European Observatory for SMEs. 5th annual report 1997

1998/2029(COS) - 17/09/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Michel SCARBONCHI (ARE, F) on the European Observatory for SMEs, the European Parliament welcomed the inclusion in the Observatory?s 1997 report of thematic studies on ? SMEs in Tourism? and ?SMEs and the Environment?, and on general trends in the situation of SMEs in the EFTA countries and the inclusion of a chapter entitled ?The European SME scoreboard? which provides useful background data on the structure and development of SMEs. It called on the Commission to submit, from next year, an annual ?State of small business" report which would go beyond the annual report of the European Observatory for SMEs by providing an annual assessment of Community policies and initiatives directed towards SMEs and proposing new policy routes. It called once again for the simplification and improvement of the legal framework for SMEs and for speedier implementation of SME aid programmes and payment arrangements. It fully supported the introduction of ?one-stop shops? which coordinate the services for SMEs, thus simplifying the subsidies application procedure. It called for improved targeting in the future of SMEs in rural areas in Community programmes, aid for developed but declining tourist areas, aid programmes for the training and adaptation of human resources and measures to publicise the euro through tourism. It calls for the next report: - to determine the extent to which SMEs, especially micro-enterprises, will be affected by changes to the social security systems; - to study the extent to which the concept of benchmarking is applied by SMEs; - to carry out a comparative survey on SMEs? access to capital through banks, stock exchanges, participating enterprises and other sources of finance; - to examine the problem of coordination between the various European programmes which target SMEs. The European Parliament also called for more attention to be given by SMEs to environmental issues. It also called on the Commission to take action to step up funding for the EXPROM programme, to promote SMEs at international trade fairs and to support the principle of reciprocity in the opening up of third countries? markets.