Poland: membership application and partnership, 8 April 1994

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The committee adopted the report by Jas GAWRONSKI (EPP-ED, I) which took the view that Poland was well on the way to joining the EU, perhaps in time for the 2004 European elections. The committee recognised that Polish farmers were the only ones in communist central Europe who had managed to keep privately-owned agriculture and this had led to structural difficulties such as farm fragmentation and over-employment. The Polish authorities and the Commission were urged to reach a compromise agreement on participation in the common agricultural policy on the basis of Commissioner Fischler's proposals for a "phasing-in" of direct payments that would gradually integrate the sector into the Community system. The report noted that unemployment at an official rate of 16% remained high, although it welcomed the proposals currently being drawn up to amend the labour laws to combat the problem. It said that the macroeconomic situation was generally encouraging and inflation and exports were showing clear signs of improvement. The committee also welcomed the "remarkable efforts" made by the Polish parliament to adapt national legislation to the EU "acquis" as quickly as possible. There was applause as well for the 2001 budget law which included provision for spending increases in sectors which were extremely important for accession, such as agriculture. Finally the committee stressed the importance of the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and Council was urged to come forward with more concrete measures, especially with regard to movement of goods and people, environmental protection and energy supplies.