

Latvia's position on EU enlargement (23 September 1998)

Caption: On 23 September 1998, the Latvian Government sets out its position on the enlargement of the European Union and emphasises the country's commitment to comply with the accession criteria.

Source: Position of Latvia regarding the EU enlargement till the Vienna Summit of the Council of Europe determined, 23 September 1998. [ON-LINE]. [Riga]: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, [23.05.2005]. Disponible sur <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/1998/sep/1851/?print=on>.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/latvia_s_position_on_eu_enlargement_23_september_1998-en-6753ebfc-cec6-432f-b2e6-33b9e91cdeda.html

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Position of Latvia regarding the EU enlargement till the Vienna Summit of the Council of Europe determined (23 September 1998)

On September 9-10 meeting of the ambassadors of Latvia to the EU member states and associated states was held. During the meeting the officials defined the position of Latvia regarding the EU enlargement till the Vienna Summit of the Council of Europe. On September 23 the ambassadors of the EU member and associated states to Latvia were informed about the position of Latvia. The position of Latvia is based on the following fundamental notions:

EU membership is and will be the highest priority of the government of Latvia, as it is a possibility to ensure long-term, stable and democratic development of the state of Latvia, increase of prosperity of the nation, it gives an aim orientation for the reform process in Latvia and provides Latvia with the possibility to contribute to the stability of the region.

The Luxembourg decisions declare that a state may be invited for accession negotiations as soon as it complies with the accession criteria:

- 1st Copenhagen criterion: stable institutional system granting democracy, power of law, observation of human and minority rights;
- 2nd Copenhagen criteria: functioning market economy and competitiveness in the EU internal market;
- 3rd Copenhagen criteria: ability to acquire the EU *acquis communautaire*. Support to the aims of political, economic and monetary union;
- Madrid criteria: adequate and functioning state administration system.

Latvia considers as significant preservation of constant accession criteria, as well as observation of the enlargement process continuity principle - this principle would be confirmed by a Vienna Summit decision to start negotiations with another one of candidate states implementing the accession criteria.

Both the Commission and the presidency with the member states have stated that invitations of a candidate depends on a positive report of the Commission. Since publication of the EU opinion in July, 1997, Latvia has achieved considerable progress in implementation of the criteria and is ready for accession negotiations with the EU in the nearest future. Invitation of Latvia for the accession negotiations would prove credibility of the Luxembourg decisions.

Already the Commission Avis of the previous year asserts that Latvia complies with the first (political) Copenhagen criteria. During the last year situation has considerably improved. Significant practical work in promotion of the society integration by simplification of the naturalisation procedure and abolition of certain professional limitations has been done. In the nearest time elaboration of the Society Integration Strategy of Latvia will be concluded. Decision on invitation of Latvia for negotiations would facilitate further integration of the society.

Macroeconomic stability of Latvia despite the Russian crisis proves that movement of Latvia towards the EU has been the right decision. Invitation of Latvia will help to secure Latvia against instability which can be caused by possible expansion of the Russian crisis to neighbouring countries.