

## EU COULD SHORTEN THE PROCEDURE FOR ROMANIA AND BULGARIA

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Published at: 30-05-2006

Source: [EUexpands](#)

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The EU would envisage a shortcut of procedures giving the EU Commission the final word on Romania and Bulgaria EU accession in its analysis in autumn, possibly in September.

This should be designed in order to give enough time to those member states that did not yet ratify the Accession Treaty of Romania and Bulgaria to do so in due course without waiting for the EU Summit in December.

Based on the EU Commission assessment, the ratification of the Treaty could continue and both countries need to have the green light of heads of states and government mid December in order to enter the EU.

Romanian sources are indicating that another scenario is also possible. While the complete ratification of the Treaty is indispensable to the accession, the green light given by the EU Council may be not. This other scenario would be to give the EU Commission the final word and if its assessment says that Bucharest and Sofia could join the EU in 2007, their accession should be possible without the blessing of 25 EU heads of state.

This would be however the very first time when the EU Commission is given the power of decision in the name of the member states on such sensitive political matter.

The scenario could nevertheless be feasible if everything goes according to the plan, as the heads of state have no new decision to take.

If the EU Commission sees no reason to delay the accession of these countries to 2008, then the EU Council would just restate the accession date as being 1 January 2007 without deciding anything new.

Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu stated recently that already the June Summit should clearly specify that Romania could join the EU on 1 January 2007.

"Given our country's progress, I think we are capable of convincing the Union of our ability to join the 25 without creating any problems," he added.

He would also like a confirmation of the fact that corruption fighting track record has improved in

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Romania, consequently avoiding the delay of the EU accession.