Management of regional policy and structural funds

2001/2066(INI) - 19/12/2001

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Samuli POHJAMO (ELDR, FIN) on the management of regional policy and structural funds, in which it stressed that the use of appropriations should be effective and result-oriented. When implementing the structural funds, it was necessary to guarantee the execution of projects according to timetable, optimum project quality and appropriate monitoring by the Commission and national authorities of the use of funds. Funding should be channelled directly and efficiently to the regions and local communities via national governments. In addition, the objectives set and the programmes for attaining them should match the real needs of the regions and the rules should be sufficiently flexible. On the question of the programme negotiations, the committee was critical of the Commission's tardiness in approving the guideline documents for Community initiatives and innovative activities, which was resulting in a loss of appropriations. As regards management and implementation, the report urged Member States to develop adequate systems of management and monitoring, and to link programme evaluation to decision-making. It further stressed that regional and local authorites, especially in the applicant countries, should allocate sufficient well-qualified human resources to the management of structural fund programmes. The Commission was urged to submit firm proposals (for example, as regards good practice) for more flexible and streamlined management. Moreover, project evaluation and the criteria to be employed should be further developed. The committee also proposed that a single regional development Fund should be achieved in 2007. The report called for the principle of additionality to be applied and for its application to be monitored effectively. It also regretted the fact that the regions still felt that the financing provisions were excessively complicated and unclear, and called for simple, clear instructions. Lastly, the committee stressed that Parliament had an important role to play in supervising, monitoring and assessing structural policy, thereby offering citizens a guarantee of the effectiveness of Community regional policies. It accordingly called on the Commission to provide regular reports and updates and to continue its work on strategic annual reviews of the programmes, with greater emphasis on quality control.