

Conclusions of the Essen European Council: extract on relations with the CEECs (9-10 December 1994)

Caption: On 9 and 10 December 1994, at the Essen European Council, the Twelve adopt the PHARE programme as the financial instrument of the pre-accession strategy, the objective of which is the accession of the ten associated Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) to the European Union.

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Essen European Council (9-10 December 1994) Conclusions of the Presidency

[...]

1. Relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

The European Council confirms the conclusions of the European Councils in Copenhagen and Corfu that the associated States of Central and Eastern Europe can become members of the European Union if they so desire and as soon as they are able to fulfil the necessary conditions.

The European Council has decided to boost and improve the process of further preparing the associated States of Central and Eastern Europe for accession. It is doing so in the knowledge that the institutional conditions for ensuring the proper functioning of the Union must be created at the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, which for that reason must take place before accession negotiations begin. The European Council has decided on a comprehensive strategy submitted by the Council and the Commission at the request of the European Council in Corfu for preparing these countries for accession to the European Union (see Annex IV).

That strategy is tailored to the needs of the countries with which Europe Agreements were concluded and will be applied to other countries with which such Agreements are concluded in the future.

The European Council requests the Commission and the Council to do everything necessary to ensure that Europe Agreements can be concluded with the Baltic States and Slovenia under the French Presidency, so that these States can be included in the accession preparation strategy.

The strategy adopted by the European Council is being politically implemented by the creation, between the associated States and the Institutions of the European Union, of "structured relations" which encourage mutual trust and will provide a framework for addressing topics of common interest.

The key element in the strategy to narrow the gap is preparation of the associated States for integration into the internal market of the Union.

The European Council requests the Commission to submit a White Paper on this subject in time for its next meeting and to report annually to the General Affairs Council on the progress of implementation of the accession preparation strategy that has been adopted, in particular on the gradual adoption of the internal market rules.

In addition, the European Council requests the Commission to submit as quickly as possible the detailed analysis desired by the Council of the effects of enlargement in the context of the Union's current policies and their future development.

The European Council further calls on the Commission to submit a study of means of developing relations between the EU and the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the agricultural sector during 1995, with a view to future accession.

Preparation for the internal market is to be backed up by a variety of measures designed to promote integration through the development of infrastructure and of cooperation in fields having above all a trans-European dimension (including energy, environment, transport, science and technology, etc.), in the fields of common foreign and security policy and of justice and home affairs. The PHARE programme, appropriately funded within a multiannual financial framework in accordance with the preparatory strategy agreed upon, will provide financial support for the purpose.

Being aware of the role of regional cooperation within the Union, the Heads of State and Government emphasize the importance of similar cooperation between the associated countries for the promotion of

economic development and good neighbourly relations. The Council has therefore approved a programme to promote such cooperation. That programme will also contribute to the objectives of the Stability Pact.

It is the European Council's belief that this strategy by the Union and the associated countries will help to prepare for accession and to make the associated countries better able to assume their responsibilities as future Member States.

The European Council regards the narrowing of the gap between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the EU and WEU as a contribution to security and stability in Europe. The European Council welcomes the intention of the WEU to initiate deliberations on the new security situation in Europe, including the suggestion that a White Paper on security in Europe should be prepared.

[...]

ANNEX IV

Report from the Council to the Essen European Council on a strategy to prepare for the accession of the associated CCEE

Introduction

The European Council meeting of Copenhagen in June 1993 agreed that the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union. Accession will take place as soon as the associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required as set out in the conclusions of that meeting. The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration and respecting its internal cohesion and its fundamental principles is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries.

The associated countries have made remarkable progress on the road to political and economic reform. Consistency in this reform course is the key to successful integration into the EU.

The associated countries need to prepare for membership and to strengthen their capacity to assume the responsibilities of a member state. On the European Union side, the institutional conditions for ensuring the proper functioning of the Union must be created at the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, which for that reason must take place before accession negotiations begin. In addition, the Council wishes to have at its disposal a detailed analysis carried out by the Commission on the impact of enlargement in the context of the current policies of the Union and their development.

The European Council in Corfu asked the Presidency and the Commission to report to it for its next meeting on progress made on the process of alignment since the Copenhagen European Council, and on the strategy to be followed with a view to preparing for accession.

The main instruments of this strategy already exist. They are the structured relations with the institutions of the Union, as decided upon in Copenhagen, and the Europe Agreements. These agreements build a flexible and dynamic framework for various forms of cooperation. As Europe Agreements with additional states are concluded by decision of the Council, those states will be brought into this strategy.

The goal of the strategy presented here is to provide a route plan for the associated countries as they prepare for accession. The essential element of the strategy is their progressive preparation for integration into the internal market of the European Union, through the phased adoption of the Union's internal market *acquis*. This strategy will be supported by the implementation of policies to promote integration through the development of infra-structure, cooperation in the framework of the trans-European networks, the promotion of intra-regional cooperation, environmental cooperation, as well as the Common Foreign and Security Policy, cooperation in the areas of judicial and home affairs, and in culture, education and training. This integration will be supported by the Union's PHARE programme which will develop on an indicative basis

into an enhanced medium-term financial instrument with improved possibilities to promote infra-structure development and intra-regional cooperation. It is recognized that the Community *acquis* and Community policies will themselves continue to develop.

Politically the strategy will be realized through the development of a structured relationship between the associated countries and the Union. This will promote an atmosphere of mutual confidence and allow for the consideration of issues of common interest in a specially created framework.

This strategy will be realized through the following measures.

Structured Relationship

Of central importance to this strategy is the establishment of a "structured relationship" between the associated partner countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the institutions of the European Union, in order that the associated countries can play a positive role in discussions on matters of common interest.

The creation of a multilateral framework for strengthened dialogue and consultations was decided by the Copenhagen Council, which foresaw the holding of meetings between, on the one hand, the Council of the Union and, on the other hand, the associated countries. These decisions are reaffirmed by this strategy.

The structured dialogue covers Community areas, especially those with a trans-European dimension (including energy, environment, transport, science and technology, etc.), Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as Home and judicial affairs. It will be effective in developing practical cooperation between the governments of the Member States and of the associated countries and should also be established at the level of the Parliaments of the participating countries and the European Parliament. Making such cooperation a normal part of the life of governments and parliaments will be an important preparation for accession.

There is agreement to hold – in addition to the meetings of the individual Association Councils agreed upon in the framework of the Europe Agreements – beginning in 1995 in principle the following meetings with the associated partners on matters of common interests:

- Heads of State and Government: annual meeting on the margins of a European Council meeting.
- Foreign ministers: semi-annual meetings for discussion of the full scope of relations with the associated countries, in particular the status and progress of the integration process.
- Ministers responsible for internal market development, in particular finance, economics, and agricultural Ministers: annual meeting.
- Transport, telecommunications, research, and environment ministers: annual meeting.
- Justice and/or home affairs: semi-annual meetings.
- Cultural affairs, education: annual meeting.

In general, the meetings should take place in connection with the corresponding Council meeting. When necessary, additional meetings of the Council with the associated countries can be scheduled.

Every member State which takes over the Presidency in the first half of a calendar year is invited, in agreement with the following Presidency, to arrange the meetings with the associated countries for that year according to the above schedule and to identify them in its workplan.

Careful preparation of these meetings with the associated countries is extremely important. It will be for COREPER to arrange this, and to ensure the horizontal coherence of the structured dialogue. Regarding

preparation for meetings of the General Affairs Council with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the associated countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, insofar as they cover the full range of relations between the EU and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, or in other special situations to be determined on a case-by-case basis, consideration could be given to holding preparatory talks in the form of joint meetings in Brussels, in particular at ambassadorial level.

Preparing to extend the internal market

On accession, the acceding countries will become part of the internal market. Therefore preparation for the internal market must be at the heart of the pre-accession strategy. It will assist the associated countries to take on the obligations of membership of the Union and to develop their capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. In the coming years, integration into the internal market will involve a complex process of approximation of legislation, norms and standards. The strategy adopted today is therefore designed for the medium term but is accompanied by short term measures which will have immediate application.

Short term measures

(a) Commercial defence instruments

The Commission, without prejudice to the position of the Council, in the exercise of its responsibilities for anti-dumping and safeguard measures and in the framework of the individual Europe Agreements, will offer information to any associated country before the initiation of proceedings and will give, on a case-by-case basis, where appropriate, a clear preference to price undertakings rather than duties in order to conclude anti-dumping cases where injury is found.

(b) Trade in textiles

The EU will improve further access to the Union's market in the area of textiles, by exempting from custom duties products concerned by outward processing operations, covered by Regulation No 636/82, extended and duly modified for this purpose.

(c) Cumulation of rules of origin

The core of the strategy on cumulation will be based on strengthening the effectiveness of the Europe Agreements. The aim is to ensure that existing cumulation provisions can be exploited fully by economic operators. The existing diagonal cumulation with the four associated countries shall be extended to Romania and Bulgaria. The successful implementation of such a system would be dependent on the associated countries all agreeing on one system and on concluding an agreement between themselves. The structure should be flexible and allow the future addition of further countries who become associated countries such as the Baltic States and Slovenia.

Secondly and to the extent possible concurrently, diagonal cumulation should be introduced between the EC/EFTA countries, treated as one territory for the purposes of rules of origin and the associated countries. All EC/CEEC/EFTA countries would then be involved in what could be called European cumulation. Consideration would have to be given to the need to avoid circumvention by means of introducing specific provisions in agreements.

Before the introduction of full cumulation into all Europe agreements as a third stage at the end of the process, whose difficulties should not be underestimated, the Council will take its decision on the basis of a thorough evaluation of the sectorial and regional consequences on European industry of introducing full cumulation, taking into account the effects of the first two stages. Focusing on harmonization of rules of origin and the extension of cumulation possibilities would strengthen the effectiveness of the Europe Agreements, improve market access for originating products and stimulate economic cooperation throughout Europe.

(d) Alignment Bulgaria/Romania

The timetables relating to duties and tariff quotas in industrial products, textiles, ECSC products and processed and non-processed agricultural products for Bulgaria and Romania will be aligned with those of the other associated countries in accordance with the arrangements agreed by the General Affairs Council on 31 October.

(e) Adjustment of the Association Agreements

The Association Agreements will be adapted in the light of enlargement of the Union at the beginning of 1995 in order not to disrupt traditional trade flows, and of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, and to further develop trade.

Medium Term Measures

Internal Market

In order to be ready to participate in the internal market on accession, the associated countries will need to align their legislation with that of the Union. To assist this process, the Commission, after consultations with the associated countries, will present to the Council a White Paper on the internal market outlining the measures which the associated countries will need to adopt.

The White Paper will identify the relevant *acquis* in the various sectors which will contribute to the creation of the conditions for establishing a single market.

The major tasks fall to the associated countries, which will have to put into place legislative and regulatory systems, standards and certification methods compatible with those of the EU.

The EU undertakes to assist the associated countries in their task. The White Paper will propose concrete methods of cooperation, making maximum use of the Association Agreements. To this end the Commission will make the necessary organizational arrangements for providing the specialized technical assistance needed, to associate Member States with such efforts wherever possible and to ensure coordination.

The efforts will require resources as well as technical and legal assistance, much of which will be channelled through the PHARE-programme.

This White Paper will be an important guide to our partners in their preparation for accession and will be considered by the next meeting of the European Council in June 1995.

Competition and State aids policy

In the context of future accession, satisfactory implementation of competition policy and state aids control in the associated countries is of special importance. Work in this area is well advanced in most of the associated countries in terms of the adoption of competition policy legislation and the setting up of competition offices.

In the area of State aids, the Commission will assist the associated countries to draw up and thereafter update an inventory of their State aids, established on the same basis as in the Union. The Commission is requested to make an annual report to the Council on these inventories. In addition to the types of aid allowed in the Union, the Commission can also provide guidance on the compatibility of aid designed to combat the specific problems of the associated countries as they undergo reform. The Commission will set up a competition policy training programme which will draw on the expertise and experience of Commission and Member State competition authorities.

Each associated country could empower a single authority to monitor and control all state aids. The aim is to ensure that the authority given the task of monitoring State aids carries out its tasks independently, on the basis of transparent legislation, and as uniformly as possible.

As satisfactory implementation of competition policy and control of state aids together with the application of those parts of Community law linked to the internal market are achieved, providing a guarantee against unfair competition comparable to that existing inside the internal market, so the Union should be ready to consider refraining from using commercial defence instruments for industrial products.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector and the related food-processing industry in the associated countries contribute significantly to the economic development of these countries. Therefore the Commission will examine the effects on agriculture in these countries of all subsidized exports. The Commission will conduct this examination in the light of the respective price levels in the EU and in the associated countries and will take account of these differences in fixing refunds. The Council takes note of the Commission's proposal to adjust the Association Agreements in the light *inter alia* of the results of the Uruguay Round and the enlargement of the Union. In order to bridge the possible gap after the accession on 1 January 1995 and the formal adaptation of the association agreements, autonomous measures should be taken only on a purely technical basis in order not to disrupt traditional trade flows.

Furthermore the Commission is requested to present a report on the reasons why only a few tariff quotas opened by the Union are fully utilized and to indicate during the first half of 1995 by what means the use of existing quotas could be improved.

As agriculture represents a key element of this strategy, the Commission is asked to present in the second half of 1995 a study on alternative strategies for the development of relations in the field of agriculture between the EU and the associated countries with a view to a future accession of these countries.

Promoting Investment

Rapid growth in the associated countries and continuing structural reform in these countries are essential elements for the eventual success of the process of economic transformation in the associated countries. While increasing savings will finance domestic investment, foreign investment is also needed in larger volumes. Therefore the European Union has adopted a programme to stimulate investment from the Union, while recognizing that still the greatest effort has to come from the associated countries themselves.

In accordance with arrangements agreed by the General Affairs Council on 31 October, this programme will include continuing support for investment promotion agencies, the establishment of an Advisory Business Council as well as continuing support through PHARE for initiatives such as restructuring and modernization of productive capacity and small business development and for helping financing infrastructural investment.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

The structured relationship covering common foreign and security policy is especially important as a means for overcoming the widespread sense of insecurity in Central and Eastern Europe. It can reinforce efforts in the framework of the Western European Union, NATO and the partnership for peace, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the stability pact, to increase security and stability throughout Europe. The Union and the associated countries have a common interest in preventing conflicts related to issues such as borders and frontiers, and should consult frequently on foreign and security policy issues of mutual concern.

Achievements in this field of cooperation have been considerable. The multilateral political dialogue with the associated countries is being intensified starting with the Conclusions of the Copenhagen European

Council June 1993 and aiming now at acquainting the associated countries with procedures used within the EU and at the same time giving them an opportunity to be associated with Union actions.

The General Affairs Council in its 7 March 1994 meeting decided not only to further reinforce and broaden the dialogue at all levels – but also to open the possibility for the associated countries to align themselves with certain CFSP activities of the Union: statements, demarches and joint actions. Practical guidelines on implementation of this were drawn up in consultation with the associated countries in October 1994.

This process can be built upon, and cooperation made more focused and substantive, by identifying priority themes at the beginning of each Presidency.

Justice and home affairs

The “Berlin Declaration” agreed by the Ministers for justice and home affairs participating in the Berlin Conference of 8 September 1994 emphasizes that, in view of the prospect of accession of the associated countries to the EU, cooperation in combating all forms of organized crime takes on particular significance. Along the lines of the "Berlin Declaration", the EU envisages cooperation with the associated countries, *inter alia*, in the following areas:

- illicit drug trade
- theft of and illegal trade in radioactive and nuclear material
- illegal immigration networks
- illegal transfer of motor vehicles.

The EU will identify those areas where cooperation with the associated countries is especially urgent or especially promising, either from their standpoint or that of the Union. A comprehensive package of measures with proposals for how cooperation in the individual areas named in the Berlin Declaration should proceed, should be submitted to the European Council under the French Presidency. Cooperation in the areas of asylum and immigration should also be taken forward, in particular by establishing links between the associated countries and CIREA and CIREFI (the asylum and immigration "clearing houses").

Environment

Environmental issues are of vital importance to both the associated countries and the European Union. Many of these problems can only be solved at the continental level and therefore close cooperation is necessary.

To this end the EU underlines the importance of attaining the objectives set out at the meeting of the Council (Environment) with the environment ministers of the associated countries on 5 October 1994 in Luxembourg.

The EU underlines the importance of the "Environment for Europe" process and will cooperate closely in preparing the Sofia conference in 1995.

An intensive exchange of information on environmental policy, strategies for sustainable development, the incorporation of environmental requirements into other policies, legislation at European Union and national level and initiatives taken in other international fora should be established within an appropriate framework. Priorities for a programme aiming at the convergence of environmental policies and the approximation of environmental legislation of the associated countries should be evaluated.

Close cooperation by the associated countries with the European Environment Agency in accordance with Article 19 of its regulation and in the future joining the agency will help to achieve the objectives set out in Luxembourg.

It is of special importance to ratify and implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change as rapidly as possible in particular with the aim of stabilizing, limiting, or reducing CO₂ emissions in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and to cooperate closely in order to pave the way for a possible extension of the commitments under the Convention at the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Berlin in 1995.

Furthermore the EU underlines the need to integrate environmental requirements into national and European transport policies in the light of the recommendations and goals set out by the Luxembourg October 5 ministerial meeting. The EU agrees to cooperate closely in the context of the preparations under way for the 1996 UNECE Conference on transport and environment, with a view to a positive outcome to the conference in terms of the conclusions reached in the October 5 ministerial meeting.

Assistance from the PHARE programme can be provided in order to help meet the objectives established jointly between the European Union and its partners. The European Union will encourage other donors and the international financial institutions to provide their support for this programme and to improve their cooperation in order to achieve synergy effects.

Transport/TEN

The integration of the associated countries into the Trans-European Networks is a key element in strengthening their economic and political ties to the Union.

In light of this, the group of personal representatives of the heads of state and government in the areas of transport and energy has addressed the question of the expansion of the TEN to neighbouring states, taking into account the relevant guidelines for the community area and the priorities of the neighbouring states. Their recommendation to intensify coordination procedures is an important step toward establishing the trans-European Networks beyond the Union.

The group recommended further work on the following projects:

- Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow (rail and road)
- Dresden-Prague (rail and road)
- Nuremberg-Prague (road)
- permanent connection over the Danube between Bulgaria and Romania (rail and road)
- Helsinki-St Petersburg-Moscow (rail and road)
- Trieste-Ljubljana-Budapest-Lviv-Kiev (rail and road)
- Russia-Belarus-Poland-EU (natural gas pipeline).
- Baltic Sea telematic platform and Baltic ring electricity network.

The Commission and the Member States will, in accordance with the conclusions of the group, continue to examine intensively which corridors and projects shall be given priority and how they can be completed. For this the available financial instruments are to be used in the most efficient way possible. This applies to European Investment Bank loans, the PHARE programme and cross-border cooperation in connection with the INTERREG II Community initiative.

Particular attention should be given to the special TEN window announced by the EIB, which is also relevant for projects in the associated countries. Plans in the areas of transport, telecommunication and

energy, as well as trans-European plans in the environmental area, would come under this facility.

Culture, Education and Training

General

The fundamental goal of not only expanding cooperation with the associated countries economically and politically but developing it also in the areas of education, youth and cultural affairs, is supported by the Member States of the Community, the European Parliament, and the Commission. While adequate contributions by the Community are called for, it is for the Member States to decide to pursue the deepening of their relationship with the associated countries in accordance with their goals and perceptions of the possibilities for doing so. All activities must take under full consideration the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Union.

Culture

The Commission has been requested to identify all current and planned programmes of the Community and its Member States as well as international organizations with the associated countries in the area of cultural affairs with a view to creating greater transparency and coordination.

The new cultural programmes presented by the Commission and still under discussion could be opened for third countries, and appropriate participation by the associated countries should be possible in accordance with the Council Decision of 27 July 1994.

The Europe Agreements as well as bilateral agreements are setting out a wide range of possibilities to intensify cultural cooperation including *inter alia*: conservation of cultural and architectural heritage, training, translation of literary works, exchange of non commercial works of art, film production and cooperation in the audiovisual sector, and cooperation to prevent illegal trading of cultural goods.

Education

The Community programmes Leonardo and Socrates and the Youth for Europe Programme should be opened, to the associated countries on the basis of the Council decision of 27 July 1994. Equally important is the Tempus programme to support the restructuring of higher education, and vocational training.

European academic institutions should draw the associated countries step by step into their work, and increasing cooperation with Europe-focused institutions in the associated countries should be considered.

Bilateral cooperation in areas concerned - for example the structural reform of vocational training and the development of new qualifications required by the reform of the economic system - is of special importance. Furthermore bilateral efforts to promote the exchange of university students and professors and the joint development of curricula could be intensified as well as the creation of school partnerships and the promotion of European language learning.

Training of Administrators

The training activities of the Commission as well as significant national efforts to provide diplomats and other government officials from the associated countries with the necessary political, legal and related training in European affairs should be strengthened and expanded.

Information

There is a need among Member States of the EU and the associated countries to have a better knowledge of each others' societies. Therefore expansion and deepening of information efforts are necessary, as of course are full respect of free broadcasting, freedom of the press and free circulation of ideas.

Financial cooperation

The main role of EU financial assistance under the PHARE programme will be to:

- help the associated countries to absorb the *acquis communautaire*;
- complete market reforms and the medium-term restructuring of their economies and societies so as to create the conditions required for future membership.

PHARE needs to be endowed appropriately, taking into account the restructuring of priorities foreseen in this strategy. Flexible and indicative multi-annual planning will be introduced both in general and country by country. The focus will be on a comprehensive framework for the next five years. The Edinburgh financial perspectives, including the planned rates of increase and the increases resulting from EU expansion, will continue to apply for the PHARE programme.

The 1995 budgetary estimates for the PHARE programme will serve as minimum level also for the next years until 1999. The Council will review the rates of increase which it views in principle as desirable - after the Essen European Council. This will increase the effectiveness of the PHARE programme to assist the integration process leading to accession taking account of the views of the associated countries. The PHARE programme will support measures to promote the approximation of laws and standards as well as the economic reform process and the development of adequate infrastructure. In order to assist infrastructure development, the European Union will increase the 15% limit on PHARE financing agreed at Copenhagen to 25%.

The EIB is invited to develop its lending operations within its present guaranteed loans ceiling, especially in the area of infrastructure investment, as a contribution to the preparation of accession. It should, wherever feasible, explore the possibilities of a close cooperation with PHARE and the international financial institutions.

Intra-regional cooperation and promotion of bon voisinage

For the success of this strategy, intra-regional cooperation between the associated countries themselves and their immediate neighbours is of particular importance. The Pact for Stability emphasizes these aspects from the political and security angles and many practical examples of cooperation between neighbouring countries are funded with the PHARE programme. Such cooperation is also important for promoting regional economic development.

The EU encourages the associated countries to expand the bilateral free trade relationship they each have with the Union to their relations with one another. In this context moves to create a Central European Free Trade Area point in the right direction.

To further promote intra-regional cooperation which will contribute to the realization of the Pact for Stability, the EU will:

- launch a new initiative to promote trade in the region. This will include support for the introduction of modern trade legislation where necessary, transfer of European Union know-how in export promotion and marketing, support for spreading European Union norms and technical assistance for the development of export insurance and guarantee schemes;
- establish a programme of regional cooperation and *bon voisinage*, in accordance with the arrangements agreed by the General Affairs Council on 31 October, to promote multi-annual, multi-country cooperation in land and maritime border regions encompassing European Union-CEEC, CEEC-CEEC and CEEC-CIS countries in areas such as transport, utilities, environment, economic development, human resources and agriculture. It will be used to cofinance actions with Interreg along EU-CEEC borders. In the allocations

between the eligible countries due account will be taken of the need not to reduce the efforts already envisaged for regions bordering the present Community. In appropriate circumstances, grants from this fund can be combined, in a coherent and effective way, with funds from EIB, EBRD and the World Bank to provide substantial, coordinated and rapid disbursing support for projects related to regional cooperation and *bon voisinage*. The Council invites the Commission to present a report on this issue in due time before the Pact of Stability meeting;

– develop a programme to eliminate delays at frontiers.

The European Union, in deciding this strategy, reemphasizes the commitment of the Union to the accession of the associated countries while recognizing the scale of the effort required for the necessary adjustments to developing Union policies. This strategy is designed to help them meet this challenge of implementing the route plan to accession.