Baltic Sea region: guidelines for a Union approach in the Baltic region

1994/2201(COS) - 14/07/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs af UGGLAS (PPE, S), Parliament called for EC aid to promote sustainable development in the Baltic Sea and the surrounding area. This region should indeed be considered fully as part of the new Europe and the Community should be promoting stability, democracy, economic, social and ecological development and respect for the rule of law in the area in question. Parliament stressed the importance of promoting regional cooperation and the gradual creation of a pan-European free-trade zone, as provided for in the new European agreements concluded with the three Baltic States. Similarly, it called for the entire Baltic Sea region to be included in the trans-European network programme and for the development of investment in that particular zone. Parliament also insisted that a significant portion of the aid in question be directed towards the clean-up of the Baltic Sea. Programmes such as LIFE, PHARE and TACIS should provide more substantial aid for this purpose. Parliament also felt that it was vital for the European Community to cooperate in establishing nuclear safety in this region and in improving the access of countries bordering eastern Europe to cleaner and safer energy sources. As regards cultural heritage, Parliament called on the Community to promote cultural exchanges in this region (including the media sector). As far as the safety of citizens was concerned, Parliament insisted that action be taken to combat smuggling and crime and to control the drugs problem. In the area of security, Parliament felt that it was essential to continue the dialogue initiated by the Stability Pact and stressed the absolute importance of ensuring the integration of minority groups living in these States (particularly the Russian-speaking populations). It called on all the Baltic Sea States to join the European Convention on Human Rights and to guarantee fundamental liberties, including those of minority groups. Finally, it approved the accession of Member States and associated countries to all the security structures to which the other Members of the EU already belonged, while recognizing each nation's right to decide on its own security policy. As regards regional cooperation, Parliament was of the opinion that economic cooperation had to have a solid regional foundation and for this reason called for the creation of an interregional development programme. Finally, at international level, Parliament was in favour of the Community establishing diplomatic representatives in this region in order to promote political dialogue and to give greater recognition to the role of the CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States) and the Euro-Arctic Council of the Barents Sea.