Cultural heritage: Community action programme 1997-2000, Raphaël

1995/0078(COD) - 12/10/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Fernando SANZ FERNANDEZ (PSE, E) on the proposal establishing a Community action programme in the field of cultural heritage (Raphael), the European Parliament gave its support to the programme and placed particular emphasis on the following points; - the importance of this programme as recognition of a Europe that was not only an economic, political and social entity but also a cultural reality; - the fact that the concept of cultural heritage included movable (works of art), immovable (monuments), and intangible (traditions, folklore) heritage, cultural sites and landscapes (cultural and natural assets) and any commemorative site which helped to define Europe's historical and cultural identity; - the problems of theft, vandalism and impoverishment of the European cultural heritage, due equally to the high number of visits to certain sites and the lack of resources to maintain them; - among the programme's objectives, Parliament emphasised in particular: . consideration of economic and social life when promoting cultural heritage, . the restoration of heritage, . the need to ensure that all the people of Europe, and particularly disadvantaged groups, had access to the programme, . the provision of information concerning heritage (taking account of disadvantaged social and cultural groups and young people), . cooperation with third countries and organisations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO; - with regard to the implementation of the measures themselves, Parliament asked that all actions receiving Community support display the Union flag and acknowledgement of the funding, that they be implemented by the disadvantaged and that young people had access to the programme. It called on the Commission to give priority to broad publicity for this programme and to ensure an appropriate balance in the financial support granted and complementarity with other similar Community actions. Parliament also emphasised: . the need to analyse the specific problems involved in the conservation of heritage within the context of policies combating pollution, . the development of European standards and/or recommendations with a view to improving good heritage conservation and management practice, . the encouragement of forms of sponsorship for firms to make them aware of the need to safeguard heritage, . restoration: a significant proportion of the programme's appropriations would be devoted to the restoration of architectural heritage (at least ECU 4.7 million per year), . the training of professionals in the fields of management and technology with regard to cultural heritage and exchanges between specialists in Europe. Parliament also called for financial support for schools or foundations organised as part of networks designed to provide vocational training for "heritage trades". Similarly, the EP called on the Commission to finance studies in this area and the publication of a database covering all the cultural objects which had been unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State or even the compilation of a guide to European cultural routes. Furthermore, Parliament highlighted the need for support for transnational cooperation between the Member States with a view to the adoption of common approaches for the conservation of cultural heritage. - with regard to the budget: Parliament regretted that, although it had been calling for 1% of the Community budget to be allocated to culture since 1979, the European Union only devoted 0.014% of its budget to cultural measures. It felt that the budget proposed for the Raphael programme, (ECU 67 million over five years) was not sufficient to implement a global coherent cultural policy. It called for a financial framework of ECU 96 million for the programme. Moreover, given that the draft budget for 1996 proposed a reduction in appropriations (ECU 10 million instead of ECU 10.8), Parliament felt that it was ridiculous to launch such a far-reaching programme while providing it with less resources than previous actions had received. The annual allocations for the Raphael programme should be established during the budgetary procedure; - opening up the programme to third countries: the EP welcomed the fact that the Raphael programme was being opened up to European countries outside the European Union (Cyprus, Malta, EFTA countries, associated CEECs) and third countries which had signed cooperation agreements containing a clause on cultural affairs; - finally, Parliament called for a report to be drawn up by 30 June 1998 outlining the financial support provided and the results achieved.