Education and training sytems: work programme on the follow-up of the concrete objectives

2001/2251(COS) - 22/01/2002

The committee adopted the report by Maria MARTENS (EPP-ED, NL) on the Commission communication. It was critical of the fact that Parliament had been unable to comment - and hence have an influence - on the original report. It said that the open coordination method should be applied to the field of education and called for an interinstitutional agreement enabling Parliament to be fully involved in the open coordination method, in order to confer greater democratic legitimacy on this procedure. On the positive side, there was praise for the Commission's decision to focus on lifelong learning and for its efforts to include in the detailed work programme clear, realistic objectives, a demonstration of the European added-value of the proposed action and performance indicators to measure progress. However, the committee noted that the programme did not contain an estimate of the budgetary implications of the proposed action. The report reiterated Parliament's support for the goal of attainment by every school-leaver of proficiency in two European languages other than his or her mother tongue. It also called on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to develop and promote education for active citizenship. Another key recommendation was that measures should be taken to increase the numbers of young people of both sexes choosing studies and careers in the field of science and technology. Moreover, as companies had a role to play in training, both the EU and the Member States should promote business internships for students and training for employees. Students should also be informed, through careers and vocational guidance programmes, of the opportunities available within the EU for the free movement of labour. Lastly, the committee welcomed the Commission's proposal to involve the applicant countries and urged that this be implemented as soon as possible, where appropriate through existing programmes.