Euro, practical aspects: banking charges for conversion, display for prices, citizens' information. Recommendations

1998/2035(COS) - 08/12/1998

The Committee demands a substantial increase of the budget for the euro information campaign from 1999 onwards. By adopting Aldo ARRONI's (EPP, I) report on the Commission's communication on the euro information strategy, the Committee asked for the annual budget for the PRINCE project to be increased to 32 MECU for 1999 and to 38 MECU for 2001, the year preceding the introduction of euro notes and coins. Rapporteur ARRONI stressed that a large part of the EU population feels ill informed about the Euro and that around 30% may not be reached by the usual communication tools (because of illiteracy, economic and socially disadvantaged situation, age and handicaps).The general public should be a main target group of the campaign and the tailoring of specific tools and means to inform disadvantaged groups of society and isolated persons was endorsed. Regional and local authorities had important roles to play by virtue of their proximity to the citizen. The main effort should, however, be put on schools (primary and secondary), on universities and on large scale media. Finally, a homogeneous emotional campaign in the member states for the year 2001 should be launched to underline the common European and monetary identity. It should not be forgotten that the changeover to the euro would destroy all existing scales of values, and habits and it might take several years to reconstruct them and to build confidence in the euro. The Committee agreed with the rapporteur's conclusion that the withdrawal of national monetary signs and the introduction of European notes and coins would have an enormous symbolic and physical impact. Everybody would be aware that the point of no return had been reached. Consequently, up to 50% of the total information budget should be spent on these aspects of the European-wide information campaign.