Cyprus's application for membership

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Cyprus belongs in Europe and the cultural, historical, economic and political links between Cyprus and the Member States of the European Union imply that it qualifies for membership of the European Union. The report by Jan Willem BERTENS (ELDR, NL) supported the opinion of the European Commission and the conclusions of the European Councils of Corfu and Essen and proposed a strategy leading to accession. Continuing peace efforts: the European Parliament hoped that the island would reunite as a sovereign, independent, twin-zone, twin-Community federation. In line with the policy of the European Union and the UNO, MEPs saw the island as a single entity under the authority of a single, legal, internationally-recognized government, which was why it trusted that the Secretary-General of the UNO would continue his efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement and called on the European Commission to continue its dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot community, so that the democratic forces in the northern part of the island were kept informed of the integration process under way. The committee felt that the mere fact of opening negotiations and accession itself could have a positive impact on accelerating the peace process in Cyprus. The accession of Cyprus is a separate process and the island should not be held hostage to relations between the Union and Turkey. The report reiterated that enlargement should be accompanied by institutional changes and took note of the Council's decision to start negotiations with the two countries six months after the close of the 1996 intergovernmental conference. However, it trusted that the accession of Cyprus and Malta would not depend on the results or lack of results of the conference and hoped that Cyprus would be granted observer status with the right to speak at the conference.