Cultural heritage: Community action programme 1997-2000, Raphaël

1995/0078(COD) - 20/09/1995 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The Committee of the Regions regarded the Raphaël programme as a welcome medium for local and regional development. It called for projects supported by the programme to show as a priority the importance of mutual interaction in the rise of local, regional and national culture in historical as well as future terms. Projects should also show the importance of the natural and built environment to people’s well-being in Europe . They should also show that preservation of our cultural heritage was not just a financial burden; enlivening and utilising that heritage created, *inter alia*, new employment opportunities. The Committee of the Regions was, however, worried about the fact that environmental issues had been given very little attention in the programme and it proposed that some heritage sites, which required a great deal of protection, be excluded from tourist programmes. It also called for particular attention to be paid to keeping as much of the cultural heritage alive as possible as an everyday living environment for Europe ’s citizens. Special efforts should also be made to make this heritage accessible to young people, people with physical, intellectual or sensory disabilities or impairments and other groups with special needs. The concept of access to cultural heritage should be given a wider interpretation and emphasis should be placed on making use of new communication technologies in order to inform the general public and raise their awareness. The Committee of the Regions considered that the allocations proposed in the financial statement were very small. In particular, the Action I measures and the synergies between these measures and the measures to raise awareness set out in Action III would require substantial funds.