Economic and monetary union EMU and the euro: strategy of communication and information up to 2002

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report by Othmar KARAS (EPP/ED, Austria) on the Commission's communication strategy in the last phases of the completion of EMU. Parliament welcomed the communication and supported the sequencing of the campaign, the emphasis of which will be SME's in 2000, because of their longer preparatory time, all target groups in 2001, and specifically, the general public after 2001. The campaign should also include information on the economic and monetary policy of the Union. Special attention needs to be given to certain categories of the population with particular difficulties of access to information such as the elderly, blind people, people with a mental disability, and the socially disadvantaged, since these categories require a form of education rather than mere information. The training of trainers should be stepped up immediately. The important role of children and young people in disseminating information is also stressed. Parliament recommended in the context of the world savings week introduced by the banks, the introduction of a "euro savings day" with information and encouragement for opening a euro savings account. Savings accounts could also be given automatically to all children born in 2001. In view of the broadening debate on the external value of the euro, the campaign should put across in tangible and clear terms, the demonstrable effects of the common currency on the European internal market, on price and currency stability and growth and employment. Parliament called for the funding of the euro information campaign in the year 2001 to be at least EUR 38 million. In the light of the ECOFIN Council's decision to shorten the period of parallel currency to two months, the information campaign should be extended to mid-2002 and should have a budget of at least EUR 20 million in that year. Parliament also called on the Commission to take firm and immediate action to stop the double charging of customers and to bring down the high bank charges for cross-border transfers in the euro area.