

Cohesion Fund

2004/0166(AVC) - 24/05/2005

The committee adopted the report by Alfonso ANDRIA (ALDE, IT)) under Rule 75(3) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, which allows the committee to draw up an interim report setting out its priorities before a final decision on assent is taken by the full Parliament.

The key positions set out in the report were as follows:

- the committee backed the proposed increase in the Cohesion Fund from EUR 18 billion (for the period 2000-2006) to EUR 62.99 billion and called for a balanced distribution between the eligible sectors of the environment and transport infrastructure, coupled with some flexibility in intervention by the Fund;
- the new financial perspective due to be agreed in June 2005 must ensure that current policy challenges - chief among which is the reform of cohesion policy - can be met. MEPs said that 0.41% of the EU's Gross National Product (GNP) was the appropriate level for this purpose;
- the regulation should include an explicit reference in favour of people with disabilities, and projects financed by the Cohesion Fund should also provide for the removal of barriers and obstacles of every kind;
- the Commission should take into account the specific characteristics of outlying Member States and island Member States eligible under the Cohesion Fund, given that they suffer from natural and demographic handicaps.