Agreement EU/Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia FYROM: negotiations for a stabilisation and association agreement

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The committee adopted the report by Johannes SWOBODA (PES, A) on the negotiations for a stabilisation and association agreement with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The committee felt that the negotiations were set to make an important contribution to the political consolidation and economic development of the country as well as to the establishment of a just international order in the region and that the process of regional cooperation also stood to benefit. The report also took the view that a future stabilisation and association agreement should contain an evolutionary clause holding out the prospect of EU membership to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and that the regional approach proposed by the EU for the countries of south-east Europe should receive material support through specific regional aid measures. It therefore advocated active EU regional aid and not only called for continuation of the multi-beneficiary, cross-border programmes under PHARE but also proposed a uniform stabilisation and partnership programme for the five countries of the western Balkans. The committee also highlighted the need for a specific programme to support interethnic initiatives and projects. Lastly, the report said that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should participate as an equal partner in the process of rebuilding Kosovo and expressed the hope that the dialogue now being conducted between Greece and FYROM within the UN would result as soon as possible in a name for the country which was acceptable to both sides.