Turkey: membership application, 12 April 1987

2000/2014(COS) - 26/03/2003 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : to propose an update of the Accession Partnership and a significant increase of pre-accession support for Turkey. CONTENT : the Commission has proposed a revised Accession Partnership for Turkey as well as a significant increase of the EU pre-accession financial support. This partnership sets out the priority areas for further work as identified in the Commission's 2002 Regular Report on Turkey, such as the fight against torture, the alignment with the European Court of Human Rights judgements and the respect of fundamental freedoms (expression, association, religion). On the basis of this revised Accession Partnership, it is expected that Turkey will adopt a revised national programme for the adoption of the acquis (NPAA). The Accession Partnerships are policy documents adopted by the Council of the European Union, on a proposal by the Commission, which identify short and medium term priority objectives on which the candidate countries should focus their efforts in order to comply with the EU accession criteria. Concerning the enhanced political dialogue and political criteria, the priorities build on the Accession Partnership from 2001. They reflect the recent progress made in Turkey. Priorities include fight against torture in practice, the alignment with the European Court of Human Rights judgements and the respect of fundamental freedoms (expression, association, religion). As far as the economic criteria is concerned, the priorities from the previous AP largely remain valid. Concerning the third criterion, which requires Turkey to assume the obligations of the acquis, the priorities have been made more detailed to reflect the developments which have taken place since the adoption of the last Accession Partnership in March 2001. In addition, the Commission has adopted a communication on the strengthening of the Accession Strategy for Turkey. This communication presents the Commission's follow up to the recommendations of the Strategy Paper and the conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council of December 2002. As part of the strengthening of the Accession Strategy for Turkey, the Commission proposes to substantially increase financial assistance for the period 2004-2006. Pre-accession financial assistance should reach EUR 250 millions in 2004, EUR 300 millions in 2005 and EUR 500 million in 2006. In line with the approach followed for all candidate countries, financial assistance will be linked to the priorities set out in the Accession Partnership. The communication also proposes to enhance co-operation in other areas such as the political dialogue, the economic dialogue, justice and home affairs, maritime safety, the process of legislative scrutiny, extending the scope of the Customs Union as well as deepening of trade relations.