Enlargement: a European strategy to prepare the countries of Central and Eastern Europe CEECs for accession

1994/2121(COS) - 30/11/1994 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Oostlander on the strategy to prepare the CEECs for accession in the run up to the Essen European Council (9-10 December 1994). In its resolution, Parliament approved of enlargement in principle but pointed out that it would examine each candidature on its own merits and that the internal institutional problems of the Union would need to be resolved before any accessions (mainly by reforming Community procedures and powers and the budget at the IGC), insisting here that Parliament play as important a role as the other institutions in preparing candidates for accession. As regards the Commission strategy, it highlighted the interesting points of the proposal but pointed out that the strategy contained omissions. In all events, it called for accession criteria to be defined by the Council and the Commission and for the enlargement process to be modulated in order to help the CEECs cope with integration into Europe. In addition, Europe should formulate a new democratic and pacifist European order as the basis for enlargement. Parliament refused to sanction the possibility of new Member States "opting out", especially from EMU and social policy. As regards the Commission's proposed method, Parliament approved the development of "structured relations" between the Union and the CEECs, but pointed out that these relations should cover the CFSP and include an interparliamentary dimension. In this respect, Parliament hoped that such relations would not compromise the decisional autonomy of the Union, especially the powers of the European Parliament. The Commission, for its part, should evaluate the budgetary consequences of enlargement, especially in the agricultural and regional policy areas. A structured dialogue should also be held on the agricultural sector. As regards certain aspects of enlargement, Parliament approved of strengthening all forms of cooperation (especially interregional) with these countries but pointed out that new programmes were needed in order to offer minorities enhanced protection of their human rights, in home affairs and in order to maintain levels of female employment. At the same time, it called for stronger ties with the countries of the former Soviet Union and, more importantly, a new strategy for the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Finally, it called for CEECs to support efforts being made by Europe within the framework of the "partnership for peace" in order to guarantee security throughout Europe. It called for the Essen Council to address the various stages of accession at the summit. Finally, as regards the budgetary aspects of enlargement, Parliament again drew the Commission's attention to the financial repercussions of any new accession; inevitably, plans would need to be made to overhaul and increase the Union's own resources. Efforts should therefore be made to allocate appropriations in category IV of the budget to PHARE and TACIS, which should focus on infrastructure, energy, nuclear security, environmental, transport and education projects and on stabilising democracy. In particular, it suggested increasing the rate of project investment aid to 30% (from 15%, in order to widen the scope for multilateral funding, and also suggested the possibility of joint funding for cross-border projects by PHARE and TACIS beneficiaries (especially environmental and transport projects). Finally, it called on the Commission to present a breakdown per country of the cost of accession of the CEECs by the middle of 1995.