

EU - ROMANIA
JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

11th Meeting
26 - 27 February 2001

Brussels

Recommendations

adopted on 27 February 2001

The EU-Romania Joint Parliamentary Committee held its 11th meeting on 26-27 February 2001 in Brussels under the co-chairmanship of Mrs Astrid THORS, European Parliament and Mr Liviu MAIOR, Romanian Parliament.

The members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee discussed the following issues:

- EU-Romania relations.
- The political, economic and social situation in Romania and the state of progress in the preparation for accession.
- Internal developments within the EU, especially in the light of the Nice Summit decisions, post-Nice process.

The EU-Romania Joint Parliamentary Committee:

1. notes the conclusions of the Nice European Council, which took place on 7-11 December 2000;
 2. notes the evaluation contained in the Commission's Regular Report on Romania and Progress towards Accession issued on 8 November 2000.
- *On EU-Romania relations*
3. notes the correct implementation of the Europe Agreement and the smooth functioning of the various joint institutions;
 4. welcomes the Enlargement Strategy ratified by the European Council in Nice, introducing a "road map", which provides a schedule for tackling the negotiations in 2001 and 2002;
 5. regrets that the decisions taken at the EU Summit in Nice with regard to the number of votes in the Council of the European Union and the number of seats in the European Parliament after enlargement have been made without preliminary consultation of the concerned candidate countries, and calls on Member States to ensure the inclusion of the candidate countries in the further post-Nice discussions, especially when the countries concerned are directly affected;
- *On the political, economic and social situation in Romania and the state of progress in the preparation for accession*
6. acknowledges the commitment of the new Romanian Government to pursue with determination the necessary reforms to achieve the country's strategic aim, which is the integration into the European Union and Euro-atlantic structures;
 7. considers it of the utmost importance to promote Romanian's economic development, notably by achieving macroeconomic stability, reducing inflation, accelerating privatisation and restructuring of the industrial sector; in this respect welcomes the commitment of the new Government to proceed with the implementation of the Medium Term Economic Strategy adopted by the former government in agreement with all political forces and the main actors in civil society; calls on the Romanian authorities to proceed with a timely implementation of this framework, in a manner compatible with the EU Acquis;

8. strongly encourages the Romanian authorities to pursue the process of the restructuring of state monopolies and state-owned enterprises as it will reduce arrears in economy, reduce inflationary pressures, boost economic efficiency and increase much needed inflows of foreign direct investment; stresses the necessity to minimise the social costs of economic transformation by addressing the needs of the vulnerable sections of society;
9. welcomes the signing by the Commission of the multi-annual and annual financing agreement (SAPARD) with Romania and hopes for the speedy establishment of the necessary structures notably the SAPARD Agencies, so that the first payments may take place at the earliest possible date;
10. welcomes the fact that the new government is fully committed to continue the preparation for accession ; recommends the government to take all necessary steps to ensure legislative stability and effective operation of the judiciary while reducing the reliance on ordinances as a legislative tool ; asks for the improving of the co-ordination between the Parliament and the Government in legislative matters, providing adequate resources to the local level following the decentralisation process and strengthening administrative capacity;
11. encourages in this respect the Romanian Government to demonstrate effectiveness in promoting good governance notably in the struggle against corruption; particular emphasis should be put on antifraud measures for the protection of EU funds;
12. notes that the judicial reform constitutes a step forward but considers it necessary to further improve the independence of the court and individual judges and to continue reforms of the civil and penal procedures;
13. calls on Romania's Senate to abolish the article 200 of the Penal Code in order to put an end to this discriminatory regulation;
14. notes the change of Rules of Procedures by both Chambers of the Romanian Parliament (the Senate and the House of Deputies) aimed at speeding up the legislative process and hopes it would lead to a significant improvement in the process of the transposition of the EU legislation into the Romanian legislation;
15. notes with satisfaction that the Romanian Parliament has adopted the new law on local administration based on the principle of de-centralisation and subsidiarity, which includes the provision that the local authorities shall provide for a range of services in the minority language where the minority comprises more than 20 % of the population;
16. notes that the strategic framework for the improvement of the conditions of the Roma minority has been adopted; calls on the Romanian government to speed up the adoption of a comprehensive strategy towards the Roma minority with the aim to improve their conditions by easing their integration into economic, social activities and educational institutions and health system; calls on the Commission to provide the necessary assistance through the Communities Programme and to strengthen the co-operation with the Council of Europe; notes the emergency decree on prohibiting discrimination and calls on the Parliament to ensure its adoption and implementation;

17. supports the efforts to continue the reform of the child protection sector in line with the National Strategy by focussing on prevention of abandonment, reintegration of children into natural or foster families and closure of large, old style institutions;
 18. calls on Romanian Government to align adoption legislation and practice with The Hague Convention and the UN Convention of the Rights of Children and to install a moratorium on international adoptions until the practice has been aligned in this respect;
 19. in the light of serious environmental accidents which occurred in Romania in the last years, stresses the urgent need to reinforce the capacity of the Romanian environmental institutions at national and local levels to prevent industrial pollution and pollution created by municipal and household waste; the transposition of the EU legislation in this area should be a priority;
 20. given the low status of approximation to the EU environmental legislation, considers it necessary to intensify the legislative work in adopting the EU Acquis and implementing it while ensuring adequate financial and human resources;
 21. invites the Romanian authorities to take appropriate measures in order to guarantee the population's best possible information about the ongoing accession process;
 22. acknowledges the political agreement on the visa issue reached at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 1st December 2000, which constitutes a genuine step forward for Romania; however regrets that it does not reflect the Commission's original proposal supported by the European Parliament for an immediate lifting of the visa restrictions; given this decision, encourages the Romanian authorities to take the necessary measures aiming in particular to reduce illegal immigration and facilitate the repatriation of illegal residents, in order to ensure that review process by June 2001, which will be a basis for the Council's decision, results in positive conclusion;
- *On the developments within the EU*
23. invites the Member States to initiate during the forthcoming EU Summit in Stockholm the examination of how enlargement could contribute to enhance Europe's competitiveness and to achieve full employment;
 24. welcomes the proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and takes note of the European Parliament's proposal to integrate it into the new treaty; notes that in the absence of agreement amongst Member States, the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be subject to further discussions and will be on the agenda of the next IGC scheduled for 2004.