Resolution on the crisis in the iron and steel sector, AST/Thyssen Krupp

2004/2511(RSP) - 12/02/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the crisis in the iron and steel sector, with particular reference to the fortunes of AST Thyssen Krup. Parliament pointed to the ssignificant public investment funding from which AST Thyssen Krup has benefited, including structural funds from Objective 2 and from the European Social Fund, for developing local systems, infrastructures and vocational training. It is satisfied with the first results of initiatives taken by all the social and institutional partners, which have led to the opening up of genuine negotiating opportunities on the future of the company. It is necessary to ensure that a strong and modern steel sector is maintained in the EU, in order to meet the requirements of lasting development and job creation. Parliament urged the Commission to act firmly within the WTO and OECD to guarantee that there is a level playing field in the global steel market. It welcomed the efforts made by European Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, in the steel conflict with the USA but expressed its concern about the steady loss of market share of Italian and European steel production. Parliament went on to remind the Commission that, following the expiry of the ECSC, its competences include tackling the economic and social impact of the changes in the European iron and steel sector. The Commission and the Member States need to adopt a more decisive strategy to tackle industrial restructuring and its social impact. All the subsidies granted in the context of public funding, including the Structural Funds, should be made subject to agreements regarding employment, local development and investments for the purposes of modernising production. Parliament also asked for concrete protection of the interests of employees and European enterprises, which must have the opportunity to operate within international markets and not be subject to any kind of dumping. Furthermore, the Commission and Member States are asked to present the financial perspectives on the use of Community funds for future years, as well as an analysis of the priorities to be established to reconcile development and employment objectives. Parliament felt that Europe must create favourable conditions for its industrial interests, especially for the advanced and high technological sectors. Investment in research and development, with the commitment of EU funds through the Sixth Framework Programme, could be used to develop the new materials, designs and processes that can reconfigure industrial sectors.