Romania: membership application and partnership, 22 June 1995

1997/2172(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr Pierre BERNARD-REYMOND (EPP, F) on Romania'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. Believing, in general terms, that the integration of the candidate countries into the European Union would contribute to security in Europe, Parliament, like the Commission, considered that it would be premature to open accession negotiations with Romania in 1999, even though it aspired to become part of the European Union. Parliament based its view on the fact that macro-economic imbalances had worsened and GNP had fallen since 1997. In political terms, Parliament stressed the considerable progress made by Romania, which in general met the political criteria laid down in Copenhagen. While encouraging Romania to remedy the outstanding shortcomings concerning human rights (e.g. the protection of children, freedom of the press, prison conditions) Parliament highlighted the delays in Romania's undertaking the structural reforms to its economy and called on that country to press on with the vital reforms (continuation of the privatization process, reform of the banking system, restructuring of the large state undertakings and the consolidation of a legal framework capable of attracting foreign investment). It drew Romania's attention to the need for an in-depth reform of its administration and called on the European Union to approach international financial institutions in order to gain their support for the Romanian Government's reform programme. The Union and Romania were also called on to align their respective foreign and security policies and to reach a satisfactory solution to the outstanding questions in respect of justice and home affairs (removal of visa requirements for Romanian nationals travelling to European Union countries provided that Romania establishes a strict emigration control policy). Parliament pointed out that only by making full use of the existing instruments (Europe Agreements and the accession partnership) could mutual cooperation be expanded between the European Union and Romania. Parliament also called on Romania to annul all legislation giving rise to prosecution on the basis of sexual orientation and to find a full and fair solution to ensure full return of confiscated property in that country. Lastly, it proposed to that country the establishment of a European Research Facility on minority policies in Central and Eastern Europe, to collaborate with European bodies already working on similar problems (e.g. European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages in Dublin).