

# Developing countries: integrate the environment in the development process, sustainable development

1999/0020(COD) - 16/12/1999 - Council position

The Council has been able to accept a substantial number of the amendments proposed by the European Parliament. Where the Commission and the Council were unable to accept Parliament's amendments or parts of them, it was usually because of one or several of the following reasons: - the provision of details concerning themes and activities, which were already addressed in other parts of the regulation and/or which were considered to burden the structure and equilibrium of the regulation without adding to its completeness; - other amendments were no longer relevant given the evolution of the text or were considered redundant for the purpose of the regulation; - amendments that were insufficiently clear, unworkable or too limiting, etc. In its common position, the Council has approved the essence and wording of the Commission's proposal with the exceptions relating to the legal basis, duration of the programme, funding and comitology. In addition, the Council thought desirable to integrate a new task for the joint Committees' meeting which aims at the approval of annual strategic guidelines and priorities to underline the focus on a strategic approach. Furthermore, the legal basis put forward by the Commission in its proposal is considered by the Council in its common position as being the most appropriate in view of the aim and content of the proposal. As far as the duration of the Regulation is concerned, the Council has opted for a seven year period (2000-2006) which corresponds to the period for which financial perspectives have been fixed. The Commission's evaluation report will be due four years after the entering into force of the Regulation and shall contain suggestions concerning the future of the Regulation. As a consequence of the seven year programme, the financial reference amount has been fixed at EUR 50,4 million, which results from the 2000 draft budget appropriations of annual EUR 8 million. This amount has further been reduced by 10% to take account of the July Decision of the Budget Control on Category 4 expenditures. By the introduction of this indicative amount the Council has partially taken into consideration the European Parliament's amendment No 52. The Council has also changed the committee procedure whereby the powers of the committee would be exercised under the management committee procedure, as set out in the Council decision of 28 June 1999 laying down on the Commission. The Council considers that such a committee procedure will ensure maximum coordination with Member States activities and thus contributing to necessary complementarity. In addition, an annual Commission document on strategic guidelines and priorities will be submitted to the appropriate geographical Committee which will approve the document in accordance with the management committee procedure. In conclusion, the Council considers that its common position constitutes a balanced text to ensure the continuation of activities implemented under Council Regulation 722/97/EC of 22 April 1997 after its expiry on 31 December 1999. It reflects the need to mainstream environmental issues in the development cooperation policy and to assist the Community in meeting its legal and political commitments to the protection of the environment in the context of sustainable development.