Innovation in the economy and the entreprises, electronic trade, Go Digital initiative for SMEs

2000/2336(COS) - 20/06/2001

The committee adopted the report by Paul RÜBIG (EPP-ED, A) on the Commission communication. It pointed out that there was still a lack of innovation in Europe compared with the USA and Japan, and focused on three key areas in which action was needed: creating an enterprise culture in the framework of the education system, promoting workers' training and encouraging small businesses to innovate. The committee suggested that "junior enterprises" could be set up to involve projects of a business undertaking type, to be carried out in schools. It also stressed the importance of tailoring educational systems to both male and female aptitudes and of modernising schools, universities and vocational training centres. As far as small businesses were concerned, the Commission was urged to implement the 2000 European Charter for Small Enterprises with particular reference to innovation and access to the knowledge-driven society for all enterprises, whatever their size and activity. There should be better coordination of national and EU instruments in favour of innovative enterprises, and incentives should be provided for the continuous training of workers, for example in the form of training allowances. The report also stressed the need for administrative simplification to make it easier for small businesses to create innovative products and adopt innovating production methods. Lastly, the committee called for measures to promote access to seed financing and venture capital and specific measures to encourage young people wishing to start a business.