Instrument for structural policies for preaccession ISPA. Annual report 2001

2003/2021(INI) - 21/05/2003

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Adriana POLI BORTONE (UEN, I) on the Commission's annual report for 2001. It highlighted the problem of the absorption capacity of the future Member States and expressed concern that such difficulties appeared to stem mainly from the inefficiency of those countries' administrative structures or from their lack of familiarity with Community procedures. The Commission was urged to use the aid for improving administration to strengthen the decentralised structures, build up experience with partnership mechanisms and improve tendering procedure mechanisms. MEPs also called on the Commission to draw up realistic spending programmes for the next few years which were compatible with the applicant countries' actual ability to absorb funds. They added that it was crucial that the Commission should ensure that the ISPA participating countries provided their proper share of co-funding for projects. The report supported the Commission's efforts to ensure that the applicant countries carried out environmental impact assessments of all ISPA projects and said that this was an "essential universal feature of Community fund-management 'culture' which the new Member States must adopt without fail". MEPs also welcomed the fact that, partly in response to Parliament's requests, the balance between expenditure on transport projects and environmental projects had improved, but said that, in the field of transport, greater priority should be given to the pan-European networking of rail transport, in line with the EU's priorities. The report highlighted the crucial importance of integrating a gender perspective in all ISPA programmes, as well as in PHARE and SAPARD, at all stages in the programming, from the analysis and definition of objectives, through to monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, it called for the development of Gender Impact Assessments.