

European Parliament resolution on Hungary's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations (5 September 2001)

Caption: On 5 September 2001, the European Parliament adopts a resolution on Hungary's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations.

Source: European Parliament resolution on Hungary's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations (COM(2000) 705 - C5-0605/2000 - 1997/2175 (COS)). [ON-LINE]. [Strasbourg]: European Parliament, [20.05.2005]. A5-0257/2001. Available on http://www3.europarl.eu.int/pv2/pv2?PRG=CALDOC&TPV=PROV&FILE=010905&TXTLST=1&POS=1&SDOCTA=14&Type_Doc=FIRST&LANGUE=EN.

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European Parliament resolution on Hungary's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations (5 September 2001)

(COM(2000) 705 - C5-0605/2000 - 1997/2175 (COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Hungary's application for membership of the European Union, submitted on 31 March 1994, pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the 2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Hungary's progress towards accession (COM(2000) 705 - C5-0605/2000),
 - having regard to the Enlargement Strategy paper on progress towards accession by each of the candidate countries presented by the Commission (COM(2000) 700),
 - having regard to the decisions taken by the European Council, notably at Copenhagen (21 and 22 June 1993), Helsinki (10 and 11 December 1999), Nice (7-9 December 2000) and Gothenburg (15 and 16 June 2001),
 - having regard to the Accession Partnership for Hungary concluded in 1999,
 - having regard to its resolution of 4 October 2000 on Hungary's membership application to the European Union and the state of negotiations (COM(1999) 505 - C5-0028/2000-1997/2175(COS))⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 31 May 2001 on the Treaty of Nice and the future of the European Union (2001/2022(INI))⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) 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 other committees concerned (A5-0257/2001),
- A. whereas in June 2000 Hungary became the first associated country to embark on the second phase of the Association Agreement with the European Community and its Member States,
- B. whereas Hungary possesses stable institutions capable of guaranteeing democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law,
- C. whereas the work of the Hungarian parliament has continued in line with the 2000 programme for the approximation of legislation,
- D. having regard to the progress achieved in the implementation of the public administration development and modernisation programme adopted in May 1999, whose key objectives are deregulation, deconcentration and decentralisation,
- E. whereas the training to prepare Hungarian officials for EU accession, covering 17 000 officials between 1999 and 2002, is progressing satisfactorily,
- F. whereas the judicial system is generally continuing to operate in a satisfactory manner and it is hoped that the backlog of trials pending in the Supreme Court may largely be overcome by training new judges, recently adopted legislation and the establishment of a new appeal court (Regional Court),
- G. whereas the alarming levels of corruption in Hungary mean that legislative and administrative measures to combat this phenomenon must be reinforced,

- H. whereas Hungary has already subscribed to most of the main international human rights conventions, and its constitutional rights are adequately protected,
- I. whereas the authorities have adopted a programme to modernise existing facilities and build two new prisons to tackle the problem of prison overcrowding,
- J. whereas progress has been achieved in promoting equality between women and men, in the shape of a new law which reverses the burden of proof in the event of discrimination,
- K. whereas legislation has been adopted on social benefits in favour of the handicapped and on public education and specific job creation programmes,
- L. whereas the situation of the Roma population continues to require special attention, despite the fact that the Hungarian government has already begun to implement its medium-term programme,
- M. whereas the macroeconomic situation in Hungary has stabilised and an appropriate institutional framework is in place to allow the sustained growth of the economy, so that it can cope in the short term with the pressure of competition and market forces within the European Union,
- N. whereas, however, the inflation rate still stands at some 10% and is thus the main weak spot in Hungary's macroeconomic situation,
- O. whereas the healthcare system is in particular need of urgent reform, despite the steps already taken in privatising the activities of general practitioners,
- P. whereas Hungary continues to make substantial progress in transposing and implementing the *acquis communautaire* in most sectors,
- Q. whereas Hungary is endeavouring to ensure that the *acquis communautaire* is fully translated into Hungarian, and, whereas some 60% has already been translated,
- R. whereas Hungary has responded satisfactorily to most of the short-term priorities set out in the Accession Partnership, and has already begun to adopt some measures aimed at achieving the medium-term priorities set out in this vein,
1. Welcomes the agreement reached by all the political parties represented in the Hungarian Parliament on Hungarian accession to the European Union, and notes the consensus reached as regards the prior organisation of a referendum on accession;
 2. Insists, therefore on the need to fix firm dates for the conclusion of negotiations and accession - since the Treaty of Nice has now been signed - so as to help forestall any disappointment or even discontent on the part of the Hungarian public;
 3. Urges the European Union to pursue the strategy for enlargement mapped out at the European Council meeting in Helsinki in December 1999, and agrees to the policy of differentiating between the applicant countries on the basis of merit;
 4. Notes the generally positive reaction of Hungary to the Treaty of Nice, despite the unjustifiable different treatment in terms of the number of MEPs who will represent the Hungarian people in the European Parliament; suggests therefore that the number of Hungarian MEPs be increased to 22;
 5. Highlights the desire expressed by the Hungarian Government and Parliament to promote the post-Nice

debate launched by the Union and to play an active role therein;

6. Confirms once again that Hungary complies with the political criteria set out in Copenhagen;
7. Draws attention to the fact that the medium-term plan adopted by the Hungarian Government to promote the integration of the Roma minority in Hungarian society must be backed by practical and immediate support measures in the fields of education, employment and housing, inter alia, some of which are already under way, and which must be coordinated with the representatives of the Roma community and monitored jointly with them; believes that discrimination against Roma is largely due to existing prejudices and attitudes and that it can only be eliminated through information and education;
8. Urges Hungary to decide on and work with all special regulations and privileges for foreign citizens of Hungarian origin in compliance with the *acquis communautaire* and with respect to the neighbouring countries;
9. Takes note of the adoption of the law on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries, as well as of the concerns expressed about it by the Governments of Romania and Slovakia; calls on the Commission to present an evaluation of this type of law in general with regard to its compatibility with the *acquis*, as well as with the spirit of good neighbourhood and cooperation among Member States;
10. Calls for the opposition parties to be adequately represented on the boards of the public media;
11. Recommends that, despite all the legislation adopted and implemented, the Hungarian government and all the authorities involved should systematically intensify the fight against corruption, and be equally resolute in tackling organised crime, drugs, prostitution and the trafficking in human beings which is linked to it;
12. Stresses that Hungary is a country of origin, transit and destination for the widespread trafficking of women and children for prostitution and sexual exploitation; calls on the Hungarian Government to take forceful measures to combat trafficking in human beings and child prostitution, and to ensure that victims and witnesses are guaranteed protection, health care, and legal and psychological assistance;
13. Wishes in this regard that Hungary continue to participate in Community programmes, notably the fifth action programme on equal opportunities for women and men (2001-2005); calls on the Commission and on Hungary systematically to incorporate the concept of 'gender mainstreaming' in all policies and reforms undertaken;
14. Calls on the Hungarian government to eliminate provisions in the penal code that discriminate against homosexual men and lesbian women, notably Article 199, a provision that is declared contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights by the European Commission of Human Rights;
15. Notes that the economic problems, the opening-up of borders, organised crime and the increase in the severity of prison sentences as well as the failure to renovate prisons over the last 40 years have led to serious overcrowding, and therefore encourages the Hungarian authorities to allocate the necessary financial means to rehabilitate existing prisons and build a second new prison centre, to help solve the problem of prison overcrowding in Hungary;
16. Notes that the state, employers and employees are all doing more to promote a representative and autonomous social dialogue, and reminds the Hungarian government and the social partners that increased efforts are needed in the field of social conciliation; welcomes, however, the approximately 60% rise in the national minimum wages, and calls on the Hungarian government to encourage the signing of collective bargaining agreements by industrial sectors, alongside the existing company agreements;
17. Highlights the consolidation of the macroeconomic situation in Hungary, which has improved over the last year, as indicated by the growth of the economy, foreign investment, employment and productivity and

exports;

18. Urges the Hungarian government and the Hungarian monetary authorities to focus all their efforts on combating inflation, which is still far higher than the eurozone average, and at the same time to streamline public finances;
19. Takes note of the decision by the Hungarian Government and Parliament to adopt a two-year budget, primarily in order to establish a stable and predictable budgetary framework which will facilitate the conclusion of accession negotiations;
20. Draws attention to the considerable disparities between regions in Hungary, and notes that currently all regions would be eligible under Objective 1; proposes that the government adopt a determined approach to Hungary's existing regional disparities and promote economic and social cohesion within the country, and intensify its efforts in the preparation for EU structural funds;
21. Notes the adoption of a new labour code based on the principle of the flexibility and mobility of labour with a view to adapting the rules and organisation of the labour market to the need for economic growth and professional skills;
22. Warns the Hungarian government of the need to complete the setting-up of the administrative structures for the implementation of the CAP, notably in the veterinary and plant health subsectors, given that these are the basic structures of the *acquis communautaire* in agriculture;
23. Remains particularly mindful of the ongoing harmonisation of the legislative framework governing the environment, and particularly issues concerning its practical implementation and integration in other policy areas; notes in particular the recent progress achieved in coordination at ministerial level and the consequent increase in the powers of the Ministry of the Environment;
24. Highlights the concern shown by the Hungarian authorities to cooperate with neighbouring countries in protecting and rehabilitating the environment; emphasises the progress achieved in monitoring air quality, and in particular the agreement reached with the six main electricity power plants on reducing pollution caused by emissions;
25. Reminds the Hungarian government of the need to bring Hungarian legislation more closely into line with European legislation in the field of transport, particularly as regards the need for effective means to ensure that social and environmental standards in this field are met; notes that within the framework of the common transport policy, new Community laws of great importance for restructuring in this sector need to be adopted before Hungarian accession;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Hungary.

(1) OJ C 178, 22.6.2001, p.146.

(2) Texts Adopted, Item 4.