

# **EC/developing countries: aid for population policies and programmes in developing countries**

1995/0166(SYN) - 22/11/1996 - Council position

In its common position on the proposal for a regulation on aid for population policies and programmes in the developing countries, the Council has incorporated 22 of the 40 amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading either in their initial form or in a modified form. These amendments seek in particular: - to incorporate references to the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), - to stress the right of individuals to decide on the number and spacing of births (denunciation of compulsory abortions, compulsory sterilization, infanticide and sexual mutilation as a means of curbing population growth), - to reject incentives to encourage sterilization, improper testing of contraceptive methods or abortion as methods of family planning (no financial support will be authorized under this regulation for such areas), - to support measures for improving access to reproductive health care services (perinatal care, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS) and family planning (information on methods of contraception), - to integrate local NGOs in the implementation of these initiatives, with women playing a special part, - to provide for the participation of local partners in the operating expenditure and for the possibility of co-financing from other fund providers. In addition to the editorial amendments the Council also incorporated other modifications to the text, which include: - the insertion of a new article specifying that the countries receiving the aid will primarily be those having the most difficulty in achieving the criteria defined by the Cairo Conference, the poorest and least developed countries and the most disadvantaged sections of the population of developing countries, - making this regulation consistent with other EC development and cooperation instruments in order to take account fully of population aspects in Union programmes, - the coordination of the actions implemented by the Community with those undertaken by other fund providers (in particular the United Nations), - the introduction of new provisions on appraisal and ex-ante and ex-post information on financing decisions (information to the committee for all projects of less than ECU 2 million in value one week before the decision and information to the Member States on the projects as a whole one month after the decision), - a change in the type of committee responsible for assisting the Commission in its work (regulatory rather than advisory committee), - the insertion of a financial reference amount in the body of the text: ECU 35 million for the period 1998 to 2002, - provision for an overall assessment of this regulation with a view to amending or prolonging it .