Culture: grants to bodies active at European level, 2004-2006 action programme

2003/0115(COD) - 20/10/2003

The committee adopted the report by Ulpu IIVARI (PES, FIN) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. It called for the programme's overall budget for the period 2004-2008 to be increased from EUR 30.92 million to EUR 38.83 million, saying that the financial framework must take the 2004 budget, rather than the 2003 budget, as its starting-point and must incorporate a minimum increase of 2% for inflation between the 2003 and 2004 budgets. MEPs also deleted the requirement in the Commission's proposal that grants awarded to cultural organisations advancing the idea of Europe be progressively reduced from the third year onwards, arguing that, under the rules on implementing the Financial Regulation, the principle of gradual reduction did not apply to such organisations since they are bodies "pursuing an objective of general European interest". In order for Parliament to be provided with more information about the various activities and organisations being funded, the committee said that it should be able to obtain and analyse at the earliest opportunity the external evaluation which had been commissioned into the organisations concerned. Moreover, the Commission should inform Parliament of the criteria used (priorities, themes and types of activities) before it issued a call for proposals. The Commission was also asked to submit a brief report to Parliament each year on the implementation of the programme. MEPs also adopted an amendment underlying the role of cultural organisations in "promoting awareness of Europe's common cultural heritage". Lastly, in the interests of transparency, they said that any beneficiary of a grant from the EU budget should indicate this in a prominent place such as a website homepage or an annual report.