Spring 2001 European Council: the Lisbon process and the path to be followed

2000/2280(INI) - 27/09/2000 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : to present a communication from the Commission on structural indicators. CONTENT : this communication proposes a set of indicators to be used in the synthesis report for the Spring 2001 European Council. It meets the request of the Feira European Council that the Commission should present a report by the end of September "on the proposed approach for the indicators and benchmarks, both in specific policies and to be used in the synthesis report to the Spring European Council, to ensure the necessary coherence and standard presentation". The choice of indicators depends on the purpose of the synthesis report, which is to assess progress towards the implementation of the Lisbon strategy aimed at transforming the European Union into the "most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The Lisbon conclusions call for a report and indicators on the four main policy domains: employment, innovation, economic reform and social cohesion, and they also underline the importance of an appropriate policy-mix in achieving this strategic aim. Furthermore, the Commission puts forward 27 key indicators which is a small enough number to focus the policy debate and to be manageable but, at the same time, sufficiently large to offer a balanced picture of how the economy is performing across the four policy domains. This is the first year in which a set of indicators is to be agreed and in which a synthesis report will be written. The synthesis report, by measuring Member States' progress in meeting key economic and social policy objectives, will help us to identify their strong and weak points in terms of performance, thus paving the way for policy action. However, structural indicators are no substitute for in-depth qualititative assessments. Finally, because of data limitations and differences in institutional and structural features, it is often difficult to achieve full comparability across countries.