Agreement EU/Croatia: negociations for a stabilisation and association agreement

2000/2244(COS) - 28/11/2000

The committee adopted the report by Alexandros BALTAS (PES, GR), welcoming the significant progress made by Croatia (including its ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as well as the change in the attitude of the Croat authorities to the international criminal court for ex-Yugoslavia). It also welcomed the opening at the Zagreb summit of negotiations to conclude a stabilisation and association agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Croatia which, together with the CARDS programme and measures by the EIB, would constitute one of the main instruments by which the EU contributed to Croatia's economic and social development. The committee stressed the importance of significantly increasing the assistance provided annually to Croatia, which should not average less than EUR 50m a year, and called on the Commission to do more to promote regional and cross-border cooperation. The report noted the statements by the Croatian Government confirming its intention to ensure transparency and visibility as regards the financial support it gave to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and called on the Croatian Government to work actively with the Sarajevo Government to strengthen the Bosnian state and preserve its multiethnic character. The Croatian Government was also congratulated on the progress it had made with regard to the return of refugees and urged to continue its efforts. Lastly, the report stressed the urgent need to ensure that Croatian citizens of Serb origin who were expelled from Krajina and wished to return could do so.