

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

3 June 2003

B5-0291/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Doris Pack

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the meeting between the Troika and the countries participating in the
Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe

European Parliament resolution on the meeting between the Troika and the countries participating in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the three Parliamentary Conferences of the Stability Pact countries held in Brussels on 16-17 September 2001, in Bucharest on 6-7 June 2002 and in Tirana on 14-16 October 2002,
- having regard to the Recommendations adopted by the 4th Parliamentary Conference of the Stability Pact Countries on the ‘Renewal of the Stabilisation and Association Process for South-Eastern Europe and the Perspectives for Accession’ organised by the European Parliament in Brussels within the framework of the Presidency of the Troika on Parliamentary Cooperation under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe,
- A. having regard to the energising effect that the Stabilisation and Association Process has had on national political institutions as a first phase in preparing for the process of accession to the European Union,
- B. having regard to the trade-off between swift implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process and the reinforcement of financial and technical assistance to each country,
- C. aware of the need to address, with the utmost urgency, the serious problems of high unemployment and poor economic development, weak public governance and the increasing risk of loss of confidence in State institutions, and of the firm commitment of the national parliaments of South-Eastern Europe to focus their efforts on bringing their countries closer to the EU and to their integration into Euro-Atlantic structures; whereas such a path demands that each country ensures its self-sustainability as a sovereign State and, wherever appropriate, successfully completes the process of ‘ownership’ and transfer of responsibilities from the international community to its own institutions,
- D. whereas a renewed Stabilisation and Association Process should: reflect the need to increase social and economic cohesion; include in its priorities financial and technical assistance in the fight against organised crime, corruption, trafficking in human beings, drugs, arms and illegal immigration; reinforce border security; enhance regional cooperation in the communication, transport and energy sectors; promote financial assistance for the education system, exchange programmes for students and young professionals, and the development of an active civil society,
- E. aware that the processes of reconciliation and integration into the EU and other Euro-Atlantic structures are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing; recalling that further integration into the European Union – a Community of values – will depend on the ability to promote and develop an active civil society focused on promoting

participation by citizens, reconciliation and a democratic society where cultural diversity is perceived as an enrichment for South-Eastern Europe and the European Union,

1. Expresses its satisfaction at the progress made in the Stabilisation and Association Process countries towards democracy and the rule of law; encourages the parliaments and governments of these countries to proceed with their stabilisation policies within the framework of the European Union's democratic values, the requirement being to respect international and national agreements, bearing in mind the lessons of the past;
2. Underlines that integration into the European Union can only become a reality on condition that the political and economic criteria are met, in particular as regards enhancing regional and cross-border cooperation, which is a vital precondition for closer integration with the EU;
3. Notes that regional cooperation should focus on developing the current network of Free Trade Agreements into a Free Trade Area, establishing a regional strategy in infrastructural sectors such as transport, communications and energy, abolishing visa requirements within the Stabilisation and Association Process countries, implementing an integrated border management strategy and successfully fighting organised crime and corruption;
4. Underlines that in parallel with enhancing regional cooperation, the Stabilisation and Association Process should be clarified and reinforced, by means of the following:
 - fixing clear annual benchmarks for each country;
 - accepting the regular involvement of representatives of Stabilisation and Association Process countries in the implementation of the EU's CFSP/ESDP, including the possibility for them to subscribe to EU statements;
 - promoting mobility programmes for students and young professionals within South-Eastern Europe and the EU (giving access to the EU's SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes);
 - promoting and assisting reform in the education systems, in line with the EU's common values and standards;
 - establishing mechanisms for better joint implementation of Community programmes for Stabilisation and Association Process and candidate countries in areas of common interest (CARDS and PHARE);
5. Welcomes Croatia's application to join the European Union, which is an important step forward and a significant example of the contribution of the Stabilisation and Association Process to the development of a country; recalls the importance of national parliamentary monitoring of the follow-up to this application, and reaffirms its hope that Croatia will take concrete steps to comply with the Copenhagen criteria while fully

cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY);

6. Underlines that the integration of the Stabilisation and Association Process countries into the EU will take a significant amount of time and will have to be evaluated in the light of the ability of each country to fulfil its obligations towards the EU, as established in the Copenhagen criteria;
7. Calls on the parliaments of the European Union's Member States to accelerate ratification of the outstanding Stabilisation and Association Agreements;
8. Welcomes the reinforced complementarity between the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe with the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP);
9. Encourages the parliaments of the Stabilisation and Association Process countries to focus their actions and the parliamentary scrutiny of their governments on:
 - an active policy against organised crime and trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms, including the setting-up of adequate intelligence, investigation and prosecution structures and, wherever relevant, the reform of the legal and judicial systems;
 - the creation of the basic structures and legal conditions for effective transnational cooperation between the police and judicial structures, including appropriate data-sharing;
 - the ratification and implementation of Council of Europe Conventions, in particular the 1999 Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and Civil Law Convention on Corruption and the 1990 Convention on the Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime;
 - an effective policy to promote the return of refugees and displaced persons and to protect minorities;
 - full and effective cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY), as well as with all other international judicial structures in which the country participates; full and unconditional cooperation with the International Criminal Court in compliance with the principles agreed by the EU General Affairs Council;
10. Stresses that Stabilisation and Association Process parliaments should do their utmost to prevent the adoption of any measure, including ratification by the national parliaments of any international agreement, that jeopardises the implementation or the full effectiveness of the above-mentioned principles and objectives, and in particular of compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights;
11. Calls on the EU to take a further step forward in its political and economic commitment to the Stabilisation and Association Process countries by: updating the instruments and programmes of the Stabilisation and Association Process; clarifying the parameters of

EU conditionality through the establishment of annual benchmarks; reinforcing the principles of individual merit and differentiation, as well as EU financial assistance, in order to ensure that the EU's policy is tailored to the level of development of each country and is in line with its approach to other countries in a similar situation;

12. Calls on the EU, therefore, to adjust the current CARDS Programme (at legislative or procedural and/or guidelines levels), in order to ensure that the following areas become a priority for EU assistance: parliamentary cooperation; support for the creation of sound legal and judicial systems; the national and transnational fight against corruption and organised crime, in particular trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms; support for educational and vocational training systems; support for building up an independent and fair media and an active civil society – all elements which will bring the Stabilisation and Association Process societies closer to EU standards and models;
13. Recognises that the solution to many of these problems is more likely to be found in the framework of a regional approach, promoting cross-border cooperation, and in consistent coordination of EU financial and technical assistance;
14. Welcomes the comprehensive and ambitious agenda for the fight against organised crime and corruption adopted at the London Conference on 25 November 2002 by the governments of the Stabilisation and Association Process countries and endorsed by the EU; welcomes the commitment entered into by the national parliaments of the Stabilisation and Association Process countries, at the 4th Parliamentary Conference on 21-22 May in Brussels, to promote parliamentary scrutiny of its implementation;
15. Insists on the importance of a serious commitment to assist the initiatives underway in this area, in particular to support the activities of the Bucharest Centre and the SP Organised Crime Initiative (SPOC), including the setting-up of an efficient witness protection system, training of police and experts according to Europol standards, promotion of cross-border operations, and the fight against white-collar crime;
16. Stresses that technical and financial assistance by the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe should also be reinforced in this sector, in order to remove the bottlenecks still persisting in national legal systems which are obstructing full implementation of the targets established at the London Conference of November 2002;
17. Underlines the importance of strengthening the role of the Ombudsperson by creating a network of Ombudspersons in South-Eastern Europe, which will contribute to enhancing the confidence-building process, act as a conflict prevention mechanism and contribute to rebuilding trust in State institutions;
18. Encourages the governments of Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia to reach a positive and constructive agreement with an eye to the Trilateral Summit planned for June 2003, in order to establish, with the utmost urgency, the necessary implementing mechanisms for a full and complete return of refugees and displaced persons; encourages Bosnia-Herzegovina entities to pass the appropriate legislation with regard to the protection of minorities;

19. Calls on the Assembly of Kosovo to act in accordance with the reconciliatory spirit and letter of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the letter of the Constitutional Framework; underlines that Kosovo's stability and prosperity continue to depend on respect for the rights of all its citizens and, in particular, on the return of refugees and displaced persons, as well as on genuine protection for its minorities;
20. Notes that the Stabilisation and Association Process is a dynamic process aimed at bringing the beneficiary countries closer to EU and Euro-Atlantic standards, and therefore calls on the EU institutions to evaluate the feasibility of enlarging it to include Moldova and, if appropriate, to clarify the conditions to be fulfilled for that purpose;

The impact of a renewed Stabilisation and Association Process on current parliamentary cooperation practices

21. Underlines the advantages of reinforcing the existing coordination between the various initiatives undertaken through parliamentary cooperation (e.g. the Parliamentary Cooperation Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the OSCE; the networks developed with the support of national parliaments; cooperation initiatives promoted by NGOs or foundations in the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe), as well as the advantage of reinforcing existing regional initiatives such as the SEECP, the CIS and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC); recognises the role that the OSCE missions and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe could play as facilitators in this regard;
22. Suggests that the national parliaments of South-Eastern Europe promote, on a regular basis, parliamentary debates in plenary, jointly with representatives of the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, evaluating the progress made by the country in the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process and, where relevant, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements;
23. Notes furthermore the Stability Pact's proposal for more structured regional cooperation and reinforcement of strong networking structures, including twinning initiatives and the creation of supporting projects; notes also the Stability Pact's support for the Tirana Declaration adopted at the 3rd Parliamentary Conference in October 2002, where the creation of a parliamentary structure involving the countries concerned was called for;
24. Considers that further progress should be made in terms of parliamentary cooperation between the EU Member States and Stabilisation and Association Process countries; proposes that multilateral meetings to bring together representatives of the European Parliament, the national parliaments of the EU and candidate countries and the Stabilisation and Association Process countries be organised by the European Parliament every year;
25. Encourages the Council of Europe, the relevant committee of the European Parliament

and the OSCE to continue reporting on the progress achieved in implementing the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Stabilisation and Association Process, including evaluation of the development of the Stability Pact;

26. Underlines the need for a stronger role for national parliaments in political activities and the consequent importance of developing assistance and support for them and for stable party-political structures;
27. Underlines the contribution of reinforced communication links between the national parliaments of South-Eastern Europe, as well as with the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, in particular through the setting-up of a video conference communication system; (*par. 32 of the Recommendations*)

The impact of a renewed Stabilisation and Association Process on the EU management structure

28. Considers that the current process of implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process should be accompanied by the following adjustments to the management structures of the EU institutions:
 - ***European Parliament:*** the creation, after the 2004 elections, of new structures for bilateral political dialogue with the countries of South-Eastern Europe, in order to reflect the different levels of implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process and the adoption of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with certain of the Stabilisation and Association Process countries (creation of joint parliamentary committees);
 - ***EU Council and Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe:*** enlarging the current 'Informal Consultative Committee' to include other key actors in the Stabilisation and Association Process countries, such as the World Bank, the IMF, the United Nations SRSG in Kosovo, the United Nations SGHR in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the EU Special Representative; reinforcing the strategic capacity of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and adjusting its current system of working methods in order to better reflect a renewed Stabilisation and Association Process (revision of the current system of the three Working Tables);
 - ***Commission:*** development of working procedures for the Stabilisation and Association Process countries similar to those used in the current enlargement process (mirroring enlargement policy instruments), such as the definition of annual country targets and benchmarks, screening and monitoring adjustment to the EU 'acquis', modifying the competence of the European Agency for Reconstruction so that it may also contribute to 'screening activity' and identification of priorities and targets, and creation of a Commissioner responsible for all EU candidate countries (including Croatia);
29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Heads of State of all those

countries participating in the Summit on 21 June, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of all the Stability Pact countries (EU Member States, candidate countries and Stabilisation and Association Process and other countries) and the Special Coordinator for South-Eastern Europe.