A new Asia strategy

1994/2107(COS) - 14/06/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In its resolution, the European Parliament stated that it was very much in favour of stepping up relations with the Asian countries. Although it stressed the importance of the Commission communication and need to accord greater priority to Asia, the EP felt that this could only be regarded as a first step and that the framework proposed by the Commission should be supported by more intense and differentiated strategies for the various parts of Asia. To this end, Parliament recommended a genuine partnership with these countries and called on the Commission to take a series of initiatives, in collaboration with Parliament itself, to strengthen relations between Europe and that part of the world: - provision for new budgetary items broken down by geographical region, - establishment of training programmes as well as exchanges for young people, - promotion of Asian studies, modelled on the Community's work relating to Latin America (IRELA), - support for regional institutes pursuing European studies in Asia, - expansion and strengthening of the Community's presence in Asia, including its commercial presence. In particular, the EP called on the Council to give priority to security and peace issues involving Asia and it hoped that the Union would have a higher profile at local level as a provider of development aid. Political dialogue with these countries should be stepped up, including dialogue on nuclear issues (nuclear test ban). Parliament again stressed that any agreements concluded with Asian countries should be based on a clause concerning "respect for human rights and democratic principles". With regard to "social dumping", which was a source of conflict between Europe and Asia, Parliament pointed out that the growth in Asian countries was largely due to government investment, foreign capital and low wages. The economic growth of these countries should thus be accompanied by an improvement in social and economic safeguards. With regard to trade, the Union should identify the priority areas for economic cooperation to assert Europe's trade interests. The liberalisation of trading relations with the Asian countries should also be based on open dialogue resulting in the inclusion of environmental and social clauses in the agreements concluded with Asia. Similarly, Parliament stressed that all comprehensive cooperation agreements should contain provisions on investment protection. The EP also called on Japan, the EU's main commercial partner in the region, to intensify its efforts at market liberalisation. There should be sustained efforts to help the poorest countries in the region. Finally, Parliament called on all the Asian countries to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty and on China to join the WTO. Parliament also called for the rapid conclusion of an agreement with Vietnam and proposed that consideration be given to concluding contractual relations with Iran at the appropriate time.