Education, training, research: the obstacles to transnational mobility. Green Paper

1996/2198(COS) - 26/02/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee endorses any initiative which adopts a critical stance towards the way the European integration process is developing. The green paper is in itself a clear recognition of the deficiencies that have blighted the integration process over the years, especially those which have a direct impact on citizens. The Committee would particularly highlight those chapters of the green paper dealing with third country nationals who legally reside in a Member State. These citizens experience additional problems on top of those which persistently affect Community nationals. All measures aimed at integrating third country citizens should be encouraged and supported, particularly with the objective of stepping up action to counter racism and xenophobia in the Union. The Committee therefore explicitly supports any measures adopted to implement line of action 6 (improving the situation of third country nationals with regard to training). It is of consummate importance to find solutions to the problems hindering the mobility of those preparing to enter the labour market. At a time when jobs are scarce and hard to come by, any attempt by the Member States to protect their national labour market must be actively opposed. The green paper does not mention this problem which may be encountered by participants in Community training programmes when they complete their period of training. The Committee considers that the Commission should highlight this aspect so that it is included in the final document. The Committee calls for line of action No. 9 also to state that a network be set up to systematically disseminate information to citizens on all Community training opportunities that are on offer. In addition to boosting the learning of Community languages in schools, the ESC calls for students to be encouraged to study subjects related to European integration and the European venture. A new line of action which the Commission should consider including is to introduce at Community level and in all EU schools a specific academic subject along the lines described above. This would be taught to all EU schoolchildren and its content would be the same across the Union. Validation and recognition of study courses carried out in another Member State must remain a priority for the Community. It is a principle which must be extendible to vocational training and to all non-regulated studies. In the interests of improving social justice, it is essential that immediate and priority action is taken to ensure that the most disadvantaged citizens are able to benefit from the Community programmes dealt with in the green paper. The Committee calls for line of action 7 to state that the financial aid set out in the programmes should take account of the recipient's financial position or that of their family.