Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

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The committee adopted the report by Geoffrey VAN ORDEN (EPP-ED, UK) on Bulgaria's application for membership of the EU and the state of the negotiations. The report stressed the importance of Bulgaria as a force for stability in the Balkans, and recognised the efforts made by its government in moving towards membership. It emphasised the need for the country to develop a functioning market economy, to tackle the legacy of environmental degradation (in particular the Kozloduy nuclear plant), to clamp down on corruption, and to develop an effective political and social infrastructure. It felt that Bulgaria needed to make further efforts to strengthen the rule of law and to improve the situation of minorities, in particular the Roma population. In conclusion, the report strongly recommended that the EU assist Bulgaria to make rapid progress towards accession, while recognising the difficulties of an evolving "acquis communautaire".