Structural funds, implementation of the budget. special reports 6/1999, 7/1999, 3/2000, 7/2000, Court of Auditors

2000/2129(COS) - 22/11/2000

The committee adopted the report by Gianfranco DELL'ALBA (TGI, I) on the Court of Auditors' special reports. On additionality, the committee stressed that it was important to respect both the spirit and the letter of the principle of additionality to ensure that the Structural Funds were used not to finance, but to cofinance, operations and were not used as a replacement for national public expenditure. The Council and Commission were urged to formulate a clear and objective definition of this principe and provide for penalties where necessary in cases of non-compliance by the Member States. Greater transparency in the application of the principle was required from all partners. On the development of industrial sites, the committee called for improved accounting and financial information, pointing out that the Commission did not always know where the money actually went. It wanted to see a genuine EU restructuring policy, with common selection criteria for projects and regional coordination as a central plank of this policy. It also wanted consideration to be given to replacing Community subsidies by loans and to phasing out Community activities relating to industrial sites, in line with the subsidiarity principle. On the job creation schemes for young people, the report noted the shortcomings highlighted by the Court of Auditors and called for improved coordination and financial monitoring. Administrative procedures at the level of both the Commission and the Member States needed to be simplified. On the EU programmes to promote peace and reconciliation in Ireland, the committee supported such activities but also expressed concern about the effectiveness of the IFI funding system and the overlap between these aid programmes and the structural funds. It agreed with the Court of Auditors that monitoring and evaluation procedures needed to be improved and also urged that uniform criteria be consistently used for the evaluation of projects. It called for the experiences gained in the implementation of the P&R programme to be taken into account when framing the PEACE 2 programme and for effective coordination at all levels between the latter and the IRI. PEACE 2 projects should also focus in the medium term on sustainable job creation and viable economic regeneration.