The European Union and Latin America: the present situation and prospects for closer partnership, 1996-2000

1995/2270(COS) - 18/12/1996

In approving the report by Mr BERTENS (ELDR, NL), the committee (chairman: Mr FERNANDEZ ALBOR (PPE, E)) did of course support the Commission communication on strengthening the partnership between the European Union and Latin America. However, it considered the proposals "vague and lacking in innovation". They lacked a "global approach" and were not based on an effective CFSP. The committee advocated a new wide-ranging "transatlantic dialogue". Hence the call for the Council and the European Commission to establish a well-defined global action programme with sufficient budgetary resources. Peace, democracy and respect for human rights in Latin America remained essential to all European Union action in this region. It was necessary, however, to go further and to involve "civil society" by having it participate in this cooperation through the establishment of fora for consultation. These were all aspects which would help to combat the poverty and social inequalities which threatened to cause serious social unrest. Future agreements should be accompanied by financial protocols incorporating a substantial increase in resources and including a negotiated and reciprocal opening up of markets with no exclusions. Finally, if these countries were really to "take off", they needed to be "released from part of their debt burden".