Cohesion Fund. Annual report, 1998

1999/2212(COS) - 23/05/2000

The committee adopted the report by Carlos RIPOLL I MARTINEZ BEDOY (EPP/ED, E) on the Commission's 1998 annual report on the Cohesion Fund. The committee expressed general satisfaction at the results of the Cohesion Fund, in particular the considerable rate of job creation resulting from the Fund's projects. It also welcomed the fact that the 1998 budget had been fuly implemented and that no case of fraud had been detected in 1998. It supported the development towards more investment in forms of transport other than the road sector, but called for greater attention to be paid to sustainable modes of transport. As far as the environment was concerned, the committee felt that assistance should move away from the current focus on the water sector and towards other measures to achieve prudent and rational use of resources, such as reafforestation and land reclamation. However, it congratulated the Commission on the efficient use of the special budget line, initiated by Parliament, for information and publicity measures to encourage environmental practices geared to sustainable development. The report called for consistency between structural policies and the Cohesion Fund, by incorporating projects financed by the latter into Structural Fund regional planning. The committee raised a number of other points, including the challenge that the forthcoming enlargement would pose for the EU and the need to make preparations in the areas of transport and the environment under the Structural Instrument for Pre-Accession (ISPA). It also issued a reminder of the importance of the fisheries sector, and the need to take this into account when evaluating projects.