Baltic region: initiative to inforce the regional cooperation

1996/2099(COS) - 12/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Staffan BURENSTAM LINDER (PPE, S) on the Baltic Sea Region Initiative, the European Parliament called for an early ratification of the Europe Agreements with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania so that the Baltic Sea might become an internal European sea and the adjoining countries, including Russia, might enhance their cooperation. In this respect, Parliament emphasized the efforts undertaken by those countries as regards political and economic cooperation and called on them to develop their cooperation further with a view to strengthening their joint position in anticipation of EU membership. The European Commission is called upon to improve the quality of the aid supplied to the Baltic States with a view to supporting their reform efforts before accession and to encourage new initiatives designed to promote stability and permanent development. Furthermore, Parliament calls for an increase in aid for those countries in the fields of education, training for the free market system and respect for the rule of law and human rights. Additional measures are also called for as regards regional infrastructure (cross-border transport, etc.), measures to combat pollution in the Baltic region and to enhance nuclear safety, particularly in Lithuania and the Russian Federation. Such aid must seek to assist reforms and support the programmes adopted in Kalmar (particularly environmental programmes). The Council is called upon to use its influence with Russia to bring about the rapid signing of the agreement between Russia and Estonia on their common borders. For its part, the European Commission is called upon to cooperate with the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as well as other international organizations (OSCE, Council of Europe and the Barents Council) in order to promote stability in the region and to protect the environment. In this respect, Parliament calls for the drawing up of a list of nuclear waste in the Baltic region as a necessary first step towards protective measures. Meetings between the EP and the parliaments of the countries bordering on the Baltic should be organized with a view to strengthening political cooperation and preparing the economic integration of those countries into the Union.