Linking relief, rehabilitation and development LRRD

1996/2080(COS) - 21/02/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Raimondo FASSA (ELDR, I) Parliament pointed out that between 1988 and 1993 relief expenditure by OECD member states rose from US$500 million to US$3 500 million per year at a time when overall aid programmes are tending to stagnate or even decline. It considered it essential that there should be better coordination of humanitarian aid actions between the Community, the Member States and the United Nations agencies. It hoped that there would be a strengthening of the Union's common foreign policy and considered that the external services as a whole should be brought under the competence of a single Commissioner. It considered that the delegations had a necessary role to play especially in the event of a major crisis and regretted the shortage of staff made available at times of crisis. It recommended that in the event of crisis the financial and human resources of the delegations should be reinforced and also hoped that such exceptional provisions would be maintained until the situation had stabilised. It called for ECHO to be allocated sufficient financial resources in order to put an end to the practice of setting up a reserve which hinders its operation and delays its intervention. It was concerned at the too frequent shifting of ECHO staff and suggested that in its recruitment policy this body should take account of the experience gained by candidates on the ground. It called for an assessment of the coordination between ECHO and the unit responsible for food security. It called on the Commission in particular to reorganize its management structure in order to allow for a more global, coherent and integrated strategy in the complementary fields of humanitarian aid and development aid. As crises of a chronic nature are more and more frequent, rehabilitation efforts should not be short term, designed to facilitate the passage from emergency aid to development but rather should aim to manage prolonged situations of instability. Greater financial means must be made available for rehabilitation programmes. In general the Commission's actions should take greater account of the needs of women and children, support the functioning of local, national and regional markets by giving priority to local sourcing possibilities. With regard to conflict prevention Parliament repeated its call for programmes aimed at the prevention of crises (in particular the creation of a European research centre for the active prevention of crises) and called in particular for the setting up of a European corps consisting of civilian and military units in cooperation with the WEU responsible for keeping and re-establishing peace (Petersberg missions). This European civil peace corps would strengthen humanitarian action, lead to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, prevent the outbreak of new conflicts and provide the necessary measures of confidence-building. It also called for the setting up of a permanent international criminal court as an instrument of conflict prevention. It also hoped to see measures to promote democracy aimed at achieving fuller social participation and integration of local populations. It considered that prevention policy for both natural disasters and armed conflicts must allocate an important role to development and the integration and social participation of women. It called for European monitoring of arms exports. Lastly, it was essential for the Commission to define clearly under what circumstances and at which point conditionality became an integral part of the relief-rehabilitation-development process and to draw up at the same time a timetable for progress to be made. Parliament called for a reform of the CFSP to enable the Union to combine diplomatic efforts and (military and civilian) humanitarian intervention capacity with trade and development aid policies.