Culture: consideration of cultural aspects in the European Commnity action. Report

1996/2075(COS) - 29/01/1997

The rapporteur, Mr Escudero (EPP, ES), reaffirmed the interdependence between the cultural and political aspects of European construction. Throughout the political history of Europe, the acquisition of citizenship had always been linked to the existence of a common set of cultural values and this argument also applied for European citizenship. The rapporteur then argued for a flexible interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity so that the European Union's participation in the cultural sphere was not made impossible in practice. In addition, he called for the introduction of a compatibility clause in all common policies which might impact on cultural policies. Finally, as regards the amendments tabled in plenary, he said that he could support two out of the three, particularly the proposal to recommend rather than impose the use, in the educational programmes of Member States, of a European history textbook. This textbook would, however, be written by experts under a Commission initiative. Commissioner Oreja supported the rapporteur's argument that European construction should focus on the people and all the values of humanism, democracy, human rights and tolerance on which the European model of society was based. He also acknowledged the active role of culture in social cohesion and the fight against unemployment and social exclusion. In this respect, he announced that a Green Paper was being prepared by the Commission. Among the other priorities of the Escudero report which the Commission wanted to support in its cultural policy based on Article 128(4) of the Maastricht Treaty, Mr Oreja highlighted: the idea of creating history courses on the comparative culture of Europe, the proposal to launch integrated programmes tackling different aspects, cohesion, training, technology with cultural aspects and the introduction of a cultural compatibility clause based on the environmental model.