Third-country nationals: joint flights for removals of illegal emigrants. Initiative Italy

2003/0821(CNS) - 19/02/2004

The committee adopted the report by Adeline HAZAN (PES, F) rejecting the proposal under the consultation procedure. It argued that the EU had yet to reach agreement on a common asylum policy and that it was therefore premature to draw up a common policy on removing illegal third country nationals. Moreover, it viewed collective returns as a "deplorable practice", which should be resorted to only by way of exception. The report was also critical of the fact that the 'common guidelines' on the state of health of returnees, a code of conduct applicable to escorts and the use of coercive measures were merely listed in an annex to the proposal - which was in no way binding - rather than in the proposal itself. Moreover, none of the provisions of the annex allowed for the operations to be monitored by organisations such as the Red Cross. Lastly, the committee pointed out that the Council had reached political agreement on the substance of the proposal while Parliament was awaiting the revised version of the Italian initiative before delivering an opinion. It concluded that the consultation exercise - which was already a pure formality as a rule for initiatives of this kind - had thus been rendered completely superfluous.