Signing and provisional application of the European Energy Charter Treaty

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The committee adopted the report on a Council decision concerning the European Energy Charter Treaty and its provisional application by the Community. The main policies and objectives of the Charter had been translated into a Treaty text, including the final act, the annexes and decisions as well as the protocol on energy efficiency and the associated environmental aspects. The text of the European Energy Charter Treaty would be opened for signature on 17 December in Lisbon. Given this timetable, the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy decided to refer the matter to the President of the EP and the Conference of Presidents in order to place this report at the beginning of the week of the December sitting in Strasbourg. If this request was met, the ESTEVAN report could be debated on Monday and the vote held on Tuesday, 13 December. In the legislative resolution in the ESTEVAN report, the committee proposed that Parliament should approve the Council decision on the signature of the Charter Treaty but reserve the right to give its assent to its provisional application. In the conclusions of the report, the Commission was urged to push ahead with the appropriate negotiations before the definitive application of the Treaty the resolve the grey areas it contained. In particular, the committee called for the development of the chapter of the Treaty relating to the protection of the environment in all operations comprising the energy cycle. It also highlighted the EP's right to be fully informed before and throughout the negotiations on the specific protocols. It called on the Commission to work within the framework of the Charter Conference to ensure that the protocol on nuclear safety was binding. The Commission representative asked the EP not to reserve the right to give its assent to the provisional application of the Treaty as "it was important to send a strong signal to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS" on this precise issue. If the EP gave its agreement without reserving this right, "it would in no way mean that the EP was giving up its rights". The Commission had already agreed to submit immediately the legislative proposals necessary for ratification. The EP would therefore have the opportunity to give its opinion on a formal basis.