Machinery construction industry: strengthening the competitiveness

1994/2188(COS) - 21/09/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Ludivina GARCIA ARIAS (PSE, E), Parliament supported the Commission's programme for the mechanical engineering industry. It felt that a basic legal framework should be put in place as soon as possible in order that firms might be able to plan their activities. Community directives aimed at the machinery sector should be rapidly transposed into the legislations of the Member States, with a view to simplifying, at administrative level, the practical implementation of Community regulations. Focusing on the strategic importance of this sector, the report called for measures to be taken to counter the negative effects of European currency fluctuations. Parliament felt that owing to the number of SMEs involved, the programmes which the Community and Member States provided for these companies should take account of the needs of the engineering sector. It called for the Fourth Framework Programme to incorporate the R&D needs of the engineering industry in its sectoral programmes and thought that firms which invested in research should enjoy fiscal benefits. Parliament stressed the importance of training for workers in this area and the need for ensuring that staff were continuously adapted to technological innovation, by making use of Community programmes such as Adapt and Leonardo. Expressing concern about the loss of skilled jobs in this sector, Parliament advocated the negotiated introduction of a flexible system which would allow employees to be kept at work or reintegrated during periods of economic prosperity. From this perspective, it called for the development of professional training opportunities, flexible working hours and, when justified, a reduction in working time. The introduction of new and more flexible working arrangements should not result in a casualization of labour or a reduction in purchasing power. Finally, Parliament felt that there was a need to develop the European engineering industry's presence in non-member countries, and particularly in south-east Asia, in Latin America and in eastern Europe, by making it easier for SMEs to become involved. To this end, agreements of mutual recognition should be negotiated which would guarantee fair commercial trade.