The role of "Euroregions" in the development of regional policy

2004/2257(INI) - 01/12/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Kyriacos **TRIANTAPHYLLIDES** (GUE/NGL, CY) on the role of "Euroregions" in the development of regional policy. (Please see the document dated 06/10/2005.) Parliament felt that cross-border cooperation was of fundamental importance to European cohesion and integration and must therefore be given wide support. It called on Member States to promote the use of Euroregions as one of the tools of cross-border co-operation. A Euroregion or similar structure fulfils important cross-border tasks, providing, for example:

- an information and service point for citizens, institutions and regional and local authorities;

- a focal point for common values, aims and strategies;

- a driving force for solving cross-border problems;

- a mouthpiece in all cross-border questions.

Euroregions are a turn table for all cross-border relationships, contacts, knowledge transfers and operational programmes and projects and they need certain legal status to be able to perform their tasks. Cross-border cooperation also makes a considerable contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy through joint innovation and research, R&D networks across borders and the exchange of best practice. Parliament felt that it was particularly important that the microproject form of assistance, as provided for in the Commission's Communication INTERREG III, be maintained under the Structural Funds.

Parliament went on to underline the need to give priority to eliminating disparities between regions in the new Member States and in the old Member States, as well as the need to extend the concept of Euroregions and similar structures, even though they do not necessarily have the legal competencies to include multiple facets of co-operation. Possible fields of mutual interest could include promoting culture, education, tourism and economic issues as well as, where applicable, fighting organised crime, drug trafficking and fraud in partnership with relevant national institutions.

Parliament called for Euroregions and similar structures as proposed in the legal framework of the EGCC to be enabled to develop and manage cross-border programmes in the EU as well as programmes in line with the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance as from the year 2007 onwards in partnership with national institutions.

Finally, it stressed the need to support cross-border co-operation and the establishment of Euroregions, including regions in the sensitive area of the Middle East, in an effort to promote friendly relations, stability, security and economic interests in terms of mutual respect and benefit.