European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 20/07/2011 - Commission communication on Council's position

In its Communication to the European Parliament concerning the position of the Council on the adoption of a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage, the Commission indicates that it can fully accept the Council position which is the outcome of constructive negotiations between the three institutions. The first reading position is in line with the essential objectives and the underlying approach of the Commission's initial proposal.

To recall, the Council's position is the result of intensive inter-institutional negotiations which followed the adoption by the European Parliament of its position at first reading on 16 December 2010. Informal and technical meetings have resulted in compromise on a number of outstanding issues.

Following the negotiations, Coreper reached agreement on the text on 15 April 2011. On 9 May 2011, the Chairwoman of the CULT Committee of the European Parliament, Ms Doris Pack, sent a letter to the Hungarian Presidency confirming that should the Council adopt as its position at first reading the text, she would recommend to the CULT Committee and then to the Parliament as a whole in plenary session, that the **Council's position be accepted without amendment at Parliament's second reading**.

The Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Council reached a political agreement on this basis on 19 May 2011.

The main points which were negotiated and agreed upon by the three institutions are the following:

- in a first stage, the European Heritage Label will be open to the participation of Member States only. In the course of the first evaluation of the action, the appropriateness of enlarging its geographical scope will be examined;
- the selection of sites will take place every two years in order to prevent the number of labelled sites increasing too quickly, which could harm the overall quality and prestige of the new label;
- several sites located in the same Member State will have the possibility to focus on a specific theme to put forward a single application ("National thematic sites");
- "Transnational sites" will be counted in the quota of the Member State which initiated the application only in order to avoid introducing additional management complexity and in order not to discourage Member States from actually taking part in these sites;
- the transitional provisions which will apply to the sites which were already awarded a label within the previous intergovernmental initiative were maintained in the text. They were however simplified and it was stated more clearly that during this period, the sites would be assessed on the base of the criteria of the new initiative and would follow the same procedure as that for the other sites.

In conclusion, the Commission fully supports the results of the inter-institutional negotiations and can therefore accept the Council's position at first reading.