Relations with the Transcaucasian Republics: European Union strategy

1996/2068(COS) - 17/01/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Hélène CARRERE D'ENCAUSSE (UPE, F) Parliament considered that the European Union must adopt a strategy on Transcaucasia (which includes Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). The goals of this strategy should be to: - consolidate the independence of these three states, - work towards finding a negotiated solution to the political crises which affect the region, applying the same general criteria and taking account of possible interaction between various potential trouble spots, - promote democracy and civil society, - encourage the economic development of these three countries within the framework of a social market economy and respect for the environment. Calling for the adoption of a Council common position on this matter, Parliament welcomed the partnership and cooperation agreements signed in April 1996 with these three countries and which provided for closer economic cooperation. These agreements should make it possible to restore the traditional trade links (energy, raw materials, agricultural products). However Parliament called for more to be done and for measures to be taken to step up trade with the Union, to promote regional cooperation, to develop a modern banking system and transport, energy and telecommunications networks, etc.. On a political level Parliament called on the Union to take steps to find a peaceful solution to the crises affecting this region. Drawing attention in particular to the dramatic plight of refugees in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, it called on the Union to continue its humanitarian activities. More specifically, it called for the immediate lifting of the blockade imposed on Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan and, in the case of the latter country, for steps to be taken to ensure greater democratization. Similarly Parliament called on the Commission through its TACIS programme to work towards greater coexistence and mutual understanding between these states. On a financial level, Parliament proposed the granting of loans tied to specific investment projects for trans-European networks (EBRD and EIB loans). Recalling its concerns about nuclear power-stations of Soviet design, it hoped that TACIS would provide aid in the area of nuclear safety for the Medzamor power station in Armenia. The European Union should pay closer attention to the role which the Black Sea could play in developing its relations with the Transcaucasian States given that it links the region with the industrial heartland of Europe through the Rhine-Danube river link. Lastly, Parliament drew attention to the fact that the transportation of oil from the Black Sea ports across the straits might represent a considerable ecological risk. It therefore called on the Union to give its support to the construction of the oil pipeline between Burgas (Bulgaria) and Alexandropolis (Greece).