# MEDA programme, Mediterranean countries (Regulation (EC) No 1488/96). Annual report 2000

2002/2235(INI) - 03/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its own-initiative report drafted by Yves PIETRASANTA (Greens /EFA, France) on the annual report on the MEDA 2000 programme. (Please see the summary of 25/03 /03.) Parliament stated that a free trade area could only function and bring prosperity if the economic, productive and technological capabilities of the countries involved are at similar levels. Inequalities and instabilities in the social fabric, which lead to exclusion and poverty, are the principal factors to be targeted in the MEDA programme. The progress made in the field of budget implementation since the introduction of MEDA II, as shown by various indicators, must be examined within the context of MEDA II's main objective, which is to tackle the five challenges of population, employment and migration, globalisation and dwindling of resources, as well as the environmental challenge. Parliament stated its conviction of the need to tackle the issues behind these five challenges. Such an approach would require a review of the structural challenges posed by the MEDA countries. These include trade flows, regional disparities, disparities in income between the MEDA countries and between social classes in the partner countries, the legal and institutional framework to encourage the development of non-governmental initiatives, the underdevelopment of the financial intermediary sector, budgetary policy characterised by uncontrolled expenditure. There is a need for the rapid launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for dialogue between cultures and civilisations and the monitoring centre for migration. Parliament condemned the minuscule share of funding allocated to the Mediterranean countries from the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). It called for a more diversified range of target beneficiary countries. It did not approve the Commission's decision not to include among the beneficiaries of these programmes, countries where civil society is active, yet still fragile. The European Parliament should be consulted on the selection of target countries. A dynamic civil society is central to the social and political development of the MEDA countries. Parliament asked the Commission to implement a policy of active support for independent organisations, associations and trade unions. Finally, Parliament repeated its support for the official establishment of an Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary assembly, which should become one of the institutions of the Barcelona Process. The assembly should have the power to make recommendations to the ministerial bodies.