Thursday 3 December 1998

RES 257

(d) **A4-0431/98**

Resolution on Lithuania's application for membership of the European Union, with a view to the European Council to be held in Vienna on 11-12 December 1998

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Lithuania's application for membership of the European Union, tabled on 8 December 1995,

— having regard to the opinion of the Commission on this application (COM(97)2007 — C4-0379/97),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 December 1997 on the Commission communication 'Agenda 2000 — For a stronger and wider Europe' (COM(97)2000 — C4-0371/97) ([1]), its opinion of 11 March 1998 on the proposal for a Council Regulation on assistance to the applicant countries in central and eastern Europe in the framework of the pre-accession strategy (COM(97)0634 — C4-0010/98 — 97/0351(CNS)) ([2]) and its resolution of 11 March 1998 on the proposals for Council Decisions on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the accession partnerships (COM(98)0053 — C4-0130/98) ([3]),

— having regard to the decisions taken at the European Councils of Luxembourg (12-13 December 1997) and Cardiff (15-16 June 1998),

— having regard to the reports presented by the Commission on 4 November 1998,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy (A4-0431/98),

A. whereas it is evident that there have been positive developments in Lithuania in all important areas in order to fulfil the *acquis communitaire*, including the Copenhagen criteria of 1993,

B. whereas Lithuania has also in a very short period of time shown itself capable of achieving the standards set by the Commission in its abovementioned opinion on the application for membership of the European Union,

C. whereas the Commission ought to increase its efforts in order to make sure that all the applicant countries take part on equal terms in the accession process even though this does not mean that all the applicant countries will become members of the EU at the same time,

D. whereas considerable progress still needs to be made with regard to Lithuania's long-term energy strategy,

E. reiterating that capital punishment has to be abolished as a pre-condition for accession,

1. Stresses the need for the dynamic of the accession process to include all countries to which the European Union is linked by a Europe Agreement, reiterates its firm conviction that there should be no closed groups of accession candidates, and stresses that the opportunity for a smooth transition to the phase of intensive negotiations should remain open at all times;

2. Believes that the gradual integration of the candidate countries into the European Union will substantially contribute to security in Europe;

3. Considers that, to ensure a continued advancement of the accession process in the applicant countries, it is of utmost importance that the progress which already has been achieved is assessed and fully taken into account in determining the date when concrete negotiations can be opened;

4. Is pleased with the dynamic approach that the Commission has displayed in its assessments of progress in the candidate countries, thereby ensuring that the enlargement process remains as flexible as it should;

5. Reiterates that each and every applicant has the right to be judged on the same basic criteria and on its own achievements;

([1]) OJ C 388, 22.12.1997, p. 17.
([2]) OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 110.
([3]) OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 113.

6. Is pleased that the Commission finds that Lithuania has made substantial progress in becoming a market economy and made great strides regarding the capacity to withstand competitive pressure, but notes that Lithuania needs to pursue reform of the judiciary and make efforts to consolidate its capacity to implement and enforce the *acquis communautaire*;

7. Calls therefore for Lithuania's accession process to be speeded up so that intensive negotiations with that country can begin shortly;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the European Council, the parliaments of the Member States and the Lithuanian Government and Parliament.

(e) **A4-0429/98**

Resolution on Bulgaria's application for membership of the European Union, with a view to the European Council to be held in Vienna on 11-12 December 1998

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Bulgaria's application for membership to the European Union, tabled on 15 December 1995,

— having regard to the Commission opinion of 15 July 1997 on that application (COM(97)2008 — C4-0380/97),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 December 1997 on the Commission communication 'Agenda 2000 — For a stronger and wider Europe' (COM(97)2000 — C4-0371/97) [1], its opinion of 11 March 1998 on the proposal for a Council Regulation on assistance to the applicant countries in central and eastern Europe in the framework of the pre-accession strategy (COM(97)0634 — C4-0010/98 — 97/0351(CNS)) [2] and its resolution of 11 March 1998 on the proposals for Council Decisions on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the accession partnerships (COM(98)0053 — C4-0130/98) [3],

— having regard to the decisions taken at the European Council in Luxembourg on 12-13 December 1997 and in Cardiff on 15 and 16 June 1998,

— having regard to the reports presented by the Commission on 4 November 1998,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy (A4-0429/98),

A. having regard to Bulgaria's considerable efforts to establish the rule of law, stable democratic order and respect for human rights and protection of minorities,

B. drawing the attention to the fact that, as in most CEECs, work has to be done to further integrate the ethnic minorities,

C. welcoming Bulgaria's efforts to stabilise the economic and financial situation, to speed up the privatisation process and to further develop the conditions for a functioning market economy,

D. highlighting Bulgaria's efforts to maintain viable social conditions in the difficult transition period and the need to enhance the combating of poverty and social exclusion, in particular with regard to children at risk,

E. taking into consideration the reforms at legislative level to comply with European legislation, and the need of sustaining them,

F. noticing, however, the need for further improvement of Bulgaria's legislation in view of raising it to the level of European standards and values,

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(1) OJ C 388, 22.12.1997, p. 17.
(2) OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 110.
(3) OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 113.