

# **South-east Europe, western Balkans: Community assistance, CARDS programme, 2000-2006**

2000/0111(CNS) - 07/11/2000

The committee unanimously adopted the report by Carlos WESTENDORP Y CABEZA (PES, E) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure. It essentially wanted to make a number of clarifications to the proposal, stressing, for example, that a democratic and cooperative Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would be a welcome member of the European family and hence eligible for assistance under the CARDS programme. It also stipulated that Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia should all benefit from the financial aid provided. The committee emphasised that the programme must take into account the need for ethnic reconciliation, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human and minority rights. The Balkan countries themselves must work towards the restoration of civil society, free media and an independent judiciary. Lastly, the report underlined the importance of basic education, youth programmes and culture in the region and urged that EU aid be targeted at improving education and vocational training.