Regional development Fund ERDF: guidelines for actions for 2000-2006

2000/2270(COS) - 14/12/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report, by 179 votes to 2 with 2 abstentions, drafted by Mr Helmuth MARKOV (EUL/NGL, D) on the guidelines for innovative measures under the ERDF in the period 2000-2006. The European Parliament calls for the innovative measures to be incorporated into a common European regional policy geared towards sustainability, strengthening economic and social cohesion, increasing competitiveness and, in particular, creating skills-based, long-term and economically viable employment. Moreover, it supports the choice of the planned priority areas for the innovative measures, however, it proposes that priority areas 1 and 2 should be combined to form a common target for action and provide support for innovatory measures in the area sof energy efficiency, the dissemination of renewable energies and the practical application of climate protection measures in both business and the public sector as a new priority area 3 on the basis of Chapter B of the guidelines for the Structural Funds. The Parliament is convinced that the competitiveness of European businesses in a globalised economy can mainly be sustainably ensured through research, technological development and innovation. In addition, it welcomes the involvement of as many players as possible at regional level in relations of partnerships, and the close linking of the innovative measures aimed at raising technological levels with the other ERDF interventions, with a view to developing a strategic regional policy plan for each region concerned for the period 2000-2006 and calls for the involvement of the private sector at all levels of the process. It adds that, in accordance with the aims of eEurope, schools and training institutions should be incorporated in the themes of the guidelines. The Parliament notes with regret the approach chosen by the Commission for opting for programme-based rather than a project-based financing, to be implemented by the national and regional authorities. It also considers that the Commission should include innovative projects in its programming approach and calls for continued support for local and regional partnerships under the programme. According to the Parliament the budget of EUR 400 million for seven years is an absolute minimum and that the possibilities that offer themselves in the second half of the programme planning period under the flexibility instrument should therefore be used to the full. Lastly, the Parliament welcomes the fact that the Commission intends to include in the guidelines a 10-point catalogue of criteria for the selection of programmes for innovative measures with a view to carrying out objective, transparent evaluation and insists that clear audit lines and exit strategies are formulated alongside these measures. It also welcomes the fact that it is planned to include the regional programmes for innovative measures in the mid-term review of the interventions financed from the structural funds.