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31. Believes that Lithuania may also be in a good position to promote alternative solutions, such as a more extensive biomass exploitation including biofuel production, the creation of new co-generation plants and the increase of gas use in the energy mix after undertaking the necessary feasibility studies, and that this might contribute in a limited, yet valuable way, to energy supply and also to rural development;

32. Considers that, because of the similarity between the challenges that EU candidate and non-candidate countries in the region face in certain areas, possibilities to develop regional cooperation in these areas should be examined;

33. Emphasises Lithuania's right to determine its own security policy independently and welcomes Lithuania's efforts to integrate across the range of Euro-Atlantic security structures as a step towards reducing the different security zones in Europe;

34. Points out that, following enlargement, Kaliningrad will become an enclave within the European Union with a considerably lower standard of living than adjoining areas; welcomes in that regard the fact that Russia has given Kaliningrad special economic status, which may mean the possibility of greater economic growth in the region; notes with satisfaction that Lithuania continues to play a constructive role in efforts to enhance cooperation with Russia in relation to the Kaliningrad oblast, but stresses that the EU's involvement in dialogue with Russia must be strengthened, particularly to ensure the possibility of free movement between Kaliningrad and Russia, and between Kaliningrad and adjoining EU countries, including within the framework of Schengen cooperation;

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35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Lithuania.

11. State of accession negotiations with Poland

A5-0254/2001

European Parliament resolution on Poland's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations (COM(2000) 709 – C5-0609/2000 – 1997/2174(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Poland's application for membership of the European Union submitted on 5 April 1994 pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the 2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Poland's progress towards accession (COM(2000) 709 – C5-0609/2000),
- 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 (21/22 June 1993), Luxembourg (12/13 December 1997), Helsinki (10/11 December 1999), Nice (7-9 December 2000) and Gothenburg (15/16 June 2001),
- having regard to the Accession Partnership with Poland concluded in 1999,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 October 2000 on Poland's application for membership of the European Union and the state of negotiations⁽¹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 178, 22.6.2001, p. 138.

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- having regard to its resolution of 31 May 2001 on the Treaty of Nice and the future of the European Union (2001/2022(INI))⁽¹⁾,
 - 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 (A5-0254/2001),
- A. whereas the Polish Government has stressed that the country will be ready to join the Union with effect from 1 January 2003,
- B. noting that Poland continues fully to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- C. noting that the Polish Government responded positively to the Nice summit and has frequently expressed its desire to be associated with the debates on the institutional future of Europe,
- D. whereas Polish farmers were the only ones in communist central Europe who managed to keep privately-owned agriculture; whereas Polish agricultural practices are still characterised by structural difficulties stemming from farm fragmentation and over-employment; whereas possibilities to create alternative job in rural areas continue to be limited,
- E. whereas the macroeconomic situation is generally encouraging and inflation and exports are showing clear signs of improvement,
- F. whereas the official unemployment rate nevertheless remains high (16 %) and is concentrated in the rural areas of north-eastern Poland; taking into account that the 'National Action Plan for Employment and Development (NAP)' adopted in summer 2000 contains sound measures in line with EU employment strategy,
- G. recognising the Polish Government's commitment to the reforms undertaken in the sectors of health, pensions, education and public administration and inviting the Polish authorities to continue efforts to ensure the rapid and effective implementation of these reforms,
- H. stressing that a major task now is to increase the stability and efficiency of Poland's judiciary and public administration, in particular, police services, customs, border guards and financial control,
- I. noting that the Union is intensifying its pre-accession aid, notably through its financial contribution in the context of the financial framework agreed upon by the Berlin European Council (24/25 March 1999) for the years 2000 to 2006; welcoming the conclusion of the multiannual and annual financing agreements with Poland under the Sapard programme,
- J. whereas the activities of the EU-Poland joint parliamentary committee have made a significant contribution to mutual understanding and continue to have a beneficial influence on accession preparations,
1. Calls on Poland to speed up effective and verifiable implementation of the *acquis communautaire* to be able to meet its commitments and fully enjoy the advantages that will follow once Poland joins the European Union;
 2. Welcomes the remarkable efforts made by the Polish parliament in order to swiftly adapt national legislation to the *acquis*;
 3. Welcomes the adoption of the 2001 budget law, which includes provision for spending increases in sectors which are extremely important for the purposes of EU accession, such as agriculture; encourages the Polish authorities to continue the effective implementation of the Pact on Agriculture;

⁽¹⁾ 'Texts Adopted', Item 4.

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4. Understands that the opinion of the Scientific Committee to place Poland, as other candidate countries, in group 3 concerning the risk of BSE aims exclusively at protection of the interests of the consumers in Poland and in the European Union; urges Poland to invest rapidly in the restructuring of slaughterhouses and to withdraw all material at risk in accordance with the European directives on the subject; urges also that the integrated system for administration and control be reviewed so as to enable livestock to be systematically traced, and welcomes the actions already undertaken by the Polish authorities to improve the situation;
5. Calls on the Polish authorities and the Commission to reach a compromise agreement on participation in the common agricultural policy on the basis of the proposal by Commissioner Fischler for a 'phasing-in' of direct payments, as this would facilitate gradual integration of this sensitive sector of the Polish economy into the Community system;
6. Welcomes the agreement reached between the Polish authorities and the Commission on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products to the satisfaction of both parties concerned;
7. Welcomes the Polish Government's commitment to adopt by the end of 2001 the whole *acquis communautaire* in the environment sector, an area where much ground has still to be made up (notably with regard to water pollution); notes that implementation of some of the legislation requires transition periods;
8. Acknowledges the need to restructure Polish agriculture in order to meet demands for quality and cost-effectiveness, and taking into account the broader issues of rural development and environmental protection;
9. Calls on the Polish Government to review its position on its request for transitional periods of five years for the acquisition of businesses and 18 years for the purchase of forest and agricultural land in Poland by European Union undertakings and citizens, adopting a more realistic approach more in line with the objectives of genuine integration;
10. Calls on the Polish authorities in this connection to coordinate procedures and relations between the Ministry of Treasury and the Ministry of the Interior with regard to the granting of the authorisations needed by foreign investors;
11. Welcomes the proposals currently being drawn up and discussed to amend the labour laws with the aim of developing a programme to combat unemployment; calls on the Polish authorities to tackle this problem, which now affects officially 16 % of the population;
12. Welcomes the increase in twinning planned under the institution-building programme for border guards; welcomes the decision by the Polish authorities to improve the working conditions of the staff employed at law enforcement agencies;
13. Wishes to avoid the danger of a 'paper curtain' at Poland's external borders after its accession to the EU and therefore supports the Polish authorities' desire to introduce flexible rules on the crossing of borders; calls for early measures to this end and advocates European financial support therefor;
14. Reminds the Polish authorities of the need to continue industrial restructuring (especially in the steel, chemical, and railways sectors), never underestimating its social impact;
15. Underlines the ongoing need for a credible record of enforcement of competition policy, in particular with regard to state aid;
16. Considers that the existence of Special Economic Zones (SSEs) in Poland has been one of the major causes of contention from the beginning of the negotiations; invites the Polish authorities to reconsider the demand for a transition period for SSEs until 2017 and to adjust its law to EU standards in issues related to state assistance for investors, which, in the case of SSEs, means bringing tax privileges into line with the *acquis* and Poland's existing obligations under the Europe Agreement ⁽¹⁾;

(¹) OJ L 319, 21.12.1993, p. 4.

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17. Welcomes the Commission's Communication on Kaliningrad (COM(2001) 26) and the subsequent discussions on Kaliningrad, not least under the framework of the Action Plan for the Northern Dimension, in the external and cross-border policies of the European Union 2000-2003, which together recognise the 'unique part' that Kaliningrad plays in the strategic trilateral relationship between the EU, the applicant countries (notably Poland and Lithuania) and Russia; regrets however that the Council has yet to announce the adoption of more concrete measures, especially with regard to the four priority issues (movement of goods, movement of people, environmental protection and energy supplies) and urges the Council to propose early progress on the upgrading of the relevant sections of the Pan-European Transport Corridors I (Gdansk-Kaliningrad-Riga) and IX.B (Kaliningrad-Vilnius-Minsk) as a first step in resolving these issues; notes that Kaliningrad is an important trade crossroads and that practically no action is being taken to modernise the relevant section of Transport corridor 1; stresses that if the Corridor is to be fully modernised to encompass Kaliningrad and ensure efficient international trade and free movement of goods, the EU will have to contribute towards the cost of modernisation;
18. Urges Poland to speed up the implementation of the Community *acquis* on transport, especially in the field of market access, social and safety legislation and in the field of road taxes and charges;
19. Notes that in the field of transport a range of very important new *acquis* has been and will be adopted before the accession of Poland (e.g. rail liberalisation, maritime safety) and therefore calls upon the Commission together with Poland, to develop a clear strategy for the implementation of these new legislative measures;
20. Considers that although economic development in Poland has made progress towards restructuring its industrial base, further efforts are still required; notes that Poland is still benefiting from fairly balanced development based on several centres of development and is thus experiencing less severe regional disparities than some Member States and candidate countries; recommends that priority continue to be given to such a multicentric development approach;
21. Calls on the Polish government to complete the process of liberalisation of the flow of all long-term capital – including money for the purchase of real estate;
22. Advocates, having regard to increased unemployment and the expected increase in the population of working age despite the low population increase, the adoption of an intensive and proactive labour-market policy on the basis of sustained economic growth; welcomes the impetus now being given to such a labour-market policy, in particular the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources 2000-2006, the National Action Plan for Employment Development 2000/2001 and the Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Poland; reiterates its concern at the unfavourable prospects for employment in agriculture and other sectors, and repeats its call for the social consequences of industrial reconversion also to be assessed;
23. Considers that the Commission contribution to European Union information campaigns in Poland has been inadequate and calls for more funds to be allocated for this purpose;
24. Emphasises the importance of applying the principle of gender equality in all policy areas, especially access to employment, pay, promotion and vocational training, education and participation in decision- and policy-making bodies, and of promoting policies which make it possible to reconcile job and family obligations so that an employment strategy can be put into effect which does not discriminate on grounds of gender, including the introduction of a range of initiatives (public or private) which will in practice facilitate the integration of professional and family life, especially for families with children;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Poland.
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