Lithuania: membership application and partnership, 8 December 1995

1997/2178(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mr Frode KRISTOFFERSEN (EPP, DK) on Lithuania's application for membership 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 Lithuania had made substantial progress in becoming a market economy and made great strides regarding the capacity to withstand competitive pressure. Nonetheless, Parliament noted that this country needed to pursue reform of the judiciary and make efforts to consolidate its capacity to implement and enforce the acquis communautaire. Welcoming the dynamic approach which the Commission had displayed in its assessments of progress in the candidate countries, Parliament reiterated that the progress already achieved should be assessed and fully taken into account in determining the date when concrete negotiations could be opened. It also reiterated that each applicant country had the right to be judged on the same basic criteria and on its own achievements. In the case of Lithuania, Parliament called for the accession process to be speeded up so that intensive negotiations with that country could begin shortly.