Economic and trade relations with the countries of the Mediterranean basin

1994/2162(INI) - 17/11/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs IZQUIERDO ROJO (PSE, E), the European Parliament approved the new institutional framework established by the association agreements between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries based on political dialogue, free trade and cooperation in the economic, financial, social and cultural fields, and called on the Commission and the Council to encourage local regional cooperation politically and financially by promoting dialogue and cooperation and, more importantly, by creating new institutions. It likewise voted in favour of new inter-regional agreements which could be independent of or which could complement bilateral association agreements or multilateral agreements. It voted in favour of strengthening all aspects of relations with the Mediterranean countries and called on the Commission to promote inter-regional economic partnership which would stimulate investments of mutual interest. It called for the model established at the initiative of the European Parliament (e.g. INTERREG AND PHARE) to be extended to Mediterranean countries, in order to achieve greater synergy between structural interventions by the European Union, and called on the Commission to strengthen its relations with the least favoured Mediterranean regions. Considering that the financial framework was not always commensurate with the commercial and strategic importance of this region to the Community, it called on the Commission to ensure that the programmes and projects implemented went beyond technical studies and took the form of concrete investment projects. It called for investment to aim to make these countries self-sufficient in foodstuffs and help them develop an economic fabric which favoured SMEs. Venture capital injected by the EIB or other systems could prove to be indispensable in this context. Programmes should not overlook the social aspects, especially employment, housing and training, especially for young people and women. As far as infrastructure was concerned, priority should be given to hydraulic projects and Parliament was particularly in favour of projects to export water from one place to another in the Mediterranean area. It also called for greater consultation on policies implemented by Member States in the Mediterranean area, especially as regards reducing the foreign debt of the Mediterranean countries, and considered it essential to establish a free trade zone between the EU and these countries (although long transitional periods would need to be granted to these countries in order to allow them to adapt). As far as the Barcelona conference was concerned, the European Parliament considered that this conference was merely the starting point for a new Euro-Mediterranean partnership and called for the institutionalization of a monitoring mechanism. Finally, it called on the Council to recognize Cyprus and Malta (two of the official partners of this conference) to be granted a different status, given that they had concluded financial protocols with the Community in preparation for their future accession to the Union.