Tourism sector: evaluation of the Community action plan 1993-1995

1996/2084(COS) - 30/04/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: The report takes stock of the evaluation of the Community's multiannual action plan to assist tourism drawn up by a group of external consultants and responds to the criticism raised by the evaluation with a view to drawing up a new tourism plan. SUBSTANCE: The consultants report appears in the annex to the report and is intended to be a wide- ranging analysis of the programme both in terms of content (Decision 92/421/EEC) and form (actions implemented). It was concluded that: - the structure of the plan caused difficulties which persisted throughout its lifetime and the consultants were critical in particular of the fragmented and incoherent nature of the measures, the confusion between ends and means, the lack of clarity affecting some actions, incomplete or overlapping measures, over-ambition given the available resources and lack of continuity over the three year period; - with regard to form (technical evaluation of the plan), the consultants had very mixed feelings about the measures taken. They noted in particular that the quality of projects was low in 1993, but improved in 1994, that the impact of actions was limited, that post-project sustainability was very limited (in many cases the aim was simply to secure EC funds), that the commercial application of some projects had not always been properly thought through, that pilot projects on culture, technology and training produced varied results., etc. At the same time, the consultants looked at the role and market positioning of the Commission's tourism unit and the compliance with the plans' objectives (particular the 11 measures linked to the objectives) . It also noticed the disastrous affect of fraud accusations on the success of the projects followed by the suspension of some members of the tourism unit and put forward a series of key recommendations with particular reference to the future programme. The Commission generally accepts the consultants' evaluation and their criticisms. However, it stresses that the complexity of tourism at European level and the differences among Member States and in Parliament made it difficult to maintain a coherent plan. In the light of the criticism regarding the lack of technical quality of the measures, the Commission accepts the idea put forward by the consultants that only a limited number of major projects meeting a genuine need should be subsidized. At the same time, the Commission also deplores the problems which arose in the tourism unit and which seriously affected its performance. Finally, the Commission believes that, criticism aside, the plan provided a useful context for practical action and provided a basis on which partnership with the industry could be envisaged in future. In particular, it stressed the need for greater coordination at the various administrative levels, whether local, regional, national or European.