Programme for the craft industry and small enterprises (SME)

1996/2128(COS) - 05/02/1997

Noting that the current numerous actions in favour of SMEs often are inconsistent and ineffective, the Committee welcomed the Commission communication on creating an integrated programme for SMEs. In its report, drafted by Ms Karla PEIJS (EPP, NL), the Committee supported the Commission's view that a better coordination of Community initiatives as well as Member States' actions in favour of SMEs is crucial in order to fully explore their potential for job-creation. However, the Committee was suprised that the Commission document, which is about coordination, does not mention how this shall be achieved and who will carry it out. The Committee also held that better coordination was not sufficient; it is equally important to lighten the administrative burden for the SMEs. In particular, the Committee proposed the introduction of a "de minimis" clause in new legsislation to avoid imposing unfair burdens on SMEs. On a simliar note, the Committee also urged the Commission to improve its systems for assessing the impact new legislation and initiatives will have on SMEs. Other demands from the Committee include greater involvment of SMEs in the Social Dialogue and actions to improve the SMEs financial environment.