Bulgaria: membership application and partnership, 14 December 1995

1997/2179(COS) - 03/12/1998 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

In adopting the report by Mrs Magda AELVOET (Green, B) on Bulgaria'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 European 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 welcomed the efforts made by Bulgaria to meet the Copenhagen criteria. The Commission's November progress report was on the whole positive, such that the implementation of the pre-accession strategy could be considered to have been successful. Parliament therefore considered that in view of its general economic and political progress Bulgaria was capable of membership of the Union. However, in expressing the hope that this country would be able to keep up the momentum of the reform process and increase its capacity to implement and enforce the acquis, Parliament stressed the need to continue reforms helping to improve the conditions of work and life of its population and to bring about a transparent, efficient and independent public administration in order to ensure a democraticsociety. It hoped that the government would quickly implement the administrative reform as soon as the parliament adopted the law. Bulgaria was also called on to complete the media reform, to speed up the privatisation process, structural adjustment and reforms in the agricultural sector. With a view to the equal treatment of the candidate countries, Parliament also called for the removal of the visa requirements for Bulgarian nationals travelling to European Union countries. It also attached particular importance to the energy sector and urged the Sofia government to abide by its commitments for the closure of the Kozoloduy nuclear power plant. Lastly, Parliament stressed the need to strengthen all forms of regional and interregional cooperation to make good the damage suffered as a result of the war in former Yugoslavia but also to make full use of existing instruments such as the European Agreement and the Pre- accession Partnership. The European Conference should be the forum in which the Union and Bulgaria could together discuss common pre-accession problems.