Competition: state aid. 9th report

2001/2269(COS) - 08/01/2002

The committee adopted the report by Bernhard RAPKAY (PES, D) on the Commission's 9th report on state aid. Although it welcomed the decline in state aid between 1997 and 1999, the committee pointed out that it still amounted on average to 1% of GDP. It was anxious to see the Member States live up to the Stockholm Council commitment to reduce this. The committee was also concerned about the possibility of regional policy returning to national control and warned against this, since it could have an adverse effect on the weaker Member States. Publication of the scoreboard was seen as an effective way of exerting pressure on the Member States to further reduce state aid, although it still needed to be improved by providing more detail such as naming companies benefiting from aid. The committee was also aware of the present difficulties facing the airlines and recognised that state aid could be justified in certain circumstances. However, it wanted the Commission to keep a close watch on aid to the American airline industry. It also called for the codecision procedure to apply to competition policy issues when the Council takes a decision through qualified majority voting.