Growth and employment initiative for small and medium enterprises SMEs

2001/2242(INI) - 11/09/2002

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Philip Rodway BUSHILL-MATTHEWS (EPP-ED, UK) on the Commission report entitled "Growth and Employment Initiative · Measures on financial assistance for innovative and job-creating SMEs". MEPs supported the aims of the initiative and praised the strong progress that had been made in increasing employment and employment prospects. However, they pointed out that SMEs had not made much use of the Joint European Venture (JEV) programme and that it had had only a limited impact on employment. They therefore said that the JEV programme in its current form was no longer appropriate and called on the Commission to come forward with new proposals to encourage SMEs to develop business links across national borders. As far as the annual Commission reports were concerned, MEPs were critical of the delays in the past and called for subsequent reports to be made available to Parliament at an earlier stage. They also called for the reports to provide a fuller analysis of certain issues and pointed out that Parliament could not fully exert its responsibilities in reporting on the Growth and Employment Initiative unless it was given more information on the auditing that had taken place. Lastly, the committee noted that, while the 2000 Commission report had referred to the aim of achieving the Community growth and employment objectives not only in the existing Member States but also in the accession countries, the 2001 report made minimal mention of those countries. It therefore called for an explanation and confirmation that a proactive approach would be taken in this area in the coming year.