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EP calls for islands' special needs to be studied

The European Parliament called on the European Commission to prepare a regular report assessing the special needs of islands, such as Gozo.

The call was made on the proposal of MEP Simon Busuttil in a report that was adopted on Tuesday by the Chamber's Regional Development Committee.

The amendment, tabled by Dr Busuttil and adopted by the Committee, calls on the Commission to undertake, on a regular basis, a "special needs assessment study" of island regions. It should take into account issues of specific concern for islands and propose measures to address them. In particular, the report should study the impact of the implementation of regional policy on islands, levels of investment, the spread of economic activity, unemployment, transport infrastructure (notably, ports and airports), environmental pressures as well as at the overall level of economic and social integration of islands within the single market.

"I am delighted that my proposal for a "special needs assessment study" was adopted." said Simon Busuttil. *"This puts islands, such as Gozo, firmly on the European agenda and will oblige the European Commission to regularly assess their needs. I am sure that the European Parliament will now see to it that the Commission delivers on this request."* he said.

During its vote on Tuesday, the Committee adopted all eleven amendments to the report tabled by Dr Busuttil.

Amongst others, the report also calls upon the European Commission to set a special unit to deal with the specific needs of islands. It also calls for special consideration be given to small islands on issues such as state aid as well as transport and environment infrastructure in order to address the natural disadvantages that stem from their insularity.

The report was penned by Sicilian centre-right MEP Francesco Musotto and was adopted in committee by 41 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.

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