LIFE II: financial instrument for the environment (amend. regul. 1973/92/EEC)

1995/0093(SYN) - 16/11/1995

The rapporteur, Mrs MARINUCCI, stated that the appropriations allocated to LIFE should increase from the ECU 400 million for the period 1992-1995 to ECU 800 million for the second phase. The Commission' s proposal of ECU 450 million was unreasonable given the additional weight of the new Member States and inflation. As regards the scope of the programme within the Union, but also within the bordering regions of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, the rapporteur highlighted its transnational scale, demonstrated by the fact that it was due to be opened up to the CEECs. The experience of the first phase showed that it was vital to improve the definition of LIFE's objectives, priorities and selection criteria in order to facilitate its implementation and avoid disappointing so many applicants. As a result, a new Article 8a was proposed in which the Commission established every two years a reference framework aimed at directing those interested in LIFE towards sectors of particular interest to the Union. In conclusion, the rapporteur regretted the lack of proportion between the paltry appropriations allocated to LIFE and the Structural Funds. It was true that several initiatives in the environmental field were financed under the Structural Funds, but the projects implemented under the LIFE programme set an example, more so than any others. The Commissioner, Mrs Ritt BJERREGAARD, stated that the Commission could take over most of the amendments tabled by the EP at first reading, in particular: - the amendment on preparatory measures (Amendment No 5), - the amendments allowing the CEECs to participate in the LIFE programme on an equal footing with the Member States (Amendments Nos 7 and 28), - the amendment on increasing from 5% to 7% the measures implemented under LIFE concerning the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea (Amendment No 18), - the amendment aimed at laying down a reference framework for certain measures (Amendment No 22). Only around 10 amendments were rejected, notably the amendments on the budget for the LIFE programme (Amendment No 17), on comitology (Amendment No 32) and on the official reports on the programme (Amendments Nos 1 and 33). In conclusion, Mrs BJERREGAARD stated that every effort should be made to improve the information available on the LIFE project. She also believed that it was important to involve local authorities in the project.