Benchmarking, instrument to economic actors and public authorities

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In its report by Mr Simon MURPHY (PES, UK) on the Commission Communication on Benchmarking the performance on the European Industry, the Committee full shares the Commission's view than benchmarking is a crucial tool to monitor and improve European competitiveness. Benchmarking is a technique for identifying inefficiencies by making comparisons between economic operators who pursue the same objectives but achieve different results. In the present case, the aim is to try to identify why the European Industry is less competitive than its Japanese or American rivals. The Committee welcomes in particular the Commission's decision to set up a high level group on benchmarking composed of industrialists, trade unions and consumers but calls also for SMEs to be involved. Similarly, the Committee calls for the EP to be directly involved in the Group through observer status for a small number of MEPs. The Committee wants benchmarking activities to be focused on the general business environment, as this forms the basis for the creation of a favourable economic, social and legislative climate. Thus the definition of industrial competitiveness benchmarking should be as broad as possible, and not focus solely on wage-price competition. Although benchmarking mostly is used to identify problems, the Committee suggests that benchmarking techniques could be used to study why the EU in sectors such as food, drink, tobacco and furniture outperform their Japanese and US counterparts in terms of industrial added value.