Resolution on the Commission's legislative and work programme for 2003

2002/2609(RSP) - 05/12/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on the Commission's Work Programme for 2003. It welcomed the programme both for its clarity and for its political focus. Parliament noted the political priorities "enlargement, stability, security, and a sustainable and inclusive economy" for the key initiatives, legislative proposals and non-legislative acts. The Commission is asked to translate more effectively the sustainability requirement into horizontal policies, thereby increasing policy coherence with reference to the Kyoto commitments in particular. On the question of the debate on the future of Europe, Parliament regretted that the European Convention, the forthcoming intergovernmental conference, and also economic governance are not mentioned at all in the Commission's work programme. It asked for the inclusion of comitology in the discussions on the interinstitutional agreement, extending the Lamfalussy procedure and ensuring equal rights of scrutiny and call-back for Parliament and the Council in all comitology procedures. An interinstitutional agreement must also be reached between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the institutional consequences of enlargement. Parliament went on to ask the Commission for a Statute for political parties and their financing as soon as the Treaty of Nice enters into force. Parliament insisted that an interinstitutional agreement must be reached on the institutional consequences of enlargement. Finally, the Commission is asked to act upon the demands and remarks set out in the Annex to the resolution. This falls under the following headings: - to make a success of enlargement. Parliament emphasised the importance of an unhindered operation of the internal market after enlargement. It supported the proposal to reassess relations with the enlarged Union's neighbours and, in particular, the priority given to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the improvement of relations with the countries of south-east Europe and other countries such as Russia, Ukraine and Moldova; - to guarantee stability and security. Parliament felt that measures relating to common European immigration and asylum policies, based on international standards, making a clear distinction between asylum seekers, people seeking international protection and migrant workers must be adopted as soon as possible. It regretted the fact that the Council had abandoned all reference to the Presidency Conclusions of the Tampere European Council and limited itself to actions against illegal immigration instead of developing an ambitious European policy for asylum and immigration; - to establish a durable, solidarity-based economy. Any extension of the Lamfalussy procedure is premature until it has been tried and tested, in view of the fact that not one directive has yet gone through all the stages of this new process. Moreover, further progress needs to be achieved as far as the introduction of a call-back procedure in a revised Lamfalussy procedure is concerned. On fiscal matters Parliament felt that the tax base must be harmonised where this is necessary for the proper functioning of the internal market (apart from tax rates). The country-of-origin principle must be adopted with regard to VAT and agreements must be concluded with a number of thirdcountries, in order to be able to finalise the adoption of the directive on taxation of savings. Parliament regretted that the Commission has not taken on board the European Parliament's request to present a proposal for a disability-specific discrimination directive, based on Article 13 of the Treaty, during the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003; - as regards interinstitutional matters, the internal reform of the Commission must remain a priority; a binding code of conduct must be introduced for the appointment of senior officials, the financial interests of Commissioners and Directors-General must be published on the Internet, and more openness and transparency must be encouraged in the awarding of contracts and grants. The Commission must draw up and put in place, as a matter of urgency, an action plan to modernise and improve its accounting system; - as regards the external dimension, Parliament believed it is necessary to make development aid and debt relief conditional on respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance. As regards the CFSP, the Transatlantic Dialogue must be further strengthened.