

Conflict prevention: regional integration and cooperation, short-term prevention

2001/2182(COS) - 06/11/2001

The committee unanimously adopted the report by Joost LAGENDIJK (Greens/EFA, NL) on the Commission communication. It welcomed the Commission's proposals but felt that more specific measures were needed. It called for a comprehensive approach to peace-building, involving humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, trade policy, the restoration of law and order, the creation or re-establishment of administrative structures, inter-ethnic dialogue, the eradication of poverty, measures to combat organised crime and drug trafficking, effective controls on arms exports and education. All actors of civil society should be involved as far as possible in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, and specialist NGOs should play a key role with support from the Commission and in close conjunction with action taken by the Council. Continued use must be made of the knowledge and expertise available from the academic Conflict Prevention Network (CPN). MEPs also revived an old suggestion by Parliament for a European Civil Peace Corps to be set up to carry out purely civilian tasks (training and deployment of civilian specialists, arbitration, mediation, confidence-building between warring parties), and for resources to be earmarked to finance this Corps. Although conflict prevention is an essential goal of the EU's external policy, as stated at the Gothenburg European Council in June 2000, the committee pointed out that numerous obstacles were created by the fragmentation of policy among the "pillars" of the EU system and that the Commission had not addressed this issue sufficiently. It urged the Commission to strengthen its delegations and ensure that conflict prevention was mainstreamed in EU programmes. Lastly, it advocated maximum cooperation with other multilateral institutions operating in this area, especially the UN, and called on the Member States to work towards a reform of the UN with the aim of making it more democratic and participatory.