Programme for the environment and climate action, LIFE 2014-2020

2011/0428(COD) - 09/03/2012

The Council had an **orientation debate** on the proposal for a regulation on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) for the period 2014-2020. The proposal was presented by the Commission at the last Environment Council meeting in December, in the context of its Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014-2020.

Ministers discussed two key issues.

(1) Geographical balance - i.e. the criteria for the distribution of LIFE funds among Member States.

Most Member States believed that the concept of "geographical balance" was relevant for the distribution of Integrated Projects, although many would prefer the concept to be clarified further and specific criteria for the implementation of "geographical balance" to be included in the regulation. Several Member States considered that the merit and quality should remain the first criteria for the distribution of projects, in particular "traditional projects".

Some Member States considered that the geographical balance should apply to all types of projects, while others preferred to keep national allocations, as in the existing LIFE+ Regulation.

(**2) Co-financing rates, including simplification of procedures.**

Many Member States would like to maintain VAT and permanent staff cost as eligible costs, even if that would entail a decrease in co-financing rates, although some ministers expressed concern that this would lead to a decrease in proposals for projects. Most Member States were in favour of a simplification of procedures.

The European Parliament will vote its report by the end of 2012.