Development problems in the Community's most outlying regions

1996/2138(INI) - 08/04/1997

The committee unanimously adopted the own-initiative report by Mr Fernando FERNANDEZ-MARTIN (PPE, E) on the problems of developing the most outlying regions of the EU. The report gave priority to the institutional aspect and called on the IGC 'to include in the Treaty an article relating specifically to the most outlying regions' which should clearly specify among other things that: - the provisions of the Treaty and of the law deriving from it apply to these regions (French overseas departments, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands), - the conditions for application of the provisions of the Treaty and those for implementing joint policies are determined by the Council and the European Parliament at the instigation of the Commission to take account of the economic and socio-structural backwardness of these regions, a situation which is aggravated by persistent and cumulative factors such as their remoteness, insularity, climate, dependence on a small number of products, etc. The report also called for a protocol to be appended to the Treaty which specified that: - this new Article of the Treaty shall establish the legal basis for determining the special conditions for its application in the most outlying regions, - the major structural problems of a socio-economic nature which affect these regions justify the provision of greater Community support in the form of specific measures, - this support must be provided by adapting common policies to regional realities, - actions already undertaken within the framework of the POSEI programmes must be strengthened and intensified, - the provisions of the new Article refer in particular to customs and commercial policies (free zones), fiscal policy (harmonious development based on local produce), agricultural and fisheries policies (preventing small-scale production from being destabilized by pressure from multinationals) and the supply of raw materials and essential consumer goods.