

# **Agenda 2000: CEEC applicant countries, pre-accession aid for agriculture and rural development SAPARD**

1998/0100(CNS) - 07/06/2000 - Implementing legislative act

**COMMUNITY MEASURE :** Commission Regulation 2222/2000/EC laying down financial rules for the application of Council Regulation 1268/1999/EC on Community support for pre-accession measures for agriculture and rural development in the applicant countries of central and eastern Europe in the pre-accession period.

**CONTENT :** in accordance with the provisions set out in Council Regulation 1266/1999/EC on the implementation of the Sapard instrument, this Regulation lays down financial rules for the application of Council Regulation 1268/1999/EC on Community support for pre-accession measures for agriculture and rural development in the applicant countries of central and eastern Europe in the pre-accession period. The Commission intends to require the applicant countries to respect these conditions by including them in financing agreements negotiated with each country.

These rules are inspired by the principles set out in the Common Agricultural Policy such as :

- a decentralised management approach organised through agencies in the applicant countries;
- the conformity of paying agencies with the EAGGF-Guarantee provisions;
- the agencies in the applicant countries will need to dispose of the payment function plus an implementation function, appropriate criteria necessary also for that function therefore need to be laid down;
- accreditation may also be provisionally granted subject to the respect of essential/minimum criteria;
- for the Commission to waive the ex ante approval and to confer management of the aid on an applicant country, the national accreditation of the Sapard agency in the applicant country needs to be approved;
- for Sapard purposes, the national fund in each applicant country be the competent authority which accredits the Sapard agency and supervises subsequent compliance with the accreditation criteria. The national authorising officer shall be the contact point for financial information between the Commission and the applicant country;
- laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds. The first commitment shall be made when the Commission lays down its decision approving the assistance. That model may, under these circumstances and with respect to the triggering of the Community budget commitment, be considered as an appropriate model to be applied mutatis mutandis to Sapard;
- the execution of ex post controls by the Commission. The EAGGF clearance of accounts procedure is an efficient system to audit payments of the decentralised agencies and, if necessary, to recover irregular or undue payments from the applicant countries.
- Sapard implementing rules should be fixed in bilateral agreements to be concluded between the Commission and each applicant country. The Commission and each applicant country should therefore

draw up a multiannual financing agreement in which the conditions determining the use of the Sapard contribution will be set out. Annual financing agreements should set out the financial contribution of the Community.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 07/06/2000.