Justice and home affairs: consequences of enlargement

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The Committee has adopted the report by Bernd POSSELT (EPP, D), which calls for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to be prepared for EU membership in the areas covered by the third pillar (justice and home affairs).Given the growth in organised crime, close attention must be paid to developments in the candidate countries in the areas of fundamental freedoms, human and minority rights and measures to strengthen the rule of law and combat discrimination.EU programmes to train and educate officials and exchanges of police and judicial staff need to be stepped up.Europol is also asked to play a more prominent role in order to improve coordination with the police authorities of the candidate countries. Mr Posselt welcomed the committee's adoption of his report and said that a key factor in public support for enlargement was whether progress was achieved in the areas of legal certainty and protection from arbitrary action, discrimination and crime.