Programming documents of the Belgian Objectives 1 and 2 areas for the period 1994-1999

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The committee unanimously adopted the draft resolution taking stock of Community cohesion policy in Belgium. According to the rapporteur, Mr DECOURRIERE (PPE, F), there have been delays in implementing certain programmes in the province of Hainaut, which is an Objective 1 region; furthermore, in this area it is noted that the funding mainly promotes subregions which are best placed to benefit from the Funds (Tournai, Mouscron), and that this casts doubt on the effective reduction of inequalities within the Hainaut area. Furthermore, in pointing to the manifest under-utilisation of the appropriations, particularly with regard to the application of Objective 4, the text which has been adopted calls upon the regional and local authorities concerned to reverse this trend, all the more so since the rate of commitment of Community appropriations as at 1 January 1999 will serve as a reference basis for calculating the amounts allocated after 1999. As far as the future of the cohesion policy is concerned, the rapporteur recommends that a certain number of deficiencies be corrected and that new guidelines be selected; this includes, for example, remedying the shortcomings in the local administrative structure, at the date of implementation of the Single Programming Document (SPD), by the appointment of a coordinator. In addition, noting that Belgian programmes had fallen severely behind during the initial phase and that this delay was now being made good, the draft resolution calls on Community institutions to ensure that the SPD negotiation phase in the next programming period be completed by the date of entry into force of the latter, in the year 2000. The rapporteur also calls for a doubling of efforts to concentrate Belgian projects on certain geographical areas (either keeping Hainaut as an Objective 1 region or not) and themes (reduction in the number of programmes, focus on job creation, economic diversification, the environment and new information technologies).