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Romanian and Bulgarian officials did not manage to get any political information concerning their chances to join the EU with or without the restrictive safeguard clauses in 2007. Different officials from the acceding countries, including Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev have been in Brussels this week.

In the mean time, the European press gave alarming signals saying that EU doesn't bother to deny any more the tactical mistake to have promised EU integration to Bucharest and Sofia by 2008 the latest.

And the EU Commission held the final consultation with both countries in view to the crucial report of 26 September that should give these countries a final scenario of accession.

Up to now, it is somehow clear that Romania may face safeguard clause in the agriculture sector mainly and Bulgaria would have to deal with the justice and home affairs clause.

The statement made by EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini Wednesday according to which both should join the EU without restrictive measures showed that the Brussels executive is under member states' pressure to use these measures.

Frattini's stance also points to the fact that the justice areas, considered as not so worrying in Romania, maybe become a "red flag" again since no big corruption cases have been brought to justice so far.

Officially Romanian efforts are praised in Brussels. Justice Minister Monica Macovei told press Thursday after a meeting with EU officials that the corruption fighting and the justice reform seem encouraging and should be irreversible.

### **After 26 September report**

Three member states that haven't yet ratified the Accession Treaty say they first need to get reassured by the EU Commission report before doing so.

It is expected that France, Germany and Denmark to then ratify the document by the end of the year.

On a separate development, the same report would be brought to the attention of the European heads of

states and governments during the informal Council in Lahti, on 20 October.

If the EU Commission does not make any "negative" recommendation, the Council would just take note and accept the EU entry of those countries.

But Geoffrey Van Orden, rapporteur for Bulgaria in the European Parliament told Bulgarian press that the final decision won't be taken until mid-December.

"I don't think they are necessarily going to take a decision at the informal Council meeting in Lahti, scheduled for 20 October , he said. We will not know the final outcome until the final moment. So it will be premature to say that it's cut and drive."

### **Romania's fault?**

Georgi Gotev, the director of the government press center "Bulgaria in EU" said that the announcement made by Geoffrey van Orden is "surprising".

Gotev thinks in the last few days something happened that changed the EU mood and this is not Bulgaria's fault, but Romania's.

Gotev added that Romanian president Traian Basescu made an unacceptable in the diplomacy statement and he insulted the British by saying that if UK poses restrictions on it's labor market for Romanians, Romania will do the same for the British.