



Cabinet of the State Secretary for
European Affairs

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Dear Sir,

Referring to your e-mail concerning the ratification of the Treaty relating to the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union, I can inform you that Belgium has launched the parliamentary procedure.

The draft law has been adopted by the Belgian Government and has been transmitted to the Belgian Federal Parliament on 10 February 2006. In this context, I have to inform you that the Accession Treaty is, according to the Belgian law, a mixed agreement, which means that it must be ratified by the Federal Parliament (Chamber of Representatives and Senate) and the Assemblies of the federated entities (Regions and Communities).

The ratification process is ruled by the different legislative assemblies. They will all adopt the respective legislative act on the approval of the Accession Treaty at the appropriate time, according to their own rules and on the basis of their sovereign judgment.

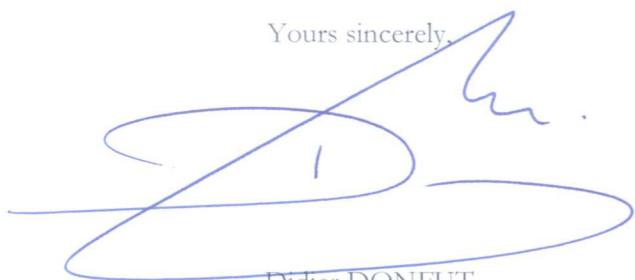
As it has been decided by the European Council in December 2004, Bulgaria will become member of the European Union on 1 January 2007, unless the Council decides to postpone the accession by one year. The decision of the Council will be based, among other things, on the regular monitoring reports of the European Commission. In a report of October 25, 2005, the Commission clearly identified

the areas in which Bulgaria had to intensify its efforts. Indeed, it is not only important to adopt the "acquis communautaire", it is even more crucial to implement this on the ground.

A new evaluation report will be issued on 17 May 2006. This report will be an important element for the Council in order to take a decision on the possible postponement of the accession. It is now up to Bulgaria to increase its efforts in the field of the implementation of the acquis.

Finally, let me stress that for the Belgian government, the ratification process and the decision on the timing for accession are two distinct issues. The ratification process is now proceeding with the support of the government and independently of what is happening in the evaluation process of Bulgaria's efforts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a smaller loop and a short horizontal stroke.

Didier DONFUT
State Secretary for European Affairs