Turkey: membership application, 12 April 1987

2000/2014(COS) - 17/12/1998

This paper contains a synthesis of the analysis in each of the regular reports for the candidate member countries regarding their progress in respecting the Copenhagen criteria. The regular reports specific to each country focus on all the aspects of the adoption of the acquis communautaire and provide a precise evaluation of candidates' capacities to fulfil the political and economic criteria required for membership. Turkey's case is distinct from that of the other candidate countries, in that it does not comply with the Copenhagen political criteria, which serves to put a brake on its current and future chances of accession (at the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997, Turkey was not retained on the list of official candidates for membership). The main problems of a political nature relate to human rights violations and the treatment of minorities ; the absence of civil control over the army; the state of emergency with regard to populations (mainly Kurds) living in the South-East of Turkey ; and the Cypriot question. On the economic front, there are no major problems mainly because of the establishment of the EU-Turkey customs union. However, sustained efforts are needed to improve the state of the public finances and to establish a stable macroeconomic framework. The European strategy that the Commission intends setting in place with respect to Turkey in 1999 should facilitate the improvement of this favourable economic outlook.