Implementation of Socrates programme

2000/2315(INI) - 22/01/2002

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Doris PACK (EPP-ED, D) on the implementation of the SOCRATES programme. It welcomed the steps the Commission had taken, following the first phase of the programme, to improve monitoring and evaluation, but suggested that the Commission should also draw up annual activity reports, in cooperation with the national agencies (NAs), and forward these to Parliament, the Council and the Member States. The committee made a number of recommendations for improving the implementation of the programme, such as ensuring that contracts between the Commission and the NAs were not issued too late and that the payment of grants was not unduly delayed. The Commission should also obtain proper feedback from students so that problems encountered during their stay in the host country could be identified. The report also noted that some administrative procedures remained cumbersome, despite the efforts to simplify them in the second stage of the programme. Given that the SOCRATES programme mainly involved a large number of small grants, the committee called on the Commission, in the case of applications for grants of less than EUR 20 000, to abolish the requirement of co-financing and introduce a 'fast-track' procedure.