competition and environment, when selecting and implementing projects. Member States must have an institutional framework in place and adequate administrative capacity to ensure programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in a sound and cost-effective manner from the point of view of management and financial control.

Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

EU policies in the area of judiciary and fundamental rights aim to maintain and further develop the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice. The establishment of an independent and efficient judiciary is of paramount importance. Impartiality, integrity and a high standard of adjudication by the courts are essential for safeguarding the rule of law. This requires a firm commitment to eliminating external influences over the judiciary and to devoting adequate financial resources and training. Legal guarantees for fair trial procedures must be in place. Equally, Member States must fight corruption effectively, as it represents a threat to the stability of democratic institutions and the rule of law. A solid legal framework and reliable institutions are required to underpin a coherent policy of prevention and deterrence of corruption. Member States must ensure respect for fundamental rights and EU citizens' rights, as guaranteed by the Acquis and by the Fundamental Rights Charter.

Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

EU policies aim to maintain and further develop the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice. On issues such as border control, visas, external migration, asylum, police co-operation, the fight against organised crime and against terrorism, co-operation in the field of drugs, customs co-operation and judicial co-operation in criminal and civil matters, Member States need to be properly equipped to adequately implement the growing framework of common rules. Above all, this requires a strong and well-integrated administrative capacity within the law enforcement agencies and other relevant bodies, which must attain the necessary standards. A professional, reliable and efficient police organisation is of paramount importance. The most detailed part of the EU's policies on justice, freedom and security is the Schengen Acquis, which entails the lifting of internal border controls in the EU. However, for the new Member States, substantial parts of the Schengen Acquis are implemented following a separate Council Decision, to be taken after accession.

Chapter 25: Science and research

The Acquis in the field of science and research does not require transposition of EU rules into the national legal order. Implementation capacity relates to the existence of the necessary conditions for effective participation in the EU's Framework Programmes. In order to ensure full and successful association with the Framework Programmes, Member States need to ensure the necessary implementing capacities in the field of research and technological development, including adequate staffing.

Chapter 26: Education and culture

The areas of education, training, youth and culture are primarily the competence of the Member States. A co-operation framework on education and training policies aims to converge national policies and the attainment of shared objectives through an open method of co-ordination, which led to the "Education and Training 2010" programme, which integrates all actions in the fields of education and training at

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European level. As regards cultural diversity, Member States need to uphold the principles enshrined in Article 151 of the EC Treaty and ensure that their international commitments allow for preserving and promoting cultural diversity. Member States need to have the legal, administrative and financial framework and necessary implementing capacity in place to ensure sound financial management of the education, training and youth Community programmes.

Chapter 27: Environment

EU environment policy aims to promote sustainable development and protect the environment for present and future generations. It is based on preventive action, the polluter pays principle, fighting environmental damage at source, shared responsibility and the integration of environmental protection into other EU policies. The Acquis comprises over 200 major legal acts covering horizontal legislation, water and air quality, waste management, nature protection, industrial pollution control and risk management, chemicals and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), noise and forestry. Compliance with the Acquis requires significant investment. A strong and well-equipped administration at national and local level is imperative for the application and enforcement of the environment Acquis.

Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection

The consumer protection Acquis covers the safety of consumer goods as well as the protection of the economic interests of consumers in a number of specific sectors. Member States need to transpose the Acquis into national law and to put in place independent administrative structures and enforcement powers which allow for effective market surveillance and enforcement of the Acquis. Appropriate judicial and out-of-court dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as consumer information and education and a role for consumer organisations should be ensured as well. In addition, this chapter covers specific binding rules in the area of public health.

Chapter 29: Customs union



The customs union Acquis consists almost exclusively of legislation which is directly binding on the Member States. It includes the EU Customs Code and its implementing provisions, the combined nomenclature, common customs tariff and provisions on tariff classification, customs duty relief, duty suspensions and certain tariff quotas, and other provisions such as those on customs control of counterfeit and pirated goods, drugs precursors, export of cultural goods as well as on mutual administrative assistance in customs matters and transit. Member States must ensure that the necessary implementing and enforcement capacities, including links to the relevant EU computerised customs systems, are in place.

The customs services must also ensure adequate capacities to implement and enforce special rules laid down in related areas of the Acquis, such as external trade.

Chapter 30: External relations

The Acquis in this field consists mainly of directly binding EU legislation which does not require transposition into national law. This EU legislation results from the EU's multilateral and bilateral commercial commitments, as well as from a number of autonomous preferential trade measures. In the area of humanitarian aid and development policy, Member States need to comply with EU legislation and international commitments and ensure the capacity to participate in the EU's development and humanitarian policies.

Applicant countries are required to progressively align policies towards third countries and positions within international organisations with the policies and positions adopted by the Union and its Member States.

Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) are based on legal acts, including legally binding international agreements, and on political documents. The Acquis consists of political declarations, actions and agreements.

Member States must be able to conduct political dialogue in the framework of the CFSP, to align with EU statements, to take part in EU actions and to apply agreed sanctions and restrictive measures.

Applicant countries are required to progressively align with EU statements, and to apply sanctions and restrictive measures when and where required.

Chapter 32: Financial control



The Acquis under this chapter relates to the adoption of internationally agreed and EU compliant principles, standards and methods of public internal financial control (PIFC) that should apply to the internal control systems of the entire public sector, including the spending of EU funds. In particular, the Acquis requires the existence of effective and transparent financial management and control systems (including adequate ex-ante, ongoing and ex-post financial control or inspection); functionally independent internal audit systems; the relevant organisational structures (including central coordination); an operationally and financially independent external audit organisation to assess, amongst others, the quality of the newly established PIFC systems. This chapter also includes the Acquis on the protection of EU financial interests and the fight against fraud involving EU funds.

Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions

This chapter covers the rules concerning the financial resources necessary for the funding of the EU budget ('own resources'). These resources are made up mainly from contributions from Member States based on traditional own resources from customs and agricultural duties and sugar levies; a resource based on Value-Added Tax; and a resource based on the level of gross national income. Member States must have appropriate administrative capacity to adequately coordinate and ensure the correct calculation, collection, payment and control of own resources. The Acquis in this area is directly binding and does not require transposition into national law.

Chapter 34 - Institutions

This chapter covers the institutional and procedural rules of the EU. When a country joins the EU, adaptations need to be made to these rules to ensure this country's equal representation in EU institutions (European Parliament, Council, Commission, Court of Justice) and other bodies, and the good functioning of decision-making procedures (such as voting rights, official languages and other procedural rules) as well as elections to the European Parliament. EU rules in this chapter do not affect the internal organisation of a Member State, but acceding countries need to ensure that they are able to participate fully in EU decision-making by setting up the necessary bodies and mechanisms at home and by electing or appointing well-prepared representatives to the EU institutions. After concluding the accession negotiations, specific rules for the interim period until accession ensure a smooth integration of the country into EU structures: an information and consultation procedure is put in place and, once the Accession Treaty is signed, the acceding country is granted active observer status in the European Parliament and Council, as well as in Commission committees.

Chapter 35 - Other issues

This chapter includes miscellaneous issues which come up during the negotiations but which are not covered under any other negotiating chapter.

THE CONTENT OF THE ACQUIS

The Acquis is the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all the Member States of the European Union. It is constantly evolving and comprises:

- the content, principles and political objectives of the Treaties;
- legislation adopted pursuant to the Treaties and the case law of the Court of Justice;
- declarations and resolutions adopted by the Union;
- instruments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy;
- instruments under Justice and Home Affairs;
- international agreements concluded by the Community and those entered into by the Member States among themselves within the sphere of the Union's activities.

Please visit the websites below or contact the Delegation of the European Commission to Tirana

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