

Tuesday 17 June 2008

In accordance with the Decision on the European Year, the Commission will draw up common guidelines in the Strategic Framework Document (SFD) which will set the key priorities for the implementation of activities relating to the European Year, including minimum standards in terms of participation in national bodies and actions (*see Annex, Part II, point 2 of the Decision*).

The SFD is addressed to the National Implementing Bodies (NIBs) responsible for defining the national programmes for the European Year and for selecting individual actions to be proposed for Community funding, and to other actors concerned.

In that context, the Commission will underline the importance of facilitating access by all NGOs, including small and medium-sized organisations. With a view to ensuring the widest possible access, the NIBs can decide not to request any co-financing and instead to fully fund certain actions.

Adoption by Slovakia of the single currency on 1 January 2009 *

P6_TA(2008)0287

European Parliament legislative resolution of 17 June 2008 on the proposal for a Council decision in accordance with Article 122(2) of the Treaty on the adoption by Slovakia of the single currency on 1 January 2009 (COM(2008)0249 — C6-0198/2008 — 2008/0092(CNS))

(2009/C 286 E/39)

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the Council (COM(2008)0249),
- having regard to the Commission Convergence Report 2008 (COM(2008)0248) as regards Slovakia and the European Central Bank (ECB) Convergence Report of May 2008,
- having regard to the Recommendation for a Council Decision abrogating Decision 2005/182/EC on the existence of an excessive deficit in Slovakia (SEC(2008)0572),
- having regard to its resolution of 12 July 2007 on the 2007 annual report on the eurozone ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 June 2007 on improving the method for consulting Parliament in procedures relating to enlargement of the euro area ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the enlargement of the euro zone ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Council Decision 2003/223/EC of 21 March 2003 on an amendment to Article 10(2) of the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its position of 13 March 2003 on the recommendation of the European Central Bank for a proposal for a Council decision on an amendment to Article 10(2) of the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank ⁽⁵⁾,

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0348.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 146 E, 12.6.2008, p. 251.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 298 E, 8.12.2006, p. 249.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 83, 1.4.2003, p. 66.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 61 E, 10.3.2004, p. 374.

Tuesday 17 June 2008

- having regard to Article 122(2) of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C6-0198/2008),
 - having regard to Rule 51 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A6-0231/2008),
- A. whereas Slovakia has complied with the Maastricht criteria in accordance with Article 121 of the EC Treaty and the Protocol on the convergence criteria referred to therein,
- B. whereas a delegation from its Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs visited Slovakia to assess the readiness of that country to enter the euro area, the first time such a visit has taken place,
- C. whereas ten years after the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union, experience has shown that the incentive to undertake structural reform decreases after joining the euro area, and that the issue of sustainability has increased in importance,
- D. whereas the President of the Ecofin Council has written a letter to the Council, meeting in the composition of Heads of State or Government, presenting the measures and policy commitments taken by the Slovak Government to ensure the sustainability of convergence,
1. Approves the Commission proposal;
 2. Favours the adoption of the euro by Slovakia on 1 January 2009;
 3. Notes that Article 121 of the EC Treaty defines the achievement of a high degree of sustainable convergence by reference to the fulfilment by each Member State of the following criteria: the achievement of a high degree of price stability; the sustainability of the government's financial position; the observance of the normal fluctuation margins provided for by the exchange rate mechanism; and the durability of convergence achieved by the Member State and of its participation in the exchange-rate mechanism of the European Monetary System being reflected in the long-term interest-rate levels;
 4. Notes that the ECB's 2008 Convergence Report identifies risks concerning the sustainability of the low inflation rate achieved and urges the necessary steps to be taken to avoid inflation;
 5. Is concerned about the discrepancies between the convergence reports of the Commission and the ECB as regards the sustainability of inflation;
 6. Recommends that the Slovak Government set up an observatory to monitor the price of a selected number of basic goods on a weekly basis so as to fight false perceptions about price increases;
 7. Calls on the Slovak Government to ensure the continuation of necessary structural reforms in labour, services and product markets, ensuring, in particular, increased labour mobility and investment in human capital; calls on the Slovak Government to ensure competition, particularly in sensitive sectors such as energy;
 8. Calls on the Slovak Government to ensure, with the cooperation of the Slovak central bank, a stable low-inflation environment, which can be achieved through further fiscal consolidation, and a sufficiently tight fiscal policy with the aim of balancing the budget in the medium term; calls on the social partners in Slovakia to keep wage growth in line with productivity growth in the foreseeable future;
 9. Calls on the Eurogroup to improve coordination and to monitor the effective implementation of the policy commitments taken by euro area Member States towards the sustainability of convergence;

Tuesday 17 June 2008

10. Emphasises that taxation policies of Member States participating in the euro area need to be consistent with the principles of good governance in tax matters;
 11. Reiterates its strongly held opinion that the Council and the Commission should adopt the position that an excessive deficit procedure concerning a Member State must have been closed before compliance with the Maastricht criteria is assessed as prescribed in Article 2 of the Protocol on the convergence criteria; regrets that the Commission has, once again, failed correctly to apply the EC Treaty in this regard;
 12. Believes that all relevant measures taken by a Member State applying for membership of the euro area, after the publication of the convergence reports of the Commission and the ECB, should be taken into account by the Council on the basis of the relevant Parliament resolution and integrated into the monitoring process;
 13. Calls on the Member States to allow the Commission to assess compliance with the Maastricht criteria on the basis of definite, current, reliable, and high-quality data;
 14. Is concerned about low support for the euro among Slovak citizens; calls on the authorities of Slovakia, therefore, to step up the public information campaign aimed at explaining the benefits of the single currency and undertake all necessary steps in order to minimise price increases during the changeover period;
 15. Takes note of the efforts undertaken by all parties to improve the conditions under which Parliament exercises its right of consultation under Articles 121 and 122 of the EC Treaty in terms of information and timing and welcomes the initiative of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs to organise a study visit to Slovakia to make its own assessment of the situation;
 16. Calls on the Commission and the ECB to consider all aspects when recommending the final exchange rate for the Slovak koruna;
 17. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
 18. Asks the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;
 19. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission, the European Central Bank, the Eurogroup and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
-