Enterprise policy: implementing the Lisbon programme, progress made

2002/2033(COS) - 13/06/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Dominique VLASTO (EPP-ED, France) on the Commission's communication. It shared the Commission's view that the pace of reform needed to be increased, and called for an enterprise policy scoreboard, which should include both the actions to be taken and a timetable. Parliament deplored the insufficient understanding of the needs of small enterprises and the fact that their involvement, through the organisations representing them, does not go far enough to identify them with the major Community political priorities of enlargement, cohesion policy, European governance and the work of the European Convention. A genuine opening of the markets in telecommunications, energy, postal services and transport is very important for small businesses. Parliament also deplored the fact that fewer than 3% of SMEs and SMIs have access to public contracts. On the specific issue of reducing the tax burden, the Commission should apply the experimental VAT-reduction measures across the board to all labour intensive businesses and study the impact on undeclared work of a reduction in VAT. On access to funding, Parliament called for the establishment of systems to facilitate access to the EIB/EIF funds for normative investments, investments in the environment and new technologies and training-related intangible investments. It also wanted mutual guarantee schemes to be strengthened. With respect to establishing an efficient regulatory framework, the Commission and the Member States should enter into discussions to produce a general framework for voluntary agreements in industry, self-regulation and all the alternatives to traditional legislative and regulatory measures. Turning to Community programmes, Parliament called for an Erasmus-style exchange programme for apprenticeship, with a view to encouraging mobility amongst apprentices. The Commission should produce a European statute for apprentices. There should also be European guidelines on services to enterprises and for an active policy to enhance tailor-made advisory and back-up services. Parliament listed the five priority areas: business management and organisation, the environment, quality /standardisation, research and technological innovation, and globalisation of markets.