EC/Armenia agreement: partnership and cooperation agreement

1994/2183(INI) - 13/03/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The report by Mr Peter KITTELMANN (PPE, D) on the economic and commercial aspects of the partnership agreement, which was adopted by the European Parliament, considered that it was urgent and essential for the European Union to step up its presence in the Transcaucasian region and to contribute to the political stabilisation and economic development of the region, and of Armenia in particular. Respect for the principles of a free market economy comprised one of the essential elements of the partnership and cooperation agreement. However, the progress achieved by this country in applying the principles of a free market economy was threatened by the rise in the power of organised criminal cartels. Consequently, Parliament urged Armenia to combat corruption, illegal dealings in industrial waste, counterfeiting, money laundering, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Regretting the re-opening of the Mezdamor nuclear plant, Parliament underlined the need for the European Union to provide aid, by way of the TACIS programme, for the implementation of an energy strategy which would permit the use of alternative energy sources. Furthermore, noting the strategic importance of the Transcaucasian region as an energy supplier, Parliament called for a level playing field for the transit and export of energy products and for the development of investment projects in this sector (construction and repair of oil and gas pipelines). It also advocated developing a complete package of measures designed to promote good relations and regional cooperation and called on the Commission to arrange for a smooth transition between its humanitarian aid and its structural aid (TACIS). In the political sphere, while welcoming the cease-fire observed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Upper Karabakh since May 1994, Parliament expressed concern about the economic blockade imposed on Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan and called for this to be lifted. It also called for Armenian troops to be withdrawn from the territory of Azerbaijan. Parliament also urged the EU to play a more decisive role in the region in order to settle existing conflicts and promote peace and prosperity in Transcaucasia. Finally, Parliament stressed that the development of Armenia was inseparable from that of the entire region and for this reason advocated that partnership agreements with this part of the world should be signed simultaneously.