Cohesion Fund. Annual report 1999

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The European Parliament believes that, overall, the Cohesion Fund has been effective over the period 1993-1999, and that its creation by the Masstricht Treaty has been fully justified as a fundamental support instrument for the countries with the greatest structural problems. The Parliament emphasises the political and economic importance of diminishing economic disparities between the current Member States and their regions, even after enlargement, since they may even worsen as a result of the the impact and dynamics of enlargement. The House considers that the forthcoming enlargement is a huge challenge for solidarity in the European Union and it reminds the Commission of the crucial importance of efficient preparations for the forthcoming enlargement. It considers that the Structural Instrument for Pre-Accession (ISPA) is an excellent tool for preparing the administration at all levels for the requirements of enlargement in the structural policy field. The Parliament confirms the importance of observing the additionality principle as a key principle in the implementation of the Structural Funds. With regard to the monitoring, evaluation and control, the Commission is called upon to devote more resources to on-the-spot checks in order to detect weaknesses in management systems. The Parliament also calls on the Commission to apply the utmost rigour when assessing the environmental impact of projects financed by means of the Cohesion Fund.