

# 2007

## Newsletter



Edition 1

### News ticker

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### About this Newsletter

This Newsletter complements the textbook *EU Concours: Guideline to the European Union*.

With this newsletter we provide our customers with up-to-date news on the European Union, its institutions and policies. Doing so, we strive to streamline our information to the requirements of the Concours.

This Newsletter includes references to the corresponding chapters in the EU Guideline and ranks the information provided (★ - ★★★★★: the more stars, the more relevant the information).

To always stay informed, regularly check <http://www.viaeuropa.de> for latest updates!

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### Accession of Bulgaria and Romania



As of January 1, 2007, Bulgaria and Romania have become new member states of the European Union.

#### Current number of member states of the EU and the EEA

The total number of member states of the European Union now therefore amounts up to 27.

Romania and Bulgaria also became Members of the European Economic Area (EEA). The number of EEA member states rose to 30 accordingly (27 EU Member States + three EFTA states Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

====> *Chapter 2.2.1 Accession of Romania and Bulgaria*

#### New Commissioners from Romania and Bulgaria

On Dec. 12, 2006 The European Parliament approved the candidates from Romania and Bulgaria for the post of new Commissioners following the decision of the Commission President and the Council of the European Union:

Meglana Kuneva (BG) – Consumer Protection

Leonard Orban (RO) – Multilingualism

As a consequence of the new appointments, it is expected that former DG SANCO will be split into two parts: a new DG SAN for health (Commissioner: Markos Kyprianou) and DG CO for consumer protection (Commissioner: Meglena Kuneva).

====> *Chapter 5.2.4 Structure (of the Commission)*

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### EU-budget 2007 adopted



On 14. December 2006, the President of the European Parliament declared the Budget 2007 definitively adopted.

The Budget 2007 is the first budget within the new financial framework 2007-2013, and the first budget covering a Union with 27 member states.

Commitment authorisations for next year are set at €126.5bn, equalling 1.08 % of the member states' GNI. This represents an increase of 5.0% over 2006 levels in commitment authorisations. Payment authorisations are set at €115.5bn, equalling 0.99 % of the member states' GNI. This represents an increase of 3.2% over 2006 levels in payment authorisations.

====> *Chapter 5.2.4 Structure (of the Commission)*

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## Germany assumes Council presidency



**Germany will take over the Council presidency from Finland as of 1 January, 2007.**

Predecessor: Finland (July – December 2006)  
Current presidency: Germany (January – June 2007)  
Following presidency: Portugal (July – December 2007)

One of the German presidency's highlights will be discussion on the future of the Constitutional Treaty. The priority areas of the Finnish presidency were: the future of the EU, competitiveness, external relations, and justice and home affairs.

It is expected that the German presidency sets a concrete timetable as to the next steps to be taken to "save" at least portions of the Constitutional Treaty. Another highlight of the presidency will be the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the treaties of Rome in order to confirm the values of the European integration process. On 25 March 1957, the treaties on the EEC and Euratom were signed in Rome. Together with the ESCS, they formed the predecessors of today's Union: the three European Communities.

====> *Chapter 1.6. EEC and EURATOM*

====> *Chapter 5.2.4 Structure (President of the Council)*

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## REACH regulation adapted



**After three years of negotiations, the Council adopted by unanimity the REACH Regulation on Dec. 18, 2006.**

The REACH regulation shall ensure the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals), the cornerstone of the new European chemicals policy (3664/06) which replaces around 40 legislative instruments currently in force. The new regulation will enter into force on 1 June 2007.

====> *Chapter 11.9.3 Measures (REACH)*

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## 23rd official language of the EU



**Irish (Gaelic) is to become new official language of the EU as of 1.1.2007.**

With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, the number of new official languages will rise from 20 to 23 as of 1 January 2007: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, Swedish.

====> *Chapter 2.4.4 Community languages*

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## Slovenia joins the Eurozone



**On on Jan 1, 2007 the Eurozone will be enlarged to include Slovenia.**

This will bring the total number of members of the Eurozone to 13: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain

====> *Chapter 11.2.3 European Monetary System II*

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## New de minimis rule on state subsidies ★

**The European Commission has adopted a Regulation exempting small subsidies from the obligation to notify them in advance for clearance by the Commission under EC Treaty state aid rules.**

Under the new Regulation, aid of up to €200.000, granted over any period of three years will not be considered as state aid (the former rule set the ceiling at €100.000). Loan guarantees will also be covered to the extent that the guaranteed part of the loan does not exceed €1.5 million.

====> *Chapter 11.5.2 Current Policy Focus (Subsidies)*

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## European Institute for Gender Equality ★

**The European Parliament adopted a second-reading report on Dec. 14, 2006, based on an agreement with the Council and the Commission, which will enable the new European Institute for Gender Equality to start work in 2007.**

The Institute's objective is to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all Community policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, and to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. Following a Council decision of 1 December 2006, the Institute will be based in Vilnius (Lithuania).

====> *Chapter 11.5.2 Current Policy Focus (Subsidies)*

Read more information  
in our textbook  
***EU Concours: Guideline to the  
European Union***

The greatest care was taken and scientific sources were referred to in the preparation of this Newsletter.

Nevertheless, as errors cannot be entirely ruled out the authors decline any liability for content and any associated consequences at this point.

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