

Tropical forests, developing countries: conservation and sustainable management

1999/0015(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 for one or several of the following reasons : - procedural or administrative proposals that were not in accordance with standard formulations and practices of similar regulations, including the Financial Regulation; - quotes from legal acts or policy documents which were considered to be redundant and to unnecessarily lengthen the text; - amendments considered to be unclear or subjective, or which repeated ideas expressed elsewhere in the Regulation or in other accepted amendments; - amendments which, if accepted, would reduce the focus and hence the effectiveness of the activities contemplated under the Regulation; - amendments concerning management issues which are of the competence of the Commission. In its common position, the Council has approved the essence and wording of the Commission's proposal with the exceptions to various point. Moreover, 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. In addition, the Council believes that the legal basis put forward by the Commission in its proposal is the most appropriate in view of the aim and content of the proposal. As far as 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 entry into force of the Regulation and shall contain suggestions concerning the future of the Regulation. Furthermore, as a consequence of the seven year programme, the financial reference amount has been fixed at EUR 63 million, which results from the 2000 draft budget appropriations of annual EUR 10 million. This amount has further been reduced by 10% to take account of the July Decision of the Budget Council on Category 4 expenditures. By the introduction of this indicative amount, the Council has partially taken into consideration the European Parliament's amendment No. 34. 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 the procedure for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission. The Council considers that such a committee procedure will ensure maximum coordination with Member States activities and thus contribute 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 adopted in full the 18 amendments adopted by the Commission and in essence the first part of the amendment No.34 proposed by the Parliament. On the other hand, apart from the amendments not adopted by the Commission the Council could not accept other amendments for the reason that it was not possible to reach the requisite unanimity. However, the Council considers that its common position constitutes a balanced text to ensure the continuation of activities implemented under Council Regulation 3062/95/EC of 20 December 1995 after its expiry on 31 December 1999. It reflects the need to meet the Community's commitments to the conservation and management of tropical forests and forests in the context of sustainable development.