Tourism sector: Community measures (dec. 92 /421/EEC). Report 1995-1996

1997/2156(COS) - 07/10/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Alfonso NOVO BELENGUER (ARE, E) on Community measures relating to tourism, Parliament called on the Commission to undertake a detailed analysis of the proposals submitted for the tourist sector by each of the fifteen Member States under their national employment plans. It considered that the means for overcoming the structural obstacles to a Community tourism policy needed to be strengthened, and that attention should be focused on the measures needed to develop a clear, positive and dynamic framework for a future tourism policy that would gain the support of all the institutions. It recommended the establishment of a directorate for tourism within the Commission's DG XXIII, with units responsible for: - ensuring effective coordination with other DGs, particularly those responsible for policy to assist small and medium-sized enterprises; - developing permanent consultation arrangements with the national tourist boards and government services; - duly evaluating all direct actions funded by the Commission affecting tourism; - increasing the information available to tourists on all aspects of their rights and responsibilities as consumers. It took the view that the budgetary authority should provide for an appropriate and realistic budget for direct Community actions in the tourism sector in the 1999 budget. It considered that the proposal for a multiannual programme for tourism ('Philoxenia'), presented by the Commission in 1996, represented, in general, an appropriate framework for the future development of a Community tourism policy. Accordingly, it called on the Presidency of the Council to take an early decision on the adoption of the programme. It called for the reform of the Structural Funds proposed in Agenda 2000 to take due account of the need to ensure coordinated support for the tourist industry. The impact of alternative forms of tourism (tourism in rural areas, sustainable tourism) as an instrument of regional development, particularly in rural areas, should be highlighted. Parliament considered that, while fully respecting the subsidiarity principle, efforts to promote the EU as a tourist destination needed to be pursued in third-country markets. It was particularly important to advertise the advantages of travelling within the euro zone to tourism markets both inside and outside the Union. It welcomed the Commission project concerning biodiversity, and called for special campaigns to promote sustainable tourism in all existing and future EU programmes for tourism. Special priority should be assigned to on-line services in tourism (particularly to promote peripheral and island regions). It called on the Commission to: - organise concerted action by the Member States to promote exchanges of experts on the restoration of the artistic heritage (study grants and encouragement of the creation of networks on the lines of that of 'Europa Traditionae Consortium'); - recognise the importance of tourism training, so as to enhance awareness of sustainable tourism; - recognise the importance of tourism as an industry and particularly the role of SMEs in this sector; - promote good practices in tourism with the applicant countries; - seek to link tourism and employment. In this context, it welcomed the setting-up of a high-level group on tourism and employment, and particularly welcomed the initiatives launched to combat sex tourism involving children.