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RECOMMENDATION

on the application by the Republic of Lithuania to become a member of the
European Union
(AA-AFNS 1-6 – C5-0119/2003 – 2003/0901D(AVC))

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence
Policy

Rapporteur: Ioannis Souladakis

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
majority of the votes cast
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- *** Assent procedure
*majority of Parliament's component Members except in cases
covered by Articles 105, 107, 161 and 300 of the EC Treaty and
Article 7 of the EU Treaty*
- ***I Codecision procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- ***II Codecision procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- ***III Codecision procedure (third reading)
majority of the votes cast, to approve the joint text

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the Commission)

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 20 February 2003 the Council requested Parliament's assent pursuant to Article 49 of the EU Treaty to the application by the Republic of Lithuania to become a member of the European Union (AA-AFNS 1-6 – 2003/0901D(AVC)).

At the sitting of 7 April 2003 the President of Parliament will announce that he has referred this application, together with the draft Treaty on Accession of the Republic of Lithuania, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy as the committee responsible (C5-0119/2003).

At its meeting of 21 January 2003 the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy had appointed Ioannis Souladakis rapporteur.

It considered the application for accession, the draft Treaty on Accession, the Commission's opinion and the draft recommendation at its meeting of 17-19 March 2003.

At the this meeting it adopted the draft legislative resolution by 57 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Elmar Brok, chairman; Christos Zacharakis, vice-chairman; Ioannis Souladakis, rapporteur; Alexandros Alavanos (for Sami Nair), Ole Andreasen, Per-Arne Arvidsson, Alexandros Baltas, André Brie, Véronique De Keyser, Rosa M. Díez González, Hélène Flautre (for Joost Lagendijk), Glyn Ford, Pernille Frahm (for Luigi Vinci), Michael Gahler, Per Gahrton, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Jas Gawronski, Vitaliano Gemelli (for Franco Marini), Alfred Gomolka, Vasco Graça Moura (for José Pacheco Pereira), Klaus Hänsch, Magdalene Hoff, Ulpu Iivari (for Catherine Lalumière), Christoph Werner Konrad (for Karl von Wogau), Efstratios Korakas, Armin Laschet, Nelly Maes (for Reinhold Messner), Cecilia Malmström, Pedro Marset Campos, Hugues Martin, Linda McAvan, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Philippe Morillon, Pasqualina Napoletano, Raimon Obiols i Germà, Arie M. Oostlander, Doris Pack (for Alain Lamassoure), Hans-Gert Poettering (for Geoffrey Van Orden), Jacques F. Poos, Bernd Posselt (for Amalia Sartori), Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack (for John Walls Cushnahan pursuant to Rule 153(2)), José Ribeiro e Castro (for Jean-Charles Marchiani pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Lennart Sacrédeus (for David Sumberg), Jannis Sakellariou, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacques Santer, Jürgen Schröder, Elisabeth Schroedter, Ursula Stenzel, Ilkka Suominen, Hannes Swoboda, Charles Tannock, Gary Titley (for Mário Soares), Joan Vallvé, Bob van den Bos, Paavo Väyrynen, Demetrio Volcic, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Matti Wuori.

The recommendation was tabled on 25 March 2003.

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

Legislative resolution on the application by the Republic of Lithuania to become a member of the European Union (AA-AFNS 1-6 – C5-0119/2003 – 2003/0901D(AVC))

(Assent procedure)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the application by the Republic of Lithuania to become a member of the European Union,
 - having regard to the Council's request for Parliament's assent pursuant to Article 49 of the EU Treaty (C5-0119/2003),
 - having regard to the Commission's opinion (COM(2003) 79)¹,
 - having regard to the draft treaty for the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic to the European Union,
 - having regard to Rules 86 and 96(6) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 April 2003 on the conclusions of the negotiations on enlargement in Copenhagen²,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy (A5-0093/2003),
- A. whereas the conditions for the admission of the applicant countries and the adjustments their accession entails are set out in the draft Treaty on Accession, and whereas Parliament should be consulted on any substantial modifications to this Treaty,
- B. whereas this assent will not determine its position on the adjustment of the financial perspective to cater for enlargement according to Article 25 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999, and whereas the figures entered in Annex XV of the draft Treaty on Accession constitute the minimum threshold necessary for the adjustment of the financial perspectives,
1. Gives its assent to the application by the Republic of Lithuania to become a member of the European Union;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Republic of Lithuania.

¹ OJ C not yet published.

² Vote foreseen in plenary on 9 April 2003 (Report by Elmar Brok (A5-0081/2003))

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

Lithuania submitted its application for EU membership on 8 December 1995.

Its request is part of the historic process of ending the division of Europe and consolidating the establishment of democracy across the continent. It followed the conclusion of a comprehensive Europe Agreement with the European Communities, intended to help Lithuania to achieve its objective to become a member.

The Conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993 stated that those candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe who so wish shall become members of the Union if they meet the following conditions, normally referred to as the Copenhagen criteria:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the ability to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

A judgement on these three groups of criteria - political, economic, and the ability to take on the *acquis* - depends also on the capacity of a country's administrative and legal systems to put into effect the principles of democracy and the market economy and to apply and enforce the *acquis* in practice.

The Commission delivered its opinion on Lithuania's application on 15 July 1997. The Helsinki European Council of 10-11 December 1999 decided that accession negotiations with Lithuania and five other countries still waiting for such a decision would be opened. In so doing, the European Council acted in accordance with Parliament's call for an end to the separation of the candidate countries into a first and a second group. Negotiations on the pace and modalities for Lithuania's transposition and effective implementation of the legislation shared by all EU Member States, the *acquis communautaire*, were duly opened the following spring.

In parallel, a framework for comprehensive EU support to Lithuania's preparations for EU membership was set up and gradually became operational. This includes the Phare, ISPA¹ and SAPARD² programmes, from which pre-accession aid is now flowing. The progress in the preparations has been assessed by the Commission in annual reports, the most recent of which was presented on 9 October 2002.

On the basis of that report and the completion of the negotiations in almost all areas, the Brussels European Council of 24-25 October 2002 took decisions in relation to outstanding issues which paved the way for the conclusion of the negotiations at the Copenhagen European Council on 12-13 December 2002.

¹ Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession

² Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development

From the time of the application and onwards, the European Parliament has in a series of resolutions firmly supported Lithuania's membership bid and pointed to issues which required special attention. A constructive dialogue with the Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament) has been conducted in the framework of the EU-Lithuania Joint Parliamentary Committee.

ASSESSMENT

Lithuania has come far in its preparations for EU membership and its efforts continue. Most of the remaining challenges are similar to those that other accession countries face. The transitional periods agreed upon in the negotiations, so as to give Lithuania some extra time to reach EU levels where this has been deemed necessary, also largely correspond to those granted to other accession countries.

The pace that Lithuania has been able to keep in its accession preparations so far, its track record when it comes to honouring commitments made and the fact that EU assistance to Lithuania will continue to grow support the belief that the challenges can be met.

In November 2002, the EU and the Russian Federation issued a joint statement on the principles for Kaliningrad transit through Lithuania, according to which the visa requirement should be replaced with a system with a so called Facilitated Transit Document (FTD) and a Facilitated Rail Travel Document (FRTD).

Kaliningrad transit must be prevented from becoming a significant problem for the operation of the Schengen area. This presupposes the honouring of all commitments made by all parties.

Lithuania committed itself to close unit 1 at Ignalina before 2005 and unit 2 no later than 2009. This decision makes comprehensive changes to Lithuania's energy production and distribution necessary. The EU will contribute to the covering of the costs of the closure, initially with an amount of € 285 million for the period 2004-2006.

* * *

Your rapporteur will not in this context make any further comments on the remaining challenges in the EU-integration process which Lithuania shares with other candidate countries. These challenges have already been rather thoroughly dealt with, in earlier reports and resolutions. Several of them are also commented upon in the motion for a general resolution on the conclusions of the negotiations on enlargement in Copenhagen. The Commission's guidance, ability to detect shortcomings and provision of support for Lithuania's efforts can be relied upon.

Thanks to the persistent efforts of Lithuania and the support she is receiving from the EU, Lithuania has reached a level of preparation for membership which permits the European Parliament to give its assent to her accession and to warmly welcome her into the European Union.