Crunch time for EU aspirants

The European Commission is expected to recommend that Bulgaria and Romania be allowed to ioin the EU on January 1, but Brussels will likely impose so-called "safeguard clauses" - limiting their access to EU markets, border regimes and other common EU policies

COUNTRIES WAITING TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

CROATIA: Accession talks started Oct 2005 - could be completed in five years

BOSNIA

ROMANIA

SERBIA

BULGARIA

BI ACK SEA

ALBANIA

MONTENEGRO

MACEDONIA Awaiting date for

accession talks Potential candidates once FU

ROMANIA Population: 21.6 million BULGARIA Population: 7.7 million

> GNI per capita: \$3,830 Unemployment: 7.0%

Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu praised by EU for his fight against corruption - numerous criminal investigations

into activities of senior officials and members of judiciary underway

TURKEY

Accession talks started Oct 2005 - could be completed in 10 years

GNI per capita: \$3,450

Unemployment: 13.7% Government of Prime

Minister Seraei Stanishev has faced criticism for failing to make sufficient

progress in campaign against corruption and organized crime

Sources: EU. World Bank

Pictures: Associated Press

criteria met, e.g. establishing rule of law and market economy

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