Outermost regions: implementation of Article 299 (2) of the EC Treaty. Report

2000/2135(COS) - 25/10/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Based on the report drafted by Mrs Margie SUDRE (EPP-ED, F) European Parliament adopted a resolution on the measures to implement Article 299(2): the outermost regions of the European Union. In adopting the resolution, the European Parliament underlined that enlargement is liable to lead to a reduction of the Community's GDP with an impact on the regions currently eligible for Objective 1 funding; moreover, an enlarged Union will bring in its wake a representativeness deficit for the outermost regions in the Community institutions. With regard to the granting of state aids or tax concessions to the outermost regions, competition must not be distorted between the Member States. The European Parliament regrets however, that the Commission report for 2000-2006 has not yet dealt satisfactorily with all the issues raised by the outermost regions and their national authorities with a view to transforming the new legal basis for a strategy for action. Therefore, the resolution calls on the Commission to provide the replies which are being sought as quickly as possible. The European Parliament also takes the view that Article 299(2), as the legal basis for the adoption of measures designed to assist the outermost regions, proposes that the derogations granted to those regions should not be subject to time-limits where the handicaps concerned are clearly multiple and permanent. With regard to the implementation of the said Article, the resolution regards is as essential that the staff complement of the Interdepartmental Group within the Commission's General Secretariat be strengthend without delay and that the presence of this Group in each of the directorates-general, should be consolidated. In addition and against the background of restricted financial resources, all proposals for acts which are general in scope should be accompanied, when they are considered by the College of Commissioners, and on the basis of Article 299(2), by a simplified sheet, drawn up by the Interdepartmental Group, outlining their possible impact on the outermost regions and the remedial measures required should that impact prove adverse. Finally, with regard to fiscal and customs regimes in outermost regions, the European Parliament urges that the differentiated tax regimes (both direct and indirect) of thse regions should be considered as necessary instruments of ecomomic development; duty-free arangements in respect of imports of certain products of particular sensitivity for the economies of these regions should also be maintained.