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Committee on International Trade

2006/0044(AVC)

11.7.2006

OPINION

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the proposal for a Council and Commission decision on the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part
(8161/2006) – C6-0197/2006 – 2006/0044(AVC))

Draftsman: Panagiotis Beglitis

PA_LegAVC

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

The proposal for a Council and Commission decision on the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part, requires the assent of the European Parliament.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The draftsman, confirming the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council of June 2003 which formalised Albania's European perspective, considers that this agreement is the best way to help maintain the momentum of political and economic reform, and to encourage Albania to continue using its constructive and restraining influence in the region. He acknowledges the progress already made and thus recommends that the European Parliament agree to the conclusion of the above-mentioned Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The draftsman would nevertheless point out to the Albanian authorities that they should pay special attention to trade-related fields.

Free movement of goods

Raise awareness among economic operators of the concepts of standards and certification, and their importance in the context of international trade;

Ensure that the accreditation service has sufficient material infrastructure and staff, and adopt a full work programme with a view to Albania's future participation in European Cooperation for Accreditation;

Ensure that the bodies responsible for standardisation, accreditation and certification work more efficiently, taking into consideration Community practices;

Make the Albanian Consumers' Association operational by increasing its staffing levels, and make sure that Albanian products comply with European safety standards;

Right of establishment

Amend current legislation on the right of establishment, to ensure that there is equal treatment for foreign and national companies;

Customs and taxation

Continue aligning legislation and customs procedures with the body of existing Community legislation (*acquis communautaire*), ensuring in particular that the rules and procedures relating to transit, customs warehouses, customs valuation, physical checks and risk analysis comply with Community standards and, where necessary, with international conventions;

Ensure that Albanian customs and taxation law is increasingly approximated to the *acquis communautaire*, and further increase the administrative capacity to implement customs law

and combat corruption, cross-border crime and tax evasion;

Adopt all necessary measures to ensure that the rules of origin are properly implemented;

Intellectual property rights

Strengthen the administrative capacity with regard to intellectual property rights, including the establishment of the Albanian copyright office;

Adopt new industrial property laws, raise awareness of intellectual property-related issues among the business world and law-enforcement bodies, including the judiciary, and designate the court having jurisdiction over intellectual property disputes;

Ensure that intellectual property rights are correctly implemented and achieve better results in the fight against piracy and counterfeiting;

Industry and SMEs

Remove administrative obstacles to investment and ensure that the law, rules and procedures relating to businesses are appropriately implemented, in a non-discretionary and non-discriminatory way;

Agriculture

Strengthen the food safety system and relevant monitoring systems;

Improve phytosanitary and veterinary conditions in line with EU requirements, especially with regard to products with strong export potential; bring the system of animal registration and identification into line with EU requirements;

Develop a strategy for rural development and the diversification of agricultural activities; improve competitiveness in this sector and make it easier for farmers to obtain credit;

Energy and transport

Implement a national action plan in the energy sector, in particular with a view to resolving the problem of power cuts, which are considered to be too frequent;

Implement a national action plan concerning the transport sector, in order to take measures to improve safety, infrastructure and maintenance;

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament gives its assent.

PROCEDURE

Title	Proposal for a Council and Commission decision on the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part
Procedure number	8161/2006 – C6 0197/2006 – 2006/0044 (AVC)
Committee responsible	AFET
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	INTA 4.7.2006
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Draftsperson Date appointed	Panagiotis Beglitis 19.4.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	19.6.2006
Date of adoption	11.7.2006
Result of final vote	+: 17 –: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Jean-Pierre Audy, Enrique Barón Crespo, Daniel Caspary, Christofer Fjellner, Béla Glattfelder, Sajjad Karim, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Georgios Papastamkos, Peter Šťastný, Robert Sturdy, Gianluca Susta, Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna, Zbigniew Zaleski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Panagiotis Beglitis, Albert Deß, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Jonas Sjöstedt
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	...