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## REPORT

on the Commission's Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main  
Challenges 2006–2007  
(2006/2252(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Elmar Brok

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the Commission's Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007 (2006/2252(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission's Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007 (COM(2006)0649),
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2006 on Turkey's progress towards accession<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A6-0436/2006),

Whereas:

- A. the European Union is a political project based on shared values and commonly pursued objectives,
- B. the EU has evolved into a political union of democracies which is itself committed to democratic standards and to developing a vivid democratic culture,
- C. the incentive offered by the EU membership prospect has undeniably contributed to the promotion of reforms, the consolidation of democracy, the enhancement of respect of human rights and the increasing of stability in neighbouring countries,
- D. the EU must proceed from its irreversible commitment to democracy and from its understanding that democracy only functions if the demos – the citizenry of Europe – recognises and supports its own enlargement through the accession of new Member States and their citizens,
- E. the European Parliament, in conjunction with national parliaments, and with the support of regional and local authorities and civil society bodies, can contribute to enhancing the transparency and accountability of the enlargement process and thereby increase public consensus on this issue,
- F. enlargement should not undermine the political nature of this project; on the contrary, it should – as laid down in the Treaty – contribute to the European integration process and to the achievement of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe; it should promote peace, security, democracy and prosperity in Europe,
- G. for that reason, the Union's integration capacity must be taken into account when consideration is given to the future of the Union,

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<sup>1</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2006)0381.

- H. the declaration issued at the June 1993 Copenhagen Summit mentioned as an important consideration 'the Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration',
- I. Member States and the EU Institutions must address courageously the institutional, financial and political factors which underlie the Union's capacity to integrate new Member States,
- J. this presupposes a thorough analysis of the implications which increased membership may entail for the Union's cohesion policies and for its finances,
- K. integration capacity is an evolutionary concept which must be assessed regularly over time in the light of new circumstances,
- L. integration capacity is based on objective criteria and addresses concrete problems and therefore should not be confused with public perception of the impact of further enlargements,
- M. integration capacity is not a new criterion applicable to the candidate countries but a condition for the success of enlargement and for the deepening of the process of European integration; the responsibility for improving its integration capacity lies with the Union and not with the candidate countries,
- N. acceding and candidate countries must comply with the Copenhagen Criteria and all other obligations stemming from the EU Treaties and bilateral agreements,
  - 1. Agrees with the Commission that past enlargements have been a success, have strengthened the European Union by stimulating its economic growth, reinforcing its role in the world and promoting the development of new EU policies, and have promoted democracy, peace and prosperity in Europe; recalls that this has been based on the widespread support for past enlargements as the fulfilment of the initial mission of European integration to reunite the European continent after the political divisions of the 20th century;
  - 2. Notes nevertheless that lessons can be learned from past experience, notably the need to judge each country on its own merits and to negotiate its accession in accordance with a timetable based on effective compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, as well as the need to avoid naming a date for final accession too soon;
  - 3. Believes that these lessons should be used to improve the quality and transparency of the enlargement process;
  - 4. Is of the opinion that the Union should honour its commitments towards the countries which already have membership prospects, provided those countries comply with the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership and fulfil the obligations resulting therefrom; underlines that respect of these commitments is a strong incentive for those countries to pursue their reforms;
  - 5. Agrees that consolidation, conditionality and communication are the guiding principles of

the EU Enlargement Strategy; is of the view that any further commitment to enlarge will require far more in-depth scrutiny than ever before of the question of the Union's integration capacity, whether from an institutional, financial or political standpoint;

6. Therefore regrets the Commission's failure to provide a sufficiently in-depth analysis of the issues which need to be resolved before the Union can proceed with further enlargements;
7. Considers the section on the Union's integration capacity an unsatisfactory answer to Parliament's request for a "report ... setting out the principles which underpin this concept"<sup>1</sup>;
8. Is of the opinion that the integration capacity of the Union rests fundamentally on three pillars, namely its institutions and their legitimacy and ability to act and take decisions democratically and efficiently under new circumstances, its financial resources and their overall contribution to economic and social cohesion, and the capacity of an enlarged Union to pursue its political objectives;
9. Recalls that the responsibility for improving its integration capacity therefore lies with the Union and not with the candidate countries;
10. Believes that the European Union can only expect its citizens to have a positive attitude towards enlargement if they see a Europe that delivers results; emphasises, therefore, that integration capacity cannot be seen in isolation from the EU's capacity to act; considers that enlargement should be a part of the Union's Citizens' Agenda and should be communicated accordingly;
11. Considers that the Union can only function properly if all of its members share common values arising from a European identity;
12. Believes that failure to ensure that the EU's integration capacity matches its enlargement agenda would weaken the Union internally and externally and reduce the benefits of growing membership for all its members, and that this effect would not be compensated by increased external size;
13. Criticises the Commission for the superficial way in which it deals with the institutional aspects, and refers in this respect to the relevant report of its Committee on Constitutional Affairs;
14. Recalls the terms of Parliament's resolution of 19 January 2006 on the period of reflection<sup>2</sup> and reaffirms that, following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the Treaty of Nice does not provide an adequate basis for further enlargements;
15. Therefore urges the Heads of State and Government to conclude the constitutional process by the end of 2008, as stated at the European Council of June 2006, in order to enable the Union to work more effectively, more transparently and more democratically, which is a

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 16 March 2006 on the 2005 enlargement strategy paper, *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2006)0096, paragraph 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2006)0027.

necessary pre-requisite for further enlargements;

16. Reminds Heads of State and Government of their duty to complete this process before the next European elections, so as to avoid delay in current accession negotiations;
17. Emphasises that the institutional overhaul of the Union is a need per se, regardless of further enlargements, and should be pursued rigorously and expeditiously;
18. Confirms that accession negotiations will progress according to the merits and achievements of each negotiating partner;
19. Welcomes and supports the Commission's commitment to improve the quality of the accession process by making it more benchmark-driven and transparent and by systematically making impact assessments on key policy areas at key stages of the process;
20. Takes the view that the planned revision of the Union's budget in 2008/2009 must factor in the future integration of the current candidate and pre-candidate countries;
21. Points out that the Commission's Communication does not deal thoroughly with the financial implications of further enlargements and calls on the Commission to provide clear and credible estimates of the budgetary impact before any further accession;
22. Reiterates that this debate involves difficult choices, including adjusting the Union's common policies and redistributing resources amongst Member States;
23. Takes the view that the financial impact of further enlargements, the complexity of which has been implicitly recognised by Heads of State and Government when they declined to factor it into the 2007-2013 Financial Framework, must be urgently addressed; calls on the General Affairs and ECOFIN Councils to hold a joint debate on this issue;
24. Emphasises that compliance with the political criteria set out at the Copenhagen European Summit, including in the area of the rule of law, should be given greater priority than has hitherto been the case in accession negotiations, and that a direct link should be established between those criteria and the start as well as the overall pace of negotiations;
25. Welcomes in this respect the inclusion in the current negotiating framework of a chapter on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights covering the political issues, which will enable EU institutions closely to scrutinise progress in these crucial areas;
26. Recalls that all the institutions, including the European Parliament itself, have been too lenient and complacent in the past, in particular concerning progress in the fields of justice, corruption and fundamental rights in the early phases of negotiations; pledges to take a much more active role in monitoring the accession process, with particular emphasis on its political aspects, and calls upon the Council to do the same and to issue clear and duly reasoned recommendations to candidate countries rather than merely taking note of technical progress in the negotiations;

27. Recalls the clear European membership prospects which the EU Thessaloniki Summit offered to the western Balkan countries; believes that these prospects have to be maintained in order to consolidate stability and peace in the region; reminds those countries that they will each be assessed on the basis of their own merits and that this will determine the pace of their integration into the EU;
28. Welcomes the decision of the Council of 13 November 2006 to adopt the negotiation mandates for visa facilitation and re-admission agreements with western Balkan countries as a first step in promoting people-to-people contacts between those countries and the EU;
29. Welcomes the continued progress made by the candidate country Croatia towards EU integration and calls on the negotiators on both sides to maintain the momentum reached in these negotiations with a view to their early conclusion;
30. Notes the Commission's Turkey 2006 Progress Report, which, whilst stating that political reforms in Turkey have continued, points out that their pace has slowed down and confirms the shortcomings in the reform process already laid out in Parliament's resolution of 27 September 2006 on Turkey's progress towards accession; insists that this also includes the ratification and the full implementation by Turkey of the Additional Protocol extending the EC–Turkey Association Agreement to the ten new Member States, signed by Turkey in July 2005, in compliance with the EU Declaration of 21 September 2005;
31. Supports the efforts of Finnish Presidency to find a solution to end the current stalemate and calls on Turkey to cooperate in a constructive way to ensure full implementation of the Additional Protocol by the end of 2006;
32. Urges the Council to take on new commitments only on the basis of an in-depth assessment of their institutional, financial, political and socio-economic consequences; therefore calls on the Commission to provide comprehensive impact assessments whenever it considers new applications for membership and when it submits its recommendations on the opening and closing of negotiations;
33. Asks for Parliament's right of assent to apply not just after the conclusion of the negotiation process but also before the opening of membership negotiations;
34. Notes that as the EU continues to conduct, and open, enlargement negotiations with the countries of the Balkans, tackling endemic corruption and regional organised crime networks will become an increasingly important feature of the road to membership; strongly recommends, therefore, that current enlargement financial instruments are strengthened and re-focused so as to target, as a top priority, the fight against corruption and organised crime, with particular emphasis on reforming judiciaries, reinforcing public administrative capacity and improving cross-border cooperation;
35. Reminds Member States' governments and national parliaments that it is their responsibility to inform the public adequately about the benefits of past enlargements and the stakes involved in further enlargements, and that they should provide the public with reasons for the decisions they take, unanimously, throughout the accession process;
36. Therefore calls on the Commission to work together with Member States, the European

Parliament and national parliaments in order to communicate the enlargement agenda more effectively to the public, thus increasing the transparency of the process;

37. Welcomes the recommendation made by the Commission that screening reports, benchmarks for opening negotiation chapters and the final EU common position be made public;
38. Urges the Commission to provide a more precise definition of "reinforced Neighbourhood Policy" and to specify in detail what this type of relationship would involve;
39. Reiterates its previous call on the Commission and the Council to submit, for all European countries currently without membership prospects, proposals for a close bilateral or multilateral relationship with the EU which matches their specific needs and interests; emphasises that it is up to all countries with recognised membership prospects to join this multilateral framework as an intermediate step towards full membership;
40. Calls in this context on the Commission and the Council to consider establishing, as part of the reinforced Neighbourhood Strategy, an EU-Black Sea Community in order to build stronger bilateral or multilateral economic and political relations between EU and ENP countries in the region, particularly with regard to free trade, as is the case for the Central European Free Trade Agreement, investment, energy security and migration policy;
41. Is of the opinion that the above options, which entail a broad spectrum of operational possibilities, could constitute a real and attractive option which, without excluding full membership, would grant partner countries a stable long-term perspective of institutionalised relations with the EU and provide the incentive necessary in order to promote the internal reforms required in the countries in question;
42. Invites the Commission and the Council in this context to consider modulating Community assistance in the light of the progress made by beneficiary countries in achieving the reforms required for their European integration;
43. Underlines that while Russia is neither a candidate for EU membership nor part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, relations with the EU's largest neighbour nevertheless remain vital in the context of any future EU enlargement strategy; urges that in this context the EU must continue all attempts to develop a unique and wide-ranging partnership with Russia, encompassing trade and energy, but above all human rights and democratisation issues;
44. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and to the Commission.



## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	The Commission's Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007
<b>Procedure number</b>	2006/2252(INI)
<b>Committee responsible</b> Date authorisation announced in plenary	AFET 29.11.2006
<b>Committee(s) asked for opinion(s)</b> Date announced in plenary	
<b>Not delivering opinion(s)</b> Date of decision	
<b>Rapporteur</b> Date appointed	Elmar Brok 17.10.2006
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	22.11.2006
<b>Date adopted</b>	23.11.2006
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ 44 - 5 0 4
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Panagiotis Beglitis, Bastiaan Belder, André Brie, Elmar Brok, Philip Claey's, Véronique De Keyser, Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos, Alfred Gomolka, Klaus Hänsch, Richard Howitt, Anna Ibrisagic, Georgios Karatzaferis, Helmut Kuhne, Vytautas Landsbergis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Pierre Moscovici, Pasqualina Napoletano, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Tobias Pflüger, Mirosław Mariusz Piotrowski, Paweł Bartłomiej Piskorski, Bernd Posselt, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Jacek Emil Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, Gitte Seeberg, Marek Siwiec, István Szent-Iványi, Antonio Tajani, Paavo Väyrynen, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Luis Yañez-Barnuevo García, Josef Zieleniec
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Francisco Assis, Alexandra Dobolyi, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, Carlo Fatuzzo, Kinga Gál, Milan Horáček, Tunne Kelam, Jaromír Kohlíček, Alexander Lambsdorff, Jaime Mayor Oreja, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, Doris Pack
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Adamos Adamou, Pilar Ayuso, Panayiotis Demetriou, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Marios Matsakis, Neil Parish, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides
<b>Date tabled</b>	29.11.2006