

Pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey

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The committee adopted the report by Alain LAMASSOURE (EPP-ED, F) broadly approving the proposal under the consultation procedure, subject to a number of amendments. It stressed that financial aid to Turkey must focus on political and institutional reforms in order to contribute to the move towards democracy. Aid should be provided not just to the state and regional authorities but also for small-scale projects involving various bodies such as cooperatives, NGOs, etc. which could help to strengthen civil society. While agreeing that pre-accession aid to Turkey should be increased, in line with the doubling of such aid for the candidate countries under the Financial Perspective 2000-2006, the committee stipulated that this should be conditional upon Turkey remaining on course to consolidate the rule of law. In addition, if the management of pre-accession aid was to be gradually devolved to Turkey, the Turkish authorities should guarantee total transparency and the same standard of financial controls and guarantees as required in EU regulations in this field. Another amendment pointed to the need to ensure that the Turkish public was made aware of the projects and funding involved in the pre-accession aid, in order to raise the Community's profile and improve its image in Turkey. Lastly, the committee stressed the need for the Commission to coordinate its actions with other providers of financial assistance in Turkey, such as the EIB.