Employment: financial assistance for innovative and job creating small and medium sized enterprises SMEs. Report

2001/2183(COS) - 20/11/2001

The committee adopted the report by Philip BUSHILL-MATTHEWS (EPP-ED, UK) on the Commission report for 2000. It welcomed the content and analysis contained in the Commission report but complained about the delay in publishing it. The committee congratulated the European Investment Fund (EIF) on the significant increase in the take-up of the SME guarantee facility. However, particular care was needed in the evaluation of the projects, and financial instruments to promote SMEs must be geared to the needs of those enterprises. The committee endorsed the revisions to the programme by the Council in December 2000 but pointed out that there was no prior discussion with the Parliament about the proposals. Parliament should be involved in such discussions in future. The committee also said that real progress had been achieved within the programme in 2000 but it hoped that performance would improve still further in 2001. There was a risk that concentration on seed capital and start-ups might result in other essential elements of the SME business cycle being neglected, such as ongoing business development, Initial Public Offering or subsequent sale, which could have an impact on employment growth. Risk capital and global loans should not be provided solely to SMEs engaging in life sciences, biotechnology, ITC and multimedia but also to sustainable high-tech sectors.