MEDA programme, Euro-Mediterranean partnership: economic and social structures

1999/0214(CNS) - 06/09/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, under the consultation procedure, the report drafted by Mr Jaime VALDIVIELSO DE CUE (EPP/ED, E) in which it calls for accelerated and simplified implementation of the MEDA programme - the main financial instrument for the Community's Mediterranean policy. This text was subject to numerous amendments which aim at achieving greater efficiency of the programme by revising the provisions concerning financing, co-operation and transparency. The European Parliament calls for the strengthening of regional cooperation through the allocation of greater resources and increased political and technical support, beginning with certain areas which are already consolidated, such as the Maghreb countries. Furthermore, it is imperative that the new MEDA regulation should guarantee balanced and sustainable political, economic and social development and respect for the environment while involving civil society in the framing and evaluation of programmes and projects. The importance of 'small-scale projects' must be taken into account in this respect. With regard to the reference amount for the implementation of this programme, for the period 2000 to 2006 it shall be at least equal in real terms to the amount allocated in the preceding period. Within the annual budget, 85% shall be earmarked for cooperation between the Community and partner countries; 15% of the annual budget shall be earmarked for regional between the Community and at leat two Mediterranean countries. In cooperation with the partner countries, the Commission shall ensure that supplies imported into the partner country in implementation of a project funded by the Community are not subject to customs duties. In addition, several amendments are intended to promote environmental measures. If projects violate internationally recognised environmental standards, the Commission and the European Investment Bank may suspend and lower their payments. An overall and gradual improvement of the Commission's management is also sought. Moreover, the Parliament wishes to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the Member States and boost its own democratic control and scrutiny over the programme.