Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

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The committee adopted the report by Ioannis SOULADAKIS (PES, GR) which took the view that Lithuania was making good progress and applauded the country's protection of the rights of ethnic minorities. However, the committee said that the functioning of some of Lithuania's institutions needed to be improved, notably the police and judiciary. Greater efforts should be made by both Lithuania and the EU to combat trafficking in women, and discrimination against homosexuals should be eliminated. The report said that the economic situation was good and provided an ever more solid base for long-term growth. However there were concerns about increasing unemployment, and the need to tackle the resulting social problems. The committee welcomed signs that Lithuania may take a decision on the closure date for unit 2 at the Ignalina nuclear power plant well before the end of 2004 and called for preparations for this to be stepped up. There was emphasis on Lithuania's right to determine its own security policy and support for its efforts to integrate "across the range of Euro-Atlantic security structures". Finally the report noted with satisfaction the "constructive role" played by Lithuania in enhancing cooperation with Russia in relation to the Kaliningrad region, while also calling for a strengthening of the EU's involvement in the dialogue.