TACIS: cross-border cooperation

1997/2119(COS) - 14/07/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Anna KARAMANOU (PSE, GR) on the Tacis programme, Parliament welcomed the introduction of cross-border cooperation in this programme but considered that the budget appropriations available for this purpose were insufficient.. This cooperation required resources if the stability of regions close to the EU's borders and to the borders of future member states was to be preserved. Future regional policy should increasingly stress such cooperation. It called on the Commission to bear in mind the enlargement when implementing the Tacis-CBC programme so as to strengthen the new external borders of the EU. Parliament, which stressed the importance of the principle of partnership and decentralisation of activities, considered that care should be taken to ensure that cross-border cooperation should contribute towards maintaining peace and security, respect for human rights and the protection of minorities. It also considered that the role of the regions was important in the process of unification and coexistence of the peoples of Europe. With regard to the Tacis guidelines the Commission should use the model of democratic co-decision used in the structural measures and should support small projects. Parliament also stressed the importance of coordinating the Union's cross-border cooperation programmes (Phare, Tacis, Interreg) in order to avoid overlapping. Joint funding could be provided for this purpose. It considered that the joint cross-border programmes should be prepared at regional level for sections of the frontier, rather than for the whole length of national borders, and on the basis of a joint socio- economic analysis. In future Tacis cross-border cooperation should be based on integrated multiannual programming so as to make it more consistent with other programmes. Parliament also regretted that the effectiveness of the programme had been affected by the bureaucratic procedures. It was therefore necessary to alter the existing system to reduce the Commission's administrative bias. It also regretted the lack of information about projects and the excessive centralisation of the Tacis administration (in major capitals). It therefore called for resources to be allocated to regional offices. Lastly, Parliament called for the Tacis-CBC programmes to define the environmental policy objectives (in particular along the Russia-Union border) and for a strengthening of the provisions on training, business development, new technologies and SMUs and a revision of public tender contracts so as to ensure that regional authorities participate in projects. It also called for the Commission to put forward the creation of a specific Baltic Sea Programme