The development of the services sector for jobs creation

2003/2132(INI) - 27/11/2003

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Rodi KRATSA (EPP-ED, GR) on the development of the services sector for job creation. The report noted that the services sector was currently twice the size of the manufacturing sector in terms of GDP and offered considerable untapped potential for job creation. The EU therefore needed to find more intelligent solutions to labour organisation and productivity in this sector. MEPs called on the Commission to publish a White Paper on the completion of an effective European services sector as rapidly as possible, with a view to formulating more specific policies for job creation in all areas of that sector (private business services, services of general interest, public services and the social economy), especially those that meet the challenges of the future. The Commission was also urged, along with the Member States, to promote an open method of coordination for national employment policies in the services sector. This would make it possible to exchange information and best practice to determine the best way of ensuring that the labour reserves and economic potential at the disposal of the services sector could be put to full use throughout the enlarged EU, including in the regions lagging behind. The report also called for a directive on 'Services as part of the internal market' to be introduced as soon as possible as a way of tackling the obstacles which currently hamper workers' freedom of movement and the provision of services in the EU, thus preventing small businesses from developing and generating more jobs in the services sector. MEPs wanted Member States to adopt and implement policies in the sector of education, qualifications and training, with particular emphasis on identifying and addressing skills shortages, in order to prepare a suitable specialised workforce in the services sector, which is continually developing in an environment of rapid technological, social and economic change. They called for the European Social Fund and the European Investment Bank to be used to support the development of this sector. The report also looked at the situation of women in the services sector and noted that they were often in low-paid, insecure and unskilled jobs. The Member States were urged to improve working conditions for women and implement equality policies in such areas as pensions, social insurance, training, etc. Lastly, the committee underlined the contribution which new forms of employment (part-time and temporary employment, teleworking, home-working, etc.) could make to the services sector and called on the Member States to enhance the quality of these new forms of working, by ensuring that all workers are guaranteed the same, high level of protection and job security.