



Institute for World Economics  
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

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# Facing Challenges: Selected Key Issues of Economic Transformation and European Cooperation

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## FOREWORD

The second bilateral workshop of the Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (IWE) and the Economic Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IE) was held on 16th September 2005 within the cooperation framework of the Hungarian and the Bulgarian Academies. The set of the traditionally existing forms of close research collaboration between IE and IWE, regular visits, mutual publication opportunities, joint participation in various international events, *etc.*, has been supplemented by organizing annual bilateral workshops since 2004.

This workshop covered topics related to certain aspects of preparations for EU membership and experiences with EU accession. It focused on labour-market issues, economic restructuring and the role of small and medium-sized enterprises. A core topic was devoted to agriculture and the different aspects of competitiveness, including the role of foreign direct investment in the economic development of both countries. During the debate speakers did not only concentrate on the experiences with EU accession and membership in the Union but analysed the implications of “Eastern” enlargement on the future of the European integration in depth.

We are convinced that the cooperation between our institutions will remain fruitful and become even more intensive as Bulgaria enters the EU, hopefully as early as at the beginning of 2007. This cooperation is set to be continued. The framework agreement supporting the continuation of the bilateral cooperation between IWE and IE is expected to be signed by the two Academies very soon. We are also confident that these workshop proceedings will serve our objectives to let the wider public know the most important issues emerging during and after EU accession in our countries and to provide useful or, at least, interesting readings.

*The Editors*