

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

FINAL
A5-0397/2003

6 November 2003

REPORT

on The Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe: Second
Annual Report
(COM(2003) 139 - 2003/2094(INI))

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

Rapporteur: Joost Lagendijk

CONTENTS

	Page
PROCEDURAL PAGE	4
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	13
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, EXTERNAL TRADE, RESEARCH AND ENERGY.....	15
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.....	18

PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 26 March 2003 the Commission forwarded to Parliament its report on The Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe Second Annual Report (COM(2003) 139), which had been referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Common Security and Defence Policy.

At the sitting of 15 May 2003 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report under Rules 47 (2) and 163 on the subject and the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had been asked for their opinions. The Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy appointed Joost Lagendijk rapporteur at its meeting of 25 March 2003.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 7 October and 3 and 4 November 2003.

At the latter meeting it adopted the draft resolution by 36 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, vice-chairman, Geoffrey Van Orden, vice-chairman, Christos Zacharakis, vice-chairman; Joost Lagendijk (rapporteur), Per-Arne Arvidsson, Alexandros Baltas, Bastiaan Belder, Cees Bremmer (for Arie M. Oostlander), Véronique De Keyser, Hélène Flautre (for Per Gahrton), Glyn Ford, Michael Gahler, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Jas Gawronski, Vitaliano Gemelli (for Franco Marini), Alfred Gomolka, Richard Howitt, Ulpu Iivari (for Klaus Hänsch), Armin Laschet, Jo Leinen (for Jannis Sakellariou), Pedro Marset Campos, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez (for Rosa M. Díez González), Pasqualina Napoletano, Bill Newton Dunn (for Ole Andreasen pursuant to Rule 153(2)), Raimon Obiols i Germà, Jacques F. Poos, Lennart Sacrédeus (for Jacques Santer), José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Amalia Sartori, Elisabeth Schroedter, Ioannis Soulidakis, Ursula Stenzel, Ilkka Suominen, Hannes Swoboda, Charles Tannock, Gary Titley (for Demetrio Volcic), Joan Vallvé, Karl von Wogau, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Matti Wuori.

The opinions of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities are attached. The Committee on Budgets decided on 22 May 2003 not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 6 November 2003.

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on The Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe: Second Annual Report (COM(2003) 139 – 2003/2094(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Commission's Second Annual Report on the Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe (COM(2003) 139),
- having regard to the Conclusions of the Fourth Parliamentary Conference EU-Stability Pact Countries of 21 May 2003,
- having regard to its Resolutions of 5 June 2003¹ on the Recommendations to the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki and of 3 July 2003² on the outcome of this Summit,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the EU Thessaloniki Summit of 21 June 2003, and to the Joint Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans adopted at this Summit,
- having regard to the UN Resolution 1244/1999 on Kosovo, the UN SC Resolutions 1503 (2003) on the part related to the relations and activity of the International Criminal Court (ICTY)³, 1491 (2003) on Bosnia and Herzegovina⁴, the UN Secretary General Report of 26 June 2003 on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo⁵, and the EP Resolutions of 28 February 2002⁶, 26 September 2002⁷ and 24 October 2002⁸, on the International Criminal Court;
- having regard to Rules 47 (2) and 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the opinions of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0397/2003),

¹ P5_TA(2003)0264

² P5_TA(2003)0320

³ UN SC Resolution 1503 (2003) of 28.8.2003

⁴ UN SC Resolution 1491 (2003) of 11.7.2003

⁵ UNSG Report S/2003/675

⁶ OJ 293E, 28.11.2002, page 88

⁷ P5_TA(2002)0449, 26.9.2002

⁸ P5_TA(2002)0521, 24.10.2002

General and horizontal issues

1. Reiterates¹ its conviction that there is only a European perspective if countries comply with the Copenhagen criteria and asks the Council and the Commission to link assistance to the SAP countries and the possible moving on to a further stage of the SAP to the following conditions:
 - co-operation with the ICTY;
 - implementation of an effective policy in favour of return of refugees and displaced persons;
 - implementation of active policies against corruption, organised crime, trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs;
 - Considers it undesirable that in the future a SAP country becomes member of the EU if and when that country has a bilateral agreement with the USA that jeopardises the full effectiveness of the ICC;
3. Points out that the successful completion of the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICTY has to rely on a full and swift co-operation from all governments of the SAP countries, in particular from those to whom transfer of fugitives has been requested (Croatian government, Serbian and Montenegro government, and the Bosnian Serb authorities);
4. Invites the Commission and the Council to give their full support to the ICTY Prosecutor in her accomplishment of the priorities for the next four years as set-up by the UN Security Council: complete investigations by 2004, ensure surrender of all remaining fugitives, and finalise all trials in 2008 and appeals in 2010;
5. Reiterates² that the Council and the Commission present a viable financial framework for the SAP countries under a restructured Heading 7 of the Financial Perspectives;
6. Calls on the Council and the Member States to start to prepare for the likely withdrawal of the US forces from the UN contingents in South-East Europe, and planning in due time their replacement with EU-lead peace-keeping forces;
7. Calls on the SAP countries to seriously address discrimination against the Roma population, including through adoption of effective anti-discrimination laws and systematic monitoring of access of Roma to education, housing, employment, health care and social services;

¹ P5_TA(2002)0534, 7.11.2002

² P5_TA-PROV(2003)0320, paragrah 35, 3.7.2003

8. Reiterates its proposal¹ that a deep reflection starts as to the future developments of the current institutional frameworks and the status of state-like entities, within the framework of the relevant UN resolutions;
9. Notes that States where, in practice, the rights of citizens depend on their ethnicity do not have a perspective towards EU accession;
10. Stresses that the present visa regime between the EU and SAP countries undermines and slows down the European perspective for these countries, and has become a source of humiliation for its citizens; calls on the Council and the Commission to establish clear benchmarks on how the visa-regimes with the SAP countries gradually can be developed and eased, as the countries undertake necessary reforms; is of the opinion that this will give a tangible sign that the EU is getting closer to the citizens of SAP countries;
11. Urges the Commission to encourage the creation of areas of facilitated freedom of movement between neighbouring regions, which will encourage the development of cross-border and regional co-operation;
12. Urges the Commission to promote and support setting up of twinning programmes at all levels and to support all actions facilitating the networking among the various actors in the EU and in the SAP countries;
13. Calls on the Commission to facilitate the setting-up of an effective administration, strengthening the structures of the State but also those of regional and communal administrations in the SAP countries and to assist and support the municipalities in programming economic development measures;
14. Encourages the participation of all citizens in the local administration, something which strengthens the sense of community; invites the Commission and the European Agency for Reconstruction to assist local authorities in adopting participatory budgets and promoting territorial communal planning;
15. Calls on the Commission to start proposals to implement the promises of the Thessaloniki Summit, in particular regarding access to the community programmes such as Socrates; encourages the SAP countries, as part of the EU's pre-accession strategy, to participate in the Community's programmes promoting gender equality;
16. Invites the SAP countries to promptly implement the free-trade agreements already signed; points out that refraining this implementation is an obstacle to the development of the SAP and of viable regional markets, further weakening the economic situation;
17. Calls on the Commission to take duly into account that reinforcing assistance to institution building is a prerequisite for a successful development of the SAP and to accompany such reinforcement by using all assistance capacities for the development of proper infrastructure;

¹ P5_TA(2002)0534, paragraph 4, 7.11.2002

18. Urges the Commission to support within CARDS local governments in selecting production sectors in which the establishment of small and medium sized enterprises will be facilitated, favouring traditional local economies; and to support the promotion of small loans and a local financial system, as a concrete aid for the economy and education to responsibility;
19. Insists therefore on the fact that in the forthcoming Action Plan, priority is given to structural and economic reforms leading to functioning market economies and achieving sustainable development;
20. Calls on the countries in the region, in the light of the unabated trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation (in particular in Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina), to take action, in cooperation with the 'countries of destination' at both internal and regional level, giving top priority to assistance to the victims, to training programmes for the services responsible and to prevention by increasing public awareness and informing public opinion;

Albania

21. Recalls that ensuring the proper functioning of democracy and pursuing political stability will be essential to speed up the implementation of reforms; deplores the obvious unsatisfactory conduction of the last local election;
22. Encourages the Albanian authorities to reinforce their commitment to proceed with the reforms initiated, as the successful conclusion of the SAA will depend on their ability to properly implement the legislation adopted and to achieve the necessary reforms;
23. Recommends that enhanced actions are taken to provide the means needed in the fight against corruption, organised crime, trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs; the functioning of an independent and efficient judicial system, improvement of Albania's administrative capacity, in particular in border management, the development of a free and independent media sector, and the promotion and guarantee of respect for human and minority rights;
24. Insists on the need to present before the end of 2003 an accurate evaluation of the size of the national minorities, in order to be able to properly implement throughout the country the national legislation on minorities and the Council of Europe conventions; invites the authorities to reinforce the Administration's structures in charge of the protection of minorities;

Bosnia-Herzegovina(BiH)

25. Recognises the important and difficult work of the OHR and the EU Special Representative in the implementation of his "Reform Agenda"; is of the opinion that international efforts should gradually shift to monitoring, facilitating and guiding, in order to implement the ownership principle;
26. Welcomes the government and the parliament of B&H having put the armies of the entities under one supreme command;
27. Welcomes the installation of a directorate for European Integration and a commission of both chambers for European Affairs; encourages the Bosnian parliament to decide soon on the law on common VAT and common custom reform;
28. Points out the contradiction of some political forces in BiH, which openly support European integration but obstruct the indispensable reforms needed for a functioning state; notes that BiH has to take responsibility for its own development and to rely less on the international community;
29. Reminds the Bosnian authorities that state-building is a precondition for getting closer to the EU; urges all the political and social actors to start a thorough evaluation of the existing institutions stemming from the Dayton agreements so as to make them viable and effective and, if necessary, to go beyond Dayton and create mechanisms that strengthen state building; in this spirit welcomes the enactment of longer terms for the executive authorities, which will lead to more effective governance;
30. Welcomes the return of refugees to their homeplaces in part of the country, which although slow proves that the global climat has been steadily improving; urges the authorities on all levels in the Republika Srpska to make finally strong efforts to make the refugee return especially to the Posavina region and to Banja Luka possible;
31. Emphasises that the most serious issues remain the continued impunity of indicted war criminals and problems with their extradition, which represent an obstacle for reconciliation and the development of mutual trust between the peoples; calls on the Bosnian authorities to fully co-operate with the ICTY; calls on Bosnian authorities at all levels of administration, the civil society and all other responsible actors to do their utmost so as to bring Karadic and Mladic to this Tribunal;
32. Urges the Commission to conclude its feasibility study on the possibility of opening negotiations on the SAA before the end of 2003;

Croatia

33. Insists¹ that intensive dialogue and diplomatic instruments continue to be the appropriate process to reach an agreement on borders; regrets that the Croatian authorities decided to declare the ecological and fishing zone without appropriate dialogue and coordination with the neighbouring countries; expects that an agreement on the further steps will be reached at the Venice Conference foreseen for 25-26 November;
34. Welcomes the new constitutional law on the rights of national minorities;
35. Praises the decision of Croatia not making a bilateral agreement with USA on the ICC, despite losing a lot of US financial support;
36. Welcomes the application of Croatia for the EU-membership and invites the Commission to adopt its opinion on this application by the end of March;
37. Draws the attention of the Croatian authorities to their interest in achieving significant improvements before the adoption of the Commission's opinion on Croatia's application to join the EU, in the following areas:
 - full implementation of all provisions in the recently adopted law on national minorities, in particular the representation of minorities in the judiciary and in the police and the provisions on housing to returning refugees, which will have a direct impact on the practices of local authorities and guarantee the unobstructed return of all refugees;
 - combat of corruption;
 - full co-operation with the ICTY as a necessary basis for reconciliation;
 - independence and freedom of media (in particular following international or EU recommendations to ensure the necessary transparency and independency of the sector and its regulatory authorities);
 - implementation of the strategy for the reform of the judicial system adopted in 2002;

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

38. Welcomes the proposed police follow-up to Concordia, but expects that the EU military presence will also be maintained as long as necessary;
39. Calls for further efforts for the full dismantlement of the Albanian National Liberation Army; insists on the essential role of regional co-operation and co-operation with the EU in putting an end to arms trafficking;

¹ P5_TA(2002)0534, paragraph 31, 7.11.2002

40. Urges the speeding-up of the implementation of the Ohrid agreement, in particular with regard to the reform of the Macedonian police and army, and the Amnesty Law for former NLA fighters;
41. Insists on the urgency of a more active policy against corruption and organised crime; calls on all political parties to condemn and oppose the use of violence;

Serbia and Montenegro

42. Points out that the EU should be ready to assist Serbia and Montenegro to work out a lasting arrangement, while adopting a neutral stance on what form that relationship should take;
43. Underlines the need to focus SAP/SAA technical assistance to the two republics on the practical issues that need to be resolved whatever the form of their ultimate relationship;
44. Encourages the Serbian government to press on with the current reform of the army so as to conclude it soon and effectively;
45. Points out that more action is needed in Serbia and Montenegro in favour of the fight against corruption and organised crime; calls on the Commission, and invites the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to examine with utmost urgency, the allegations of violations of human rights, the lack of independence of the judiciary and growing state influence over the media;
46. Calls on the Commission to find ways to create in close co-operation with the Regional Centre in Bucharest, a European network of associations for the fight against organised crime, trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs;
47. Calls on the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro to fully co-operate with the ICTY;
48. Expresses its deep concern at the current standstill in the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro; calls on both parties to resume talks so as to find a viable solution;
49. Urges the Commission to conclude its feasibility study on the possibility of opening negotiations on the SAA before the end of 2003;

Kosovo

50. Welcomes the start of the SAP Tracking Mechanism for Kosovo which, as a technical non political process will enable Kosovo to benefit from the opportunities provided by the SAP; believes nevertheless that without the definition of the final status of Kosovo

numerous subsidiary problems cannot be solved effectively;

51. Welcomes the start of direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina authorities which focus on practical issues of mutual interest; looks forward to the continuation of these talks;
52. Proposes that the EU, acting in co-operation with the United Nations, plays a more active role in establishing a roadmap and a time frame with the aim of reaching a conclusion on the final status of Kosovo as soon as possible and preferably within the next two years;
53. Is of the opinion that irrespective of the form of the final status - far reaching autonomy or independence - the Kosovo authorities must strengthen and enhance their efforts for a tolerant society with mutual respect of all ethnic groups according to European standards; Calls, therefore, on the Kosovo authorities to stick concretely to the principles of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious society and to co-operate actively with UNMIK so that the return of refugees and displaced persons, in particular minorities, is improved;
54. Urges the UN to speed up the process of devolution of power to the Provisional Self Government, excluding the agreed reserved areas;
55. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EU National Parliaments, the Governments and Parliaments of the SAP countries and the Special Co-ordinator for the Stability Pact.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Since the last EP report and resolution on the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process (November 2002) the European Parliament has taken the following initiatives with regard to the beneficiary countries of the EU Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP countries):
 - Public Hearing on an "Enhanced SAP for the SEE countries " (March 2003)
 - Organisation of the 4th Parliamentary Conference EU - Stability Pact Countries and adoption of its Recommendations to the EU-SAP countries Summit (May 2003)
 - Adoption of an EP resolution on its Recommendations to the EU-SAP countries Summit, which included new political and financial proposals for reinforcing the SAP and increasing its impact in the beneficiary countries (5 June 2003);
2. These initiatives were followed by the adoption of the "EU Council Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans "(16 June 2003) and the Joint Declaration of the EU Heads of Government, the acceding and candidate countries and the SAP countries, on the Perspective of the SAP and Accession to the EU (21 June 2003).
3. The Committee on Foreign Affairs decided to prepare, by the end of this year, a report on the implementation of the SAP and the coming challenges. This report will have to take into account not only the positions expressed in the above-mentioned EP initiatives, but also the new Council approach and the EU-SAP countries Joint Declaration of 21 June. It will also take into account the detailed country assessment reports presented by the Commission in May 2003 and development in these countries since that date
4. The rapporteur's approach will therefore be based on the following principles:
 - The need to reiterate the political approach followed in its previous resolution on the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) of November 2002, in particular as regards those recommendations and requests which are still valid and whose non-implementation can jeopardise the political conditionality of the process,
 - The preparation of the countries of South East Europe for their future integration into the European structures is a major priority of the European Union,
 - The SAP must already be considered a strategy for accession which goes beyond the status of potential candidates contained in the Zagreb Declaration, as recognised in the Thessaloniki Joint Declaration,
 - The progress of each country towards EU membership, will depend on its own merits in meeting the Copenhagen criteria and the conditions set for the SAP,
 - Support for the decision to strengthen the Stabilisation and Association policy

towards the region, by using elements of the successful experience of enlargement, as requested by the EP (e.g. European Partnerships), which will give fresh impetus to the process,

- Recognition that the SAP countries have become the most challenging test case for a mature and effective European Common Foreign and Security Policy,
 - The need to ensure the follow-up of its resolutions regarding the International Criminal Court and the EP position regarding the consequences for the SAP countries in the case of the adoption and entry into force of bilateral agreements with the USA under art 98 of the Rome Statute,
 - The need to maintain the co-ordination between UN Security Council decisions on the ICTY and the approaches to be followed by the ÉU with the SAP countries
5. The report also aims to give clear guidelines to the SAP countries on the best way to tackle the specific challenges each one of them is facing on their path towards the European Union and their on-going negotiations with the EU institutions.

6 October 2003

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, EXTERNAL TRADE, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

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

on the Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe, Second Annual Report
(COM(2003) 139 – 2003/2094(INI))

Draftsman: Myrsini Zorba

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy appointed Myrsini Zorba draftsman at its meeting of 19 June 2003.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 26 August 2003 and 2 October 2003 .

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 37 votes to 2.

The following were present for the vote Luis Berenguer Fuster, chairman, Peter Michael Mombaur, vice-chairman, Yves Piétrasanta, vice-chairman, Myrsini Zorba, draftswoman, Konstantinos Alyssandrakis, Sir Robert Atkins, Gérard Caudron, Giles Bryan Chichester, Nicholas Clegg, Willy C.E.H. De Clercq, Harlem Désir, Carlo Fatuzzo (for Angelika Niebler), Concepció Ferrer, Francesco Fiori (for Guido Bodrato), Christos Folias (for Dominique Vlasto), Norbert Glante, Michel Hansenne, Werner Langen, Rolf Linkohr, Caroline Lucas, Eryl Margaret McNally, Erika Mann, Marjo Matikainen-Kallström, Ana Clara Maria Miranda de Lage, Bill Newton Dunn (for Colette Flesch), Seán Ó Neachtain, Reino Paasilinna, Paolo Pastorelli, Elly Plooij-van Gorsel, John Purvis, Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, Imelda Mary Read, Mechtild Rothe, Christian Foldberg Røvsing, Paul Rübig, Konrad K. Schwaiger, Esko Olavi Seppänen, W.G. van Velzen, Olga Zrihen Zaari.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the Communication from the commission to the Council and European Parliament on the Western Balkans and European Integration (COM (2003) 285 final)
1. Considers the Second Report on the Stabilisation and Association process for South East Asia and the Commission Communication on the Western Balkans and European Integration indispensable for laying down the priorities and constraints for both the EU and the countries concerned; however, both should be assessed in the context of the undertakings set by the Thessaloniki European Council of 19-20 June 2003, in particular, its endorsement of the Council Conclusions of 16 June 2003 on the Thessaloniki agenda for the Western Balkans and the 2003 Annual Council Review of the SAP and the declaration by the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 21 June 2003;
 2. Believes that the proposal from the Commission for launching the European Integration Partnerships for the Western Balkans merits careful consideration but this should be a medium-term objective based on an Action Plan setting out the urgent measures and actions to be undertaken by the SAP countries in the short term; the Action Plan should, inter alia, contain an enhanced support for institution building, infrastructure projects, regional trade and economic co-operation projects, Community financial support to the SAP countries and projects concerning ethnic reconciliation, promotion of tolerance, development of civil society, combating trafficking in human beings and coping with illegal immigration;
 3. Insists on the fact that, in the forthcoming Action Plan, priority may be given to structural and economic reforms leading to functioning market economies and achieving sustainable development; in this context, the opening of all Community programmes to the SAP countries on the basis of framework agreements based on criteria similar to the ones adopted for the candidate countries, entailing effective monitoring and control mechanisms, would be desirable and effective in pursuing the basic objective of integration of the SPA countries in the European family;
 4. Believes that for an Action Plan to be successful it needs adequate financing which, apart from the CARDS programme and macro-financial assistance (MFA), may be mobilised by the European Investment Bank, International Financial Institutions and private foreign investment, seeking to finance networks and infrastructures in energy, transport and telecommunications, environment and water projects;
 5. Reiterates its view that the pace of integration into the EU would ultimately depend on the SAP countries and that the proposed Action Plan should be considered as an instrument seeking to achieve this objective; in this sense, the EU's autonomous trade measures (ATMs) of 2000, establishing a uniform system of trade preferences for the SAP countries could be reconsidered by extending the system of pan-European diagonal cumulation of origin to the countries of the Western Balkans and by including the exempted fishery, baby-beef, wine and textile products;

6. Stresses the need to tackle the underlying causes of structural rigidities associated with the role and functioning of large public companies, the banking sector, business practices, corruption, poor customs infrastructure and substantial underground economy; such rigidities create in the main an uneven playing field for economic operators, reduce tax collection, increase the inequality in income distribution and poverty; in this context, the Action Plan should be conceived as an instrument that would eliminate gradually these structural rigidities, seeking to establish a sound economic environment;
7. Reiterates its view expressed over the CARDS programme that institution building is a prerequisite for a successful integration of the Western Balkans into the EU family but specific steps should be taken, for example, by strengthening "twinning programmes" by the secondment of civil servants from the EU Member States to work as advisers in the SAP countries and by extending technical assistance, such as TAIEX-like services, to the said region.

7 October 2003

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

on the Stabilisation and Association process for South East Europe: second annual report (COM(2003) 139 – 2003/2094(INI))

Draftsman: Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities appointed Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou draftsman at its meeting of 20 May 2003.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 11 September and 2 October 2003.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 19 votes to 0, with 1 abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Anna Karamanou (chairman), Olga Zrihen Zaari (vice-chairman), Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (draftsman), Ulla Maija Aaltonen, María Antonia Avilés Perea, Regina Bastos, Johanna L.A. Boogerd-Quaak, Armonia Bordes, Lone Dybkjær, Ilda Figueiredo (for Geneviève Fraisse), Fiorella Ghilardotti, Thomas Mann, Maria Martens, Ria G.H.C. Oomen-Ruijten, (for Emilia Franziska Müller) Miet Smet, Patsy Sørensen, Joke Swiebel, Feleknas Uca, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco and Sabine Zissener.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

1. Regrets that the Commission includes neither information concerning the position of women nor separate statistics and data for men and women in its second annual report, since that would have helped in the assessment of the current situation and in the evaluation of the impact of the various policies implemented for women and men; calls on the Commission to include such information in its next annual report;
2. Considers it essential for the beneficiary countries to incorporate gender mainstreaming in their stabilisation and democratisation strategies in all areas of economic, political and social life, as well as measures to combat discrimination, and for developments in this field to be included in the EU's annual report;
3. Calls on the Commission to encourage the countries of south-east Europe, as it encouraged the applicant countries as part of the EU's pre-accession strategy, to participate in the Community's programmes to promote gender equality and, in particular, in the Community's action programmes: (a) on gender equality (2001-2005), (b) on combating discrimination (2001-2006) and (c) on measures to prevent violence against children, young people and women (DAPHNE);
4. Approves the proposals of the Council¹ and the Commission² which seek to ensure that the CARDS budget is increased by more than EUR 200 million for the period 2004-2006 and calls on the Commission to fund programmes and initiatives designed to promote gender equality, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 2666/2000³;
5. Calls on the countries in the region, in the light of the unabated trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation (in particular in Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina), to take action, in cooperation with the 'countries of destination' at both internal and regional level, giving top priority to assistance to the victims, to training programmes for the services responsible and to prevention by increasing public awareness and informing public opinion; calls, moreover, on those countries to adopt, within a specific timeframe, all the legislation required for the conclusion of agreements with Europol so that police authorities may cooperate in a practicable and effective manner; also calls on the Commission to support the work of the Consultative Task Forces operating under the Stabilisation Agreement for South East Europe with regard to gender issues and combating trafficking in human beings;

¹ 10369/03 (Presse 166), 2518th Council meeting - External Relations - Luxembourg, 16 June 2003.

² COM(2003)139, COM(2003) 285.

³ Regulation (EC) No 2666/2000 on EU financial aid to beneficiary countries - CARDS.

6. Considers it essential for the beneficiary countries to incorporate gender mainstreaming in their stabilisation and democratisation strategies (for the period 2004-2006) in all areas of economic, political and social life and for them to encourage the activities of civil society and, in particular, of women's organisations, with a view to the balanced participation of women in the decision-making process; takes the view that, if such an effective strategy is to be implemented, specific timetables must be laid down for the attainment of predetermined quantitative and qualitative targets for women;
7. Calls on the Commission and the countries of south-east Europe to focus particularly on and to develop national and local action programmes designed to tackle the problems of minorities (Roma), refugees and displaced persons;
8. Deems significant the proposal put forward by the External Relations Council on 16 June 2003, i.e. that the European Affairs Committees of the parliaments of the countries of the region should convene a Balkan Conference of European Affairs Committees, and calls, in that connection, for the establishment of a dialogue on equality and the promotion of women's rights and the problem of trafficking in human beings;
9. Acknowledges the importance of respect for human rights and minorities in the sensitive Balkan region and calls, therefore, on the countries concerned and the applicant countries to sign and ratify the 1950 Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).