Romania: membership application and partnership, 22 June 1995

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The committee adopted the report by Baroness Emma NICHOLSON (ELDR, UK) on Romania's progress towards EU accession. Children's rights were at the top of the agenda in the report, in which the committee supported the Romanian Government's clear statements and its action plan of 12 June 2001 to tackle root and branch reform of child health and development. The report praised the government's suspension of international adoption and its intention of making Romania a no-go area for traffickers. The committee noted, however, the grave concerns expressed in recent years over the significant abuse and neglect of children in state institutions and the growth of the street children phenomenon and trafficking. It stressed that Romania's incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was incomplete and that the secondary legislation on international adoption created a legal framework for child-trafficking world-wide. Other issues taken up in the report included the need to integrate minorities. The abolition of Article 200 of the Penal Code, which maintained discrimination in this field, was particularly welcomed. The committee also believed that a NATO decision to invite Romania to become a member of the Alliance would be an important contribution to regional stability. There was applause too for improvements in macro-economic stabilisation, although the committee stressed that major reforms were still needed and the importance of the government's medium term economic strategy for 2000-2004 was emphasised. There was also concern over the environment and the "weak infrastructural capacity" in this sector - in particular the nuclear and mining industry. Other issues taken up included the importance of the fight against corruption, interference in the judiciary and the "evident signals of reduction of freedom of information and of an independent media". Finally the committee reiterated Parliament's position that Romanian citizens did not require a visa to enter EU territory, while calling on the Bucharest government to provide a clear commitment on the fight against illegal immigration and residence.