Broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and the Community for 1997

1997/2068(COS) - 29/05/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In the report by Mrs Christa RANDZIO-PLATH (PSE,D) on the broad economic policy guidelines, the European Parliament called for these guidelines to include the coordination of economic policies on the basis of a policy mix combining economic, structural, fiscal, monetary and income policies and targeting medium-term budgetary consolidation. Regretting that the Commission's communication was limited to repeating the principles upon which the convergence criteria are based (price stability and reduction of deficits), Parliament called on the Council to incorporate an active employment policy into its broad guidelines and proposed that the fight against unemployment be incorporated into every policy. In this connection it suggested that a Council formed from the ECOFIN Council and the Council of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs should submit recommendations to the European Council stressing the importance of knitting together the broad lines of the economic and employment policies of the Member States and the Community and directing them towards achieving a high level of employment. On the other hand, it rejected the proposal from its Committee on Economic Affairs calling for an introduction of a recommendation on 'broad guidelines for employment' to fix the foundation of an EU employment policy. Parliament also called for the introduction of measures to improve skills, training and further training and to create new jobs in the environmental and cultural fields, as well in the caring services. It pointed out that small businesses (SMUs and NGOs) can create a great many jobs and point the way to a new 'social economy' (child care, domiciliary care, safety of public transport, nature conservancy, etc.). Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to take the measures required to restore confidence so as to reduce the amount of precautionary savings and, in this way, to boost internal demand. The Member States were urged to create the conditions which would result in an increase in both private and public investment. Parliament reiterated its call for the establishment without delay of the trans-European communications, transport, energy and environmental networks. It also called for support for SMEs and measures to encourage research and development, in particular by means of appropriate tax concessions. Action was also needed to enhance the complementarity of Member States' economic policies in order to achieve synergies in the following areas: - improvements in the economic, social and administrative environment for firms, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses, - stimulation of innovation and research, - adaptation of eduction, training and further training systems to technological and social changes, - abstention from social, environmental, monetary and tax 'dumping', which is harmful to the Community. Lastly, stressing the need for improved coordination between policies relevant to employment and the economy, Parliament called for an Interinstitutional agreement between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament with a view to guaranteeing respect for Parliament's prerogatives with regard to information, pursuant to Article 103 of the TEU.