

LIFE III, financial instrument for environment: actions after 31.12.1999 (repeal. Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92)

1998/0336(COD) - 22/10/1999 - Council position

The Council's common position accepts, in total or partially, most of the European Parliament's amendments integrated by the Commission in its amended proposal. The main amendments approved by the Council are the following: - General Objective: the common position integrates sustainable development into the general objectives of LIFE. It also specifies that priority may be given to projects based on a multinational approach when this is likely to have more effective results in terms of achievement of objectives taking into account feasibility and costs; - LIFE-Nature: the bird species covered by projects eligible for 75% financial support have been specified (those which are considered as priority by the committee set up under the "Wild Birds" Directive). A transitional measure has been introduced for the submission and the selection of projects concerning the year 2000. Attention is focused on the migratory routes and buffer zones for projects contributing to the implementation of Natura 2000. The references to the annexes of the "Wild Birds" Directive and to the Berne Convention resolutions have been clarified. It is also specified that the accompanying measures relating to cooperation or the exchange of experience are subject to consultation of the relevant Committee and that the Member States may submit proposals for such measures; - LIFE-Environment: the common position takes account of amendments relating to the integration of sustainable development into land use planning, the prevention and reuse of waste, the reduction of the environmental impact of products at the end of their life and the development of environmentally-friendly products, accompanying measures seeking to strengthen the transfer of results and the introduction of a reference to the broadest possible dissemination and application of practices and technologies. The common position also accepts the amendment that seeks to take account of the employment implications of the project when demonstration projects are being selected, without actually making them into a selection criterion. Lastly, bearing in mind the importance of the guidelines both in the preparation of the projects and their selection, a simple Article 11 committee opinion is not sufficient and the Council foresees the implementation of the committee procedure in its integral form; - LIFE-Third Countries: the text has been modified in such a way as to ensure that Cyprus is unequivocally covered. Furthermore, as special powers are necessary to assess projects concerning nature protection, consultation of the committee set up under the Habitats Directive has been provided for. The common position takes up the amendment regarding the breakdown of credits given to the co-financing of the instrument by the accession candidate countries; - duration and budget resources: the Council has mentioned, like the European Parliament, a financial reference amount of EUR 613 million for the period 2000-2004. It should be noted that the Council has kept the regulatory committee proposed by the Commission, already in place in the the context of LIFE II. Without affecting the possible launch of the fourth phase of LIFE, the deadline for submitting the Commission report to the Parliament and to the Council, and that for the decision have been brought forward.