Malta's application for membership

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The report by Mrs Bernie MALONE (PSE, IRL) stressed the geopolitical and strategic importance of the island, the geographical position of which was such that it had been coveted by every power in history with ambitions to dominate the seas in the region. The Committee on Foreign Affairs acknowledged that the Maltese government was committed to a series of reforms which would allow negotiations on the accession of Malta to the European Union to commence and found that Malta offered every guarantee that human rights and freedoms would be respected. The Malone report starts by welcoming the progress made between Malta and the Commission during the stage preceding accession negotiations, which should constitute the unquestionable basis for a pre-accession strategy prior to negotiations proper. This approach implies a structured dialogue between Malta and the Union. Hence the call on the Commission to help ensure that this dialogue commences during the year and before the Euro-Mediterranean conference scheduled for November 1995. On the subject of the legal and economic obstacles raised by the European Commission, the report considers that they can be easily surmounted, given the real political will on both sides. As for the new financial protocol, which is really a de facto pre-accession prototol, it should be applied without delay. As with Cyprus, the committee called for Malta to be given observer status with the right to speak at the 1996 intergovernmental conference.