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A3-245/90

R E P O R T

by the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning
on a concerted regional planning policy

Rapporteur: Mr A. WAECHTER

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A Series: Reports - B Series: Motions for Resolutions, Oral Questions - C Series: Documents received from other Institutions (e.g. Commissions)

* = Consultation procedure requiring a single reading

**II = Cooperation procedure (second reading) which requires the votes of a majority of the current Members of Parliament for rejection or amendment

**I = Cooperation procedure (first reading)

*** = Parliamentary assent which requires the votes of a majority of the current Members of Parliament

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At the sittings of 2 April 1990 and 14 May 1990 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred motion for a resolution B3-441/90 by Mr Arbeloa Muru and Mrs Belo on a concerted regional planning policy and motion for a resolution B3-623/90 by Mr Waechter on a Community regional development policy, pursuant to Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure, to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible.

At its meeting of 24 April 1990 the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr Waechter rapporteur.

At its meetings of 28 and 29 June 1990 and 26 and 27 September 1990 it considered the draft report.

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unopposed with one abstention.

The following took part in the vote : Waechter, chairman and rapporteur; Maher, De Rossa, vice-chairmen; Anger (for Staes), Calvo Ortega, da Cunha Oliveira, Duarte, Fitzgerald, Harrison, Köhler, Maibaum, Melis, Musso and Onur.

The explanatory statement will be presented orally in plenary sitting.

The report was tabled on 3 October 1990.

The deadline for tabling amendments will appear on the draft agenda for the part-session at which the report is to be considered.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motions for resolutions tabled by:

(a) Mr ARBELOA MURU and Mrs BELO on a concerted regional planning policy (Doc. B 3-441/90) and

(b) Mr WAECHTER on a Community regional development policy (Doc. B 3-623/90),

- having regard to the terms of reference of the European Parliament and in particular of its Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning,

- having regard to the resolution on a European regional planning scheme adopted by the European Parliament on 15 December 1983¹,

- having regard to the report of its Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning (Doc. A3-245/90),

A. whereas although many measures taken by the Community, particularly in the fields of structural policy, agriculture, the environment, energy and transport, have a considerable bearing on European regional development, they do not form part of a clearly defined regional strategy,

B. whereas the Commission communication applying competition rules to regional aid², which lays down maximum rates for incentives for siting industry, is having an effect on regional planning which is anything but coordinated,

C. having regard to the principles of the European Charter for Regional Planning drawn up by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning,

D. having regard to the preparatory work carried out by the Council of Europe in this area,

E. whereas international coordination of major energy, transport and telecommunications infrastructures is necessary,

F. whereas developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the European economic area as well as in the single market are likely to generate movement of workers, firms and capital and have an impact on the economy of the regions of the Community,

G. having regard to the value of inter-regional planning for border areas at the Community's internal and external frontiers,

¹ OJ No. C 10, 16.1.1984

² OJ No. C 212, 12.8.1988

- H. having regard to the vast disparities in development and population density within the Community and the tendency for more and more wealth and activities to be concentrated in the area bounded by the cities of London, Amsterdam, Munich, Milan and Paris,
- I. having regard to the socio-economic disruption caused by large urban centres and the rootlessness, isolation and segregation of those living in large anonymous cities,
- J. whereas the completion of the single market and the European economic area is likely to accentuate this trend and it is vital not to allow geo-economic forces alone to prevail,
- K. whereas every Community citizen is entitled to have access to a range of educational, cultural, postal and commercial services and whereas the availability of these services, whether public or otherwise, is an important factor in maintaining rural populations,
- L. whereas the desire to shape regional development in Europe must be accompanied by a concern to set aside areas as natural open spaces, so as to restore or maintain the full biological diversity of the Community, and safeguard or restore the beauty and diversity of the European landscape,
- M. whereas the existing mosaic of regional cultures is the life-blood of the Community, but is threatened by the collapse of rural economies and the standardizing effects of economic concentration,
- N. having regard to the adverse effects of road traffic on the climate, landscapes, forests and human health, and the consequent need to reduce transport requirements, a goal which can be achieved by decentralization of production, by means of urban planning aimed at restoring residential, commercial, productive, cultural and health facilities to all areas and by greater use of other means of transport, and which could be most easily achieved in the short term by making individual motorized transport more expensive,
- O. whereas fossil-fuel and nuclear energy plants and energy distribution plants give rise to regional planning problems and in particular ecological problems,
- P. having regard to the diversity of regional planning procedures and the inadequacy of regulations concerning the allocation of space for different uses and/or the failure to comply fully with such regulations in some parts of the Community, which result in the least-protected areas being subject to severe pressure from land speculation,
- Q. having regard to the frequently adverse effects of large-scale tourism on the environment, landscape and natural resources, particularly along the coasts of the Mediterranean, Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea,
- R. whereas regional planning offers an opportunity to bring coherence to Community policies as regards their regional impact,
- S. emphasizing that a concerted regional planning policy ultimately requires a preventive environmental protection policy,

A European regional planning policy

1. Calls on the European Community to make available the financial resources and adopt the provisions necessary for a purposeful regional planning policy with the objective of avoiding overcongestion and protecting the natural environment, landscape and cultures of Europe, while also providing a framework for the assessment of infrastructure projects at European, national and local level;
2. Emphasizes that European regional planning policy can only be conducted on the largest geographical scale and therefore calls for close cooperation with the Council of Europe in this area;
3. Calls on the Community to give greater weight in its regional planning policy, as an integrative strategy, to the many aspects of preventive environmental protection (e.g. clean air policy and protection of soil and water), which is inseparable from regional planning;
4. Regrets that the recommendations made by the European Parliament in its resolution of 15 December 1983³ have had no effect;
5. Approves the drawing up by the Commission of a forward analysis of the Community's physical area as a vital precondition for area planning and calls for this study to be extended to include an assessment of:
 - (a) the impact on regional development patterns of a possible enlargement of the Community to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the European economic area;
 - (b) the impact of various communications infrastructures on the siting of activities and populations in the regions so as to identify those which could be supported by the Community as a coherent part of its regional, environmental, energy and area planning policies;
 - (c) the projects hitherto co-financed by the Community and their effects;
6. Regrets that the Commission has not yet devised any structure or working method to enable it to cooperate with the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (ECMRP) and calls on the Commission to carry out this work in conjunction with the Council of Europe and, in particular, the ECMRP;
7. Calls on the Commission to encourage the Member States to draw up national regional planning policies and plans which take account of the forward analysis of the Community area and the aim of achieving a balanced distribution of development and protecting the biological and cultural heritage and the landscape of Europe;
8. Calls on the Commission to examine the European Charter for Regional Planning and, if appropriate, to draw up a revised version of the Charter in conjunction with the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and submit it to the European Parliament;

³ OJ No. C 10, 16.1.1984

9. Proposes that the Commission draw up area planning guidelines on the basis of regularly updated forward studies and national plans designed to:
 - (a) give the Member States and regions a Community frame of reference for their own planning policies;
 - (b) devise Community sectoral policies in such a way as to take account of their regional planning impact;
 - (c) provide a frame of reference for the negotiation of the Community support frameworks with a view to securing balanced, integrated and equitable regional development;
10. Calls on the Commission to depict the Community not as an isolated bloc but as part of the European continent in its maps of the European Community and its policies;
11. Urges the Commission and the Member States to draw up the legislative framework needed to ensure that, following the abolition of physical frontiers, border areas can conduct a joint regional planning policy, especially in those communities which enjoy cultural, linguistic and historical affinities;

Levels of cooperation

12. Considers that Community regional planning strategies can only be drawn up effectively through the participation of regional representatives in a dialogue between the four relevant levels of decision-making, i.e. European, national, regional and local;
13. Calls therefore for Parliament and the Commission to organize jointly an inter-regional conference on regional planning, bringing together representatives of all the Community regions;
14. Suggests that the Commission set up a body to liaise with the regions of Europe on matters of regional planning, and, in particular, to publish the findings of its studies and maps of the current environmental and socio-economic situation of the European regions;
15. Notes that the division of labour which an industrial economy entails has led to a concentration of economic activity in certain areas, with adverse consequences;

Establishing balanced development in the Community

16. Points out that beneficial adjustments to this development are not possible unless economic activities are dispersed across the whole of the Community and further overcongestion is prevented;
17. Considers that the structural funds are insufficient to curb prevailing trends, although the impact of regional development plans and Community initiative programmes should not be underestimated; a strategy to establish balanced development must involve statutory limitations on the concentration of economic activities, special support for endogenous development and priority investment in secondary and university education and vocational training;
18. Notes that in some countries there is a shortage of qualified manpower in the craft industries and in commerce, despite the fact that unemployment rates are still high, a shortfall which can be overcome only if greater value is placed on the craft trades;
19. Calls for the different national and Community aids for siting undertakings in the regions to be harmonized so as to create an effective system for encouraging firms to move to regions with the highest rates of unemployment;
20. Considers it necessary to maintain a balanced network of dynamic cities and towns throughout the territory of the Community as a hub for cultural, social and economic activities, but also to control urban growth so as to avoid the creation of vast urban conglomerations;
21. Calls on the Commission to give priority to those transport infrastructures which favour decentralized development, such as main and branch railway lines, telecommunications and ports, as compared to heavy infrastructures (motorways, airports, high-speed trains) which strengthen the position of major urban centres to the detriment of the weaker regions;
22. Calls also, therefore, for individual motorized transport to be made more expensive, to the benefit of local and long-distance public transport;
23. Asks the Commission to give consideration to a Community support programme for railway branch lines, and in particular for investment to improve rural infrastructures so as to increase the speed and frequency of railway links, and asks its Committee on Transport to prepare a report on this programme;
24. Calls on the Community and its Member States to decentralize developments in the field of energy, e.g. by drawing up and initiating overall regional and local energy plans, which would include plans for economical and rational energy use, the use of renewable energy sources and combined heat and power systems;

Striking a balance between town and country

25. Calls on the Commission to correct the distorting effects of the common agricultural policy which mainly benefits the prosperous regions and partially nullifies the beneficial impact of the structural funds by exacerbating the disparities between the various rural regions;
26. Requests that maintaining a permanent working population in all rural areas should be included as one of the objectives of the CAP;
27. Calls on the Member States to maintain or develop a network of public services in all regions across Europe (post offices, schools, libraries, medical services and hospitals) and to encourage the provision of private services (doctors, pharmacists, local shops, etc.) and to take account of these objectives in implementing regional development plans;
28. Calls on the Member States to consider introducing arrangements for sharing the tax burden more equitably between urban and rural areas, taking into account also the distortions caused by the siting of industries in the regions;

Harmonization of area planning procedures

29. Calls on the Member States to adopt an area planning policy based on three principles: coordination of global planning to ensure coherence in space and time, integrated planning with major emphasis on assessing the social, economic, demographic and environmental effects of the regional planning schemes envisaged, and public participation in decisions;
30. Suggests that the Commission seek ways of achieving minimal harmonization of the rules on land use in the different Member States;
31. Calls for space to be seen as a limited resource to be used sparingly and for a European Community funded body (European Environment Agency) to be set up to monitor the use of space and land;

Regional policy in border areas

32. Emphasizes the particular geographical situation of border regions in Europe and calls therefore for cross-border harmonization of regional policy plans in these areas as well as joint action programmes for all European border regions;

A European network of protected areas

33. Calls on the Commission to draw up Community legislation to allow the establishment, in agreement with the Member States and regions concerned, of a network of areas to be protected as internationally recognized sites of special scientific interest of outstanding natural beauty, with particular reference to nature reserves, cross-border sites, mountain regions and coastal areas;

34. Calls on the Commission to introduce a policy to protect and improve the European countryside based on:
- (a) funding for the restoration of the rural habitat and aid to promote the use of local materials in contemporary construction;
 - (b) funding of measures to restore the natural landscape, as part of the Community support frameworks (CSFs) or special prototype schemes;
 - (c) ensuring that infrastructures co-financed by the Community blend harmoniously with the landscape, taking particular account, in each case, of the impact on the environment;
 - (d) incentives for research into new technologies enabling electric transmission lines to be laid underground.

Resources

35. Calls for an operational area planning unit to be set up and placed under the responsibility of a Commissioner, for example the Commissioner responsible for regional policy;
36. Proposes that the Commission draw up a code of conduct, containing recommendations on minimum standards for local services, for local planning authorities in areas with sensitive environments;
37. Calls on the Commission to encourage planners to organize seminars and conferences so as to exchange the experience they have gained;
38. Calls on the Commission to work in conjunction with the Council of Europe when shaping its own policies and to make optimum use of work already carried out by individual Council of Europe bodies;
39. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, particularly in view of the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning due to be held in November 1990, the governments of the Member States, the associations of regional and local authorities representative at European level and the Consultative Council of Local and Regional Authorities.

28 February 1990

SERIES B

B3-441/90

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr ARBELOA MURU and Mrs BELO

on a concerted regional planning policy

The European Parliament,

- A. concerned at the possibility of increased imbalances between local and regional authorities after the planned liberalization of capital movements,
- B. bearing in mind the statements made by the President of the Commission regarding the independent development of the regions and the principle of subsidiarity made at the meeting of Community Ministers of Regional Development held recently in Nantes,
- C. bearing in mind also the conclusions of the recent colloquy on this subject held by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions,
 1. Recommends that the relevant parliamentary committee, possibly with the assistance of the Consultative Committee of Local and Regional Authorities, should draw up a study on a concerted regional planning policy which would enable a certain proportion of investments to be devoted to the less-developed regions of the Community;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

19 March 1990

SERIES B

B3-623/90

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure

by Mr WAECHTER

on a Community regional development policy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 1983 on a European regional development plan,
- A. having regard to the reform of the Structural Funds and, in particular, Article 10 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 4254/88 of 19 December 1988 on the ERDF which provides for the possibility that studies or pilot schemes concerning regional development may be financed,
- B. having regard to the informal meeting of Member States' Ministers responsible for regional development, which took place in Nantes, France, on 24 November 1989, and to the commitment given at this conference by the Italian delegation to organize a second meeting during the second half of 1990,
- C. having regard to the significant impact of other Community policies on regional development (transport infrastructure, agriculture, environment, etc.),
- 1. Calls on the Commission of the European Communities to draw up, as a matter of urgency, a Community action programme aimed at developing a Community regional development policy.

