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Estonia is about to joint the OECD and is increasingly close to the eurozone

On 27 May, Estonia will be the first former USSR republic to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Tallinn also expects to become the newest member of the eurozone on 1 January 2011. Despite a deep economic crisis in 2009, the Estonian economy is one of the best-developed and competitive from among the new EU member states. Moreover, according to recent European Commission forecasts, Estonia's GDP next year may achieve the highest growth across the entire community.

The secretary general of the OECD announced on 10 May that Estonia, along with Slovenia and Israel, would join this organisation made up of over thirty of the best-developed world economies. Membership in the OECD, an organisation of a primarily consultative and advisory nature, is mainly a matter of prestige for Estonia. Over the three-year accession process, Estonia has met a number of requirements covering for example the liberalisation of some sectors of the economy. Estonia was ranked 12th among EU member states in the competitiveness ranking published by the World Economic Forum published on 9 May, and was in the lead of the new member states; its neighbours Latvia and Lithuania were ranked 20th and 22nd respectively.

Although Estonian GDP fell by 15% in 2009, the country has succeeded in limiting its budget deficit by cutting state expenses and raising taxes and thus meeting the economic criteria necessary to join the eurozone. According to the most recent European Commission forecast, Estonia's GDP will slightly increase this year, while its forecasted 3.8% growth in 2011 may be the highest in the EU. <pas>