Community structural policy and employment

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The own initiative report by Mr Carlos LAGE (PSE) adopted by the Committee on Regional Policy on 29 October stated that structural aid from the European Union had helped considerably over recent years to increase economic growth in several Member States. However, the same could not be said for its contribution to the fight against unemployment and economic growth alone could not bring about a satisfactory reduction in the current high levels of unemployment. The committee felt that the problem had less to do with the lack of resources of the structural funds than the way in which the money was spent. Hence its call for measures geared to employment and the concomitant reform of the structural funds. Selection needed to be based on a systematic study of the correlation between each ECU spent and each job created. The committee also suggested that the balance between investments in infrastructure and investments in human resources should be redressed and called for initiatives which aimed to improve access to education and vocational training to be strengthened, especially for women. Support should also be given to culture and tourism, which were also job-creating sectors.