The role of territorial cohesion in regional development

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Ambroise GUELLEC (EPP-ED, FR) onthe role of territorial cohesion in regional development. The report called for regional development to be founded on programmes which guarantee equality of treatment between the EU's territories, while preserving their diversity. The committee said that this implied accessibility of services of general interest (SGI) and services of general economic interest (SGEI).

With a view to measuring regional development and evaluating the obstacles objectively, the committee also called for the adoption, alongside GDP figures, of new territorial indicators, namely "the decentralisation and accessibility index, infrastructure and transport provision, research/ innovation, education and training activity, level of diversification of productivity in the area, and unemployment rate".

The report called on the Commission to establish a system for checking the impact of the various Community policies on territorial cohesion within the EU, and stressed the role of Parliament in the process of further evaluation of the outcomes. Lastly, the committee wanted the Commission to draw up before 2007 a White Paper on the objective of territorial cohesion, indicating in particular "how this objective is to be incorporated into the national strategic plan of each Member State ".