

## EC stays aloof to Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area and the Eurozone

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***The European Commission may express reservations over Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen free-travel zone and the Eurozone because of the endemic corruption in the country, France-Presse reports quoting diplomatic sources.***

EC's draft report, which may still be amended until its approval on Wednesday, highlights the "numerous faults" of the Bulgarian judicial system, "the lack of will" and "lack of capacity" of Bulgarian authorities to deal with corruption, Darik Radio announced.

This situation "may have consequences" for the country's accession to the Schengen passport-free travel area which currently includes 24 countries /22 of all 27 EU Member States plus Island and Norway/, the draft report says. This level of corruption also decreases Bulgaria's chances to adopt on time the common European currency.

"This is Bulgaria's last chance", one of the sources comments unveiling that Member States, lately willing to stand up for their neighbour, are now feeling less and less clement to Sofia.

EC has already frozen hundreds of millions of euros under EU pre-accession funds for Bulgaria and may further impose financial sanctions on the country. Romania, however, which is also under Brussels strict monitoring since its accession to the EU in January 2007, is likely to avoid sanctions, France-Presse adds.

"The Commission differentiates between the two countries we should not think that everything is running smoothly in Romania. Romania has not made any progress, it is only marking time and Bulgaria, however, has regressed", a diplomatic source states quoted by France-Presse.