Latvia: membership application and partnership, 13 October 1995

1997/2176(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr Ernesto CACCAVALE (UPI, I) on Latvia's application for membership of the European Union, Parliament reaffirmed a position already expressed in its resolution of 4 December 1997 according to which all countries should be placed on the same footing even if it was logical to open negotiations with the most advanced countries. It stressed the need for the advancing accession process to cover all the countries with which the European Union had signed a Europe Agreement and underlined again its firm conviction that there should be no closed groups of accession candidates. It also stressed that the opportunity for a smooth transition to the phase of intensive negotiations should remain open at all times. Considering, in general terms, that the integration of the candidate countries into the Union would substantially contribute to security in Europe, Parliament noted that Latvia's bid to join the Union now had the firm support of the majority of the country's political parties and society in general. Welcoming the outcome of the referendum of 3 October 1998, in which the Latvian people voted to amend the nationality law (abolition of the much criticized 'windows' system and automatic granting of Latvian nationality to the children of stateless persons born in Latvia since independence), Parliament consider that this move could help to dissipate tension in Russia and remove one of the major barriers to accession. It hoped that the border agreement, which had been repeatedly called for and approved by Latvia, could also be signed by Russia. While Parliament welcomed the encouraging results obtained by Latvia as regards the principal macro-economic indicators (progress in the privatization process and stability of the national currency), it stressed the need to deepen and step up the process of administrative and judicial reform. There was a need to implement without delay pre-accession aid programmes to assist in the training of judges and lawyers and to protect the local culture. Lastly, considering that the economic trends and the political and institutional developments pointed to accession of this country, Parliament urged the Council to adopt a flexible approach to Latvia so that the decision to start negotiations could be taken before the end of the German presidency.