Competitiveness of the European industry

1996/2230(COS) - 14/05/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Gérard CAUDRON (PSE, F) on the competitiveness of European industry, the European Parliament noted the lack of any real chronic sectoral weaknesses, with the exception of the persistent backwardness in the field of information technology and, to a lesser extent, biotechnology. It observed, nonetheless, that despite its considerable diversified and complementary research potential, Europe was achieving mediocre results in the area of innovation, which was reflected in its decline in the patents sector. Parliament called on the Commission to draw up proposals laying the foundations for a genuine European industrial policy based, in particular, on incentives for public and private investment, the introduction of aid mechanisms for innovative, job creating and/or restructuring industries, and the development of venture capital. It firmly supported the principle of coordinating and harmonising fiscal policies. It believed that public spending on industrial research should be geared more to commercial applications and encouraged the creation of European structures, whether private, public or joint in origin, capable of bringing industrial partners together in major research cooperation projects. It called for the adoption of the European company statute as a decisive step towards recognising the European dimension of business. It believed that the introduction of minimum social and environmental clauses in bilateral and multilateral world trade was essential in order to combat social and environmental dumping. It called for better coordination and certification of products marketed within the EU. While recognising the impact of environmental requirements on competitiveness as a factor which stimulated research, it also acknowledged that environmental constraints were a significant financial burden which was acceptable only if competitors were likewise subject to them. Parliament considered that it must be possible for labour markets to adjust and accompany the development of society and that the long- term economic and social impact of the initiatives to reduce working time adopted in the various Member States should be analysed.