

# Aid for policies and actions on reproductive and sexual health and rights in developing countries

2002/0052(COD) - 15/07/2003 - Final act

**PURPOSE** : to provide an Community instrument to on aid for policies and actions on reproductive and sexual health and rights in developing countries. **LEGISLATIVE ACT** : Regulation 1567/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on aid for policies and actions on reproductive and sexual health and rights in developing countries. **CONTENT** : this Regulation shall replace Council Regulation 1484/97 /EC on aid for population programmes and policies in developing countries, which expired on 31 December 2002. It reinforces the Cairo programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) whilst at the same time aims to increase and accelerate efforts in light of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Regulation supports the Cairo Programme of Action by giving all couples and individuals the basic right and opportunity to fully protect their reproductive and sexual health, in particular against unsafe abortion, HIV/AIDS and existing harmful practices, such as Female genital Mutilation (FGM). It aims to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, which are disproportionately high in developing countries, in particular amongst the poorest girls and women. It aims to give people the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so. The Community shall provide financial assistance and appropriate expertise with a view to promoting a holistic approach to, and the recognition of, reproductive and sexual health and rights as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action, including safe motherhood and universal access to a comprehensive range of safe and reliable reproductive and sexual health care and services. In the allocation of such funding and expertise, priority shall be given to: - the poorest and least developed countries and the most disadvantaged sections of the populations of developing countries; - action that complements and reinforces both the policies and capacities of developing countries and the assistance provided through other instruments of development cooperation. The purpose of the activities carried out under this Regulation shall be to: - secure the right of women, men and adolescents to good reproductive and sexual health; - enable women, men and adolescents to have access to a comprehensive range of high-quality, safe, accessible, affordable and reliable reproductive and sexual health care services, supplies, education and information, including information on all kinds of family planning methods; - reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, with particular reference to the countries and populations where these are highest. Community financial support shall be given to specific operations targeting the poorest and most vulnerable populations in both rural and urban areas, in particular, to those which aim to: - support and promote policy and operational frameworks and action, tailored to meet specific targets for the progressive realisation of people's rights to adequate basic health services and accountable service providers; - ensure better access to high-quality reproductive and sexual health services, offering, in particular, contraceptive choice and the prevention and diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and the provision of voluntary confidential counselling and testing; - offer adolescents and young adults educational programmes that focus on the relationship between family planning, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases and the impact of HIV/AIDS on partnerships, and provide them with the necessary information, services and skills to protect their reproductive and sexual health, avoid unwanted pregnancies and involve them in the design and implementation of such programmes; - combat practices harmful to the sexual and reproductive health of women, adolescents and children, such as female genital mutilation, sexual violence, child marriages and early marriages; - ensure the sustained supply, availability and affordability of more effective and acceptable methods of contraception and protection from sexually transmitted infection, including HIV/AIDS; - promote comprehensive maternal health programmes, including the provision of quality antenatal care, care during childbirth and post-natal care, and the establishment and/or expansion of a body of skilled birth attendants; - provide effective emergency obstetric and post-partum care, including treatment for complications resulting from unsafe abortion; - reduce unsafe abortions by decreasing the number of unwanted pregnancies through the provision of family planning services,

compassionate counselling and information, including the use of contraception, and by investing in the training and equipping of suitable staff, including medical service personnel, to manage under hygienic and safe conditions the complications resulting from unsafe abortion. Community financing under this Regulation shall take the form of grants. A financial contribution from the partners shall be sought for each cooperation operation. The partners eligible for financial assistance under this Regulation include the classic cooperation partners such as administrative authorities and agencies at national, regional and local government levels; local authorities and other decentralised bodies, etc. Participation in invitations to tender for the award of contracts shall be open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons in the Member States and in all developing countries. It may be extended, in exceptional cases, to other third countries. Supplies shall originate in the beneficiary country, other developing countries or the Member States. In exceptional cases, supplies may originate from other third countries. In order to secure the objectives of consistency and complementarity referred to in the Treaty and to ensure maximum effectiveness of these operations as a whole, the Commission may take all necessary coordination measures, including: - the establishment of a system for the systematic exchange and analysis of information on the operations financed and those which the Community and the Member States propose to finance; - on-the-spot coordination of the implementation of operations through regular meetings and exchanges of information between the representatives of the Commission and the Member States in the recipient country. The financial framework for the implementation of this Regulation for the period from 2003 to 2006 is hereby set at EUR 73,95 million. The Commission shall be responsible for drafting strategic programming guidelines, defining the Community's cooperation in terms of measurable objectives, priorities, deadlines for specific areas of action, assumptions and expected outcomes. Programming shall be annual and indicative. Decisions concerning operations for which financing under this Regulation exceeds EUR 3 million and any changes to these operations that entail a cost overrun of more than 20 % of the amount initially fixed for the operation concerned shall be adopted. For decisions and changes to these operations amounting to EUR 3 million or less, the Commission shall inform the Member States. After each budget year, the Commission shall submit information on the guidelines for its annual indicative strategic programme and on the operations financed in the course of that year, as well as the Commission's conclusions on the implementation of this Regulation over the previous budget year. At the latest one year before the expiry of this Regulation, the Commission shall submit a comprehensive independent appraisal report on its implementation to the European Parliament and the Council with a view to establishing whether the actions undertaken under this Regulation have been effective, and with a view to providing guidelines for improving the effectiveness of future operations. On the basis of this appraisal report the Commission may make proposals for the future of this Regulation and, if necessary, proposals for its amendment. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 9 September 2003. It shall apply until 31 December 2006.