Improving the effectiveness of Community aid

1995/2149(INI) - 16/01/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Charles GOERENS (ELDR, L) on Community aid, the European Parliament called for Community development aid to concentrate on a small number of sectoral or vertical framework programmes. In Parliament's opinion, it was necessary to avoid dissipating efforts on a wide variety of measures of limited scope and to see projects as support measures rather than objectives in themselves. It called on the Community to acquire the means of ensuring that the projects on which it embarked were a success, which meant carrying out detailed feasibility and impact studies. It called on the EU to pay attention to the economic and social effectiveness of projects, and their viability once financing ceased. In a spirit of greater coordination, Parliament called on Member States to subject their own development cooperation programmes for comparable evaluation. It considered that coordination of bilateral aid and Community aid must be improved. The coordination of development cooperation and the other Community policies which had an impact on development must likewise be improved. Noting the staffing shortages at the Commission's DG VIII (Development), Parliament called on the Commission to set up a central unit to assume control of the evaluation of its development aid programmes, including the Echo, Meda, Phare and Tacis programmes, ensure adequate quality control and internal and external evaluation of actions. It called on the Commission to ensure that it had the necessary staff to process and administer the funding applications for cooperation projects submitted by NGOs and measures to involve men and women in development. Parliament called on the EU to re-establish a sense of partnership by enlarging the circle of those who have a say in the matter to include the direct beneficiaries and the NGOs operating at local level. In particular, it felt that genuine dialogue must be established with the latter, especially concerning the utilization of resources. In the institutional sphere, the capacities of recipient countries must be improved, applying the principle of conditionality to aid, i.e. the democracy clause and respect for human rights. It called for clear separation of the political decision-making process from the technical project management tasks and for the latter to be centralized in a Joint Service to manage Community aid to third countries. This would make it possible to achieve greater efficiency and improve the management of aid. Parliament wondered whether it might be useful for the EU to establish its own analysis and evaluation capacity for Community development aid policy.