Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 08/11/2000 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

This Regular Report for 2000 on Lithuania largely follows the same structure of the Commission's 1997 Opinion and the subsequent regular reports; however, it differs from that used in the previous years on three minor points. Firstly, part of the present report assessing Lithuania's ability to assume the obligations of membership has been structured to follow the list of 29 negotiating chapters covering the acquis. Seecondly, this part has been broadened to cover also Lithuania's administrative capacity to apply the acquis under each of the negotiating chapters (previously discussed in a separate section of the report). Thirdly, the report includes, for the first time, a section assessing the progress made by Lithuania in translating the acquis into its official language. This report takes into consideration progress since 1999 and looks at whether intended reforms referred to in the 1999 report have been carried and also it examines new initiatives. With regard to the relations between Lithuania and the EU, it should be said that Lithuania has continued to implement the European Agreement correctly and contributed to the smooth functioning of the various joint institutions. Lithuania's trade with the EC has continued to increase. In March 1999, the Council mandated the Commission to open negotiations with the associated countries in view of new reciprocal concessions for agricultural products. The negotiations with Lithuania were concluded between negotiators in June 2000. As a consequence of the new agreement approximately three quarters of the bilateral trade of agricultural products will benefit from preferences. Negotiations were also opened in July 2000 relating to new reciprocal concessions in the field of fish and fishery products. As regards anti-dumping proceedings concerning products originating, inter alia, in Lithuania, it was decided, during the report period not to impose provisional anti-dumping duties on imports of certain cathode-ray colour television picture tubes and on imports of ammonium nitrate, because the dumping margins found were de minimis. With regard to Community aid, in the years 2000-2002 total financial assistance to Lithuania will amount annually to EUR 126 million from Phare, EUR 90 million from SAPARD, and between EUR 120 million and EUR 180 million from ISPA. Furthermore, Lithuania continues to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. Lithuania has made good progress in the area of public administration and the civil service. However, in continuing this reform, further issues need to be addressed, namely, the level of renumeration, additional training and improved inter-ministerial coordination. The reform of the legal system has significantly progressed with the adoption of the Civil Code and the Criminal Code. Macroeconomic stability has been preserved and it has managed to reduce the fiscal and external imbalances and state interference. Progress has also been made in the restructuring and liberalisation of the energy market, internal market, in particular with regards the free movement of goods (standardisation and market surveillance); competition (with the adoption of State aid law); taxation; audiovisual and telecommunications sectors; agriculture; environment;transport; justice and home affairs. However, as Lithuania reaches a more advanced level of alignment, greater attention needs to be paid to strengthening administrative capacity as well as further progress in areas such as financial control and judicial reform.