Structural assistance: single programming document in France. Rapport

1995/2204(COS) - 27/05/1997

The committee unanimously adopted the draft resolution on the impact of the structural funds in France. The rapporteur, Mr Castagnède (ARE, F) noted that, while per capita GDP in France was above the Community average (110%), the Community structural policy had not succeeded in substantially closing the gaps in regional development (especially the expenditure of the overseas departments and Corsica). The text adopted therefore proposed to correct these shortcomings by reversing the tendency towards under-use of appropriations, speeding up transfers of Community appropriations via the government, clarifying and simplifying the conditions in which structural funds are implemented, in order to make the conditions of eligibility more legible and more flexible, increasing transparency, ensuring fuller respect of the principle of additionality and using harmonized programme impact evaluation tools in each region and at national level. As far as new orientations were concerned, the draft resolution emphasized the need to focus more on the geographical aspect, especially with regard to the overseas departments and Corsica, and on the thematic aspect, by granting priority to programmes to strengthen the economic fabric with regard to infrastructure projects and by encouraging the creation of permanent jobs and an Objective 2b for urban areas hit by social exclusion. It was also suggested that regional policy in France should be territorialized on the basis of Objectives 3 and 4 and that local initiatives modelled on territorial pacts and interregional programmes should be stepped up. Finally, France should be fully involved in cohesion policy at both national and European level within the context of the principle of subsidiarity.