



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **Bulgaria and Romania set to join the European Union**

Today the Treaty of Accession with Bulgaria and Romania was signed at a special ceremony held in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The signature of the Treaty of Accession by Bulgaria and Romania paves the way for the ratification procedures that will formalise their membership of the Union on 1 January 2007.

Bulgaria and Romania are part of the same irreversible and inclusive enlargement process as the ten countries who joined the Union last year. Their accession will complete the fifth and largest enlargement in the Union's history. This represents an important further step on the path towards a wider Europe of peace, democracy, stability and prosperity.

Today's ceremony marks the completion of a long process of accession preparations and negotiations, which was launched by the European Council in Luxembourg in December 1997. Considerable efforts have been made by Bulgaria and Romania to bring their laws, regulatory frameworks and administrative practices into line with the *acquis* of the Union.

# **P R E S S**

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At today's signing ceremony, speeches were delivered by Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER, President of the European Council, Mr Josep BORRELL FONTELLES, President of the European Parliament, Mr José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission, Mr Simeon SAXE-COBOURG, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria and Mr Traian BĂSESCU, President of Romania.

With the signature of the Treaty, Bulgaria and Romania must now focus on their final preparations for membership and strengthen their efforts in order to be in a position to fully implement the acquis by 1 January 2007. The Union will follow this process closely. The respect by Bulgaria and Romania of their commitments undertaken in the course of the negotiations are essential for them to benefit fully from EU membership.

As of 26 April 2005, the Union will be welcoming Bulgaria and Romania as active observers in the work of the Council and its preparatory bodies.