Promoting innovation through patents. Green Paper

1997/2148(COS) - 28/10/1998

The committee adopted unanimously the motion for a resolution on the Commission Green Paper on the Community patent and the patent system in Europe. Taking the view that there was an urgent need to consider the Community patent system and the effective implementation thereof within the European Union before enlargement commenced, the rapporteur, Mr Añoveros Trias de Bes (PPE, E), made a wide range of proposals and improvements to the substance of the Green Paper. Among the various problems raised by the Community patent system, he considered: translation costs, not only from the financial point of view but also taking account of the dissemination of European inventions in other regions of the world; the legal uncertainty stemming from the fact that a number of legal bodies were provided for in the intended system of jurisdiction; the levying of fees at European and national level and the appropriateness of the formulae for conversion from the European to the Community patent system. Mr Añoveros wished computer programs and software inventions to be patentable, and he advocated the adoption of supplementary harmonisation measures at Community level to make the patent system more attractive. On this subject, he said that he appreciated the proposal by the Commission to reduce the fees payable by SMEs, individual inventors and universities, and the motion for a resolution adopted indicated that mutual recognition of patent attorneys, and the involvement of other professional groups, such as business consultants, in the network of services associated with patenting could help to simplify the procedure and render it more effective.