Fight against organised crime: criminal offence to participate in a criminal organisation

1997/0913(CNS) - 20/11/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Leoluca ORLANDO (V, I), the European Parliament has approved the draft joint action, subject to amendments designed to render the fight against criminal organizations more effective. Parliament calls on all Member States to agree on a common interpretation of the concept of 'criminal organization' and undertakes to ensure effective judicial cooperation in connection with offences punishable in the Union by criminal penalties. Parliament defines a criminal organization as an association of more than two persons acting in concert to commit crimes or other offences, in particular drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, money laundering and other forms of financial crime, including financial fraud via the Internet or by way of electronic banking services, financial investments, extra-territorial privileges or tax fraud such as organized VAT and customs-duty fraud, terrorism, threat, violence, corruption, etc., or enlisting the support or protection of persons associated with important institutions to conceal or facilitate such offences. Parliament considers that the penalties for participation in the activities of a criminal organization should be at least three years. Finally, Parliament emphasizes the need to strengthen cooperation between countries applying for accession and the European Union's transatlantic partners in this field.