Community initiatives: allocation for the reserve for the period up to the end of 1999

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The committee unanimously adopted the report by its chairman, Mr Roberto SPECIALE (PSE, I), on Community Initiatives and presented its criticisms to the Commission of its draft allocation of the reserve for Community Initiatives for the period up to the end of 1999. The report regretted that the Commission had published in a press release its decision setting out the allocation of the reserve including, among other things, its allocation for each Member State before informing Parliament of its decision. In doing this, the Commission had ignored the provisions of the Code of Conduct agreed with Parliament. However, the Members were most concerned about the fact that the Commission had published a budgetary framework for the distribution amongst the Member States. Indeed, this meant that the Community Initiatives were dependent on the national quotas and that the allocation by Member State would determine the allocation by Initiative. Furthermore, outwith the national quotas of the ERDF, these Initiatives were a response to the need to fund measures which possessed Community Added Value. Given this situation, the committee felt that it was important to ensure that Community Initiatives were always European in nature, transcending purely national interests, since this constituted their added value with regard to the Community Support Frameworks. As a result, the breakdown of appropriations by Initiative should take precedence over the allocation by Member State. The SPECIALE report stated that it was impermissible for "national quotas" to be established. However, the report approved the general criteria which the Commission had established for the allocation of the reserve. In this connection, the application of the Community Initiatives to the end of 1999 should be based, in an effective manner, on the objectives of increasing their contribution to creating new jobs, protecting environmental resources, improving the quality of life and further developing their transnational character, so that the objective of economic and social cohesion could be attained. Members also called on the Commission to include in the Community Initiatives Rechar, Resider and Konver regions requiring the environmental rehabilitation of disused industrial sites and to channel aid in such a way so to create employment.