EC/Turkey Framework Agreement: participation in Community programmes

2001/0195(AVC) - 20/11/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: To conclude a framework agreement allowing Turkey participation on Community specific programmes. CONTENT: The Helsinki Council of December 1999 confirmed that enlargement between the European Union and 13 applicant countries should proceed as soon as possible. As part of this process applicant countries should be offered the opportunity to participate in Community programmes. To give legal definition to applicant's participation, the Council has authorised the Commission to negotiate a bi-lateral Framework Agreement with Turkey laying down the general principles to the participation of Turkey in all Community programmes. Negotiating a "framework" settlement is a new option. Under this new approach, framework instruments are agreed with candidate countries,in this case Turkey, which then establishes the general principles for their participation in Community programmes. The terms and conditions of participation in specific programmes are then negotiated bilaterally between the Commission and Turkey. Without such a framework agreement, a large number of new international instruments would be needed. This would lead to institutional decision making overload and significantly lengthen the time span for a final settlement. Turkey has yet to participate fully in Community programmes, but is starting preparatory measures for participation in Socrates, Leonardo da Vince and Youth. It has also expressed an interest in participating in a number of other programmes. In terms of financing, Turkey should receive payment through two "European Regulation". Under these Regulations measures aimed at intensifying the EU-Turkey Customs Union as well as promoting economic and social development in Turkey is foreseen. However, a new draft Regulation is under discussion in the Council and would bring all pre-accession financial assistance to Turkey including participation on Community programmes, within a single budget line. The terms of the proposed draft framework agreement for Turkey are: - the programmes concerned will allow for the participation of candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe; - Turkey will pay an annual contribution to the programmes, to be determined between the Commission and Turkish government; - the Commission will be assisted by a special committee appointed by the Council; - the contribution made will not be reimbursed to Turkey if at the end of the year, the results fall short of the contribution paid; - representatives from Turkey will be invited to attend meetings of the Programme Committees as observers; - projects and initiatives submitted by Turkey shall be subject to the same conditions, rules and procedures pertaining to the programmes concerned as are applied to Member States, regarding in particular the submission, assessment and selection of applications and projects; - the Framework Agreement will apply for an unspecified period, subject to a classical clause of denunciation. Specific duration of participation in programmes will be determined in the terms and conditions concluded between the Commission and the Turkish government.