Agricultural aspects of enlargement

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The European Parliament, having regard to the contributions of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, is of the opinion that in the fisheries and agricultural sectors, further efforts must be made both by the current EU, as regards its ability to absorb new Member States, and by the candidate countries, as regards their readiness for accession. As for the Commission, it is called upon to take account during its negotiations of the macroeconomic equilibrium within the current EU and within the candidate countries and also for the financial and structural guidelines contained in the decisions of the 1999 Berlin European Council. The Parliament considers that assistance to farmers in the candidate countries should be restricted to measures aimed at structural reform of the agricultural sector. It stresses also the need to ensure that, following accession, farmers are entitled to income support in the form of direct payments designed to compensate for price falls only where they actually suffer a loss of income and where immediate structural change is not possible, but not in cases where prices on domestic markets are rising because of continuing inflation and internal demand for agricultural prices. The Parliament asks the Commission to provide it with an estimate of possible costs per land and per sector involved in those countries in case the current Common Agricultural Policy is appied. As regards the fisheries policy, the Parliament requires an estimate of the probable cost of implementing the common fisheries policy in the candidate countries. Moreover, the Parliament calls for the acquis communautaire, and especially veterinary and phytosanitary legislation, as well as animal welfare regulations, to be adopted in full by the candidate countries. Finally, the European Parliament wishes to be granted full powers of codecision on agricultural policy and the agricultural budget before any new Member State is admitted to the European Union.