A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

1994/2210(COS) - 23/03/1995

The committee unanimously adopted the report by Mr John HUME (PSE, UK) on the special support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The rapporteur, whose efforts in favour of peace have been acknowledged by the European Parliament, felt that it was most important that this Community initiative should win the support both of the European institutions and the two parties. Parliament supported the objective of the programme, which seeks to ensure that everyone benefits, both in Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the border counties, and called for the programme to be applied in a balanced and fair manner, giving priority to the most disadvantaged zones and sections of the population. The committee also welcomed the fact that priority had been given to encouraging growth and employment, social insertion, urban regeneration and agricultural development. The rapporteur also felt that it was important to promote cross-border cooperation and industrial development on the basis of comprehensive consultation with local authorities, enterprises, trades union, charities and other groups. The report adopted called for the special and distinct nature of the programme to be highlighted and, more importantly, for the principle of additionality to be applied. It stressed the need for this proposal to be coordinated with other structural measures cofinanced by the Union in this region. In addition, following the adoption of an amendment by the Greens (14 votes for, 13 against and 1 abstention), the report called for action to raise public awareness of the need to protect the natural environment. Stressing the innovative nature of this approach, the rapporteur hoped, when it was implemented, that the need for strict budgetary control would be reconciled with the need for more flexible management. The HUME report is due to be tabled before plenary on 6 April.