Trans-European networks for transport, telecommunications, energy: granting of Community financial aid

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The Committee adopted the draft report on the proposal for a Council regulation laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of Trans European Networks , in the transport, telecommunications and energy sectors. The crucial issue which must be faced is the level of funding envisaged for Community action in this field. For the period 19941999, the figure is 2395 mEcu 1868 mECU for the transport sector). The Commission assessed the total requirements in this field, which is one of the priority areas identified by the White Paper on relaunching the European economy, at 400 bn for the same six year period (of which 220 bn for transport). The amount being visaged represents only 0,6% of this figure, a fact which reveals a clear disparity between the requirements of a genuine EU infrastructure policy and the funding actually available. Thus the role played by the EU hitherto has been a limited one. From the Commission's own estimate of total investment requirement in transport infrastructures, it is extremely clear how much there is still to be done: for the period until 2010 it puts the figures at between ECU one billion and ECU one and a half billion. To raise such an enormous investment will require the assistance and support of other public and private bodies, whose identity and criteria for participation have yet to be determined. The Committee considered the proposal essential last night for determining the objectives and priorities of Community intervention in the field of the networks. The general feeling was that, since Parliament has the power of codecision on the creation of the networks it should also have that power over Community participation in their funding. A lot of amendments, also from other Committees (Regional affairs, Economical affairs) were adopted, basically seeking to define better the criteria, objectives, procedure and timelimits proposed, so that the Member States and economic operators can be more certain of the rules for financial participation by the EU in any infrastructure projects they submit. The Commission's intervention is more clearly defined.