

Employment creation and support for small and micro-enterprises in the Maghreb countries

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The Committee on Development approved the programme proposed by the Commission, the aim of which is to encourage sustainable job creation and the development of small and micro-enterprises in the Maghreb. So far, projects financed in Morocco total ECU 6,416,000, projects financed in Tunisia total ECU 2,940,500 and projects financed in Algeria total ECU 500,000 (purely because of the difficult situation in Algeria). Priority has been given to creating and developing small and micro-enterprises, vocational training, industrial restructuring, institutional development and access to information. The committee also called for renewable energy projects to be taken into consideration and for special attention to be paid to creating jobs for women. Community financing takes the form of non-refundable aid. The Committee on Development called for the Commission to be assisted in implementing the cooperation projects provided for in this regulation by a type 1 advisory committee. It also called for the Commission to report to it by 30 April every year. This report should list the investment projects financed and contain any information pertaining to their financing. It also called on the Commission to update the financial statement for the programme on the basis of this information. Finally, as far as the cost-benefit analysis is concerned, the Committee on Development called for the following performance indicators to be used: - the number of jobs created; - the functional and continuing nature of these jobs; - growth in the SME sector; - the proportionality of funding to the number of jobs created.