A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

1994/2210(COS) - 06/04/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In its resolution on the Commission communication and the draft memorandum to the Member States on the special aid programme in favour of peace in Northern Ireland, the European Parliament welcomed the speed with which the Commission and the Essen Council had reacted to the peace-keeping agreement in this country in order to support and facilitate lasting peace in Northern Ireland. It considered the Commission proposal to be encouraging and welcomed the fact that the programme gave priority to growth and employment, social inclusion, urban regeneration and cross-border cooperation. At the same time, the European Parliament welcomed the new and comprehensive consultations with local authorities, enterprises and associations in the debate and hoped that this practice would become a permanent feature of the Community initiative. As far as the programme itself is concerned, Parliament was in favour of applying the principle of additionality during the implementation of the programme and called on both the Commission and the Council to coordinate this action with other structural measures cofinanced by the Union. Parliament hoped that this programme would benefit all the communities in the region and would be implemented in a balanced manner both in Northern Ireland and in the border counties. In this sense, the most disadvantaged sections of the population should take priority. The European Parliament also called for all aid projects in Northern Ireland to preserve the natural and cultural environment. Parliament hoped that a certain flexibility would be applied to the daily management of this initiative during implementation, although not at the expense of strict budgetary control, and stated that it was prepared, if necessary, to increase the funding for this programme and called on the Commission to submit proposals along these lines or at least to amend the financial statement accompanying the programme. It also called for the 4 month deadline for local authorities to submit proposals to be reduced to 2 months.