Cooperation with third countries: democracy, rule of law, human rights

2004/0807(CNS) - 13/02/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to extend for a further two years (until 31.12.2006) the period of validity of Council Regulation 976/1999/EC on the consolidation of the rule of law and the respect of human rights, following the splitting of the Commission's proposal on the extension of this Regulation and the parallel Regulation (975/99/EC) on the respect of human rights within the framework of development cooperation. PROPOSED MEASURE: Council Regulation. CONTENT: On 28 October 2003, the Commission submitted to the Council and the European Parliament a proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation 975/1999/EC laying down the requirements for the implementation of development cooperation which contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and Council Regulation 976/1999/EC laying down the requirements for the implementation of Community operations other than those of development cooperation which, within the framework of Community cooperation policy, contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in third countries. The Commission's initial proposal (see COD/2003 /0250) is based on Articles 17 and 181a of the EC Treaty and was subject to the codecision procedure laid down in Article 251 of the EC Treaty. However, the Council has decided to separate the two texts contained in the Commission's original proposal amending Council Regulations 975/99/EC and 976/99 /EC respectively. The first (see COD/2003/0250) requires amendment by codecision in accordance with Article 179 of the EC Treaty, while the second (Regulation 976/99/EC) has to be amended by the Council acting by qualified majority and after consulting the European Parliament in line with Article 181a of the EC Treaty. This proposal relates specifically to this second part of the original proposal and its purpose is to extend by two years (2005-2006) Council Regulation 976/1999/EC. The content of the proposal is essentially identical to that of the Commission's original proposal. The only difference relates to the amount of the financial reference for the implementation of the Regulation for the 2005-2006 period which is set at EUR 78 million (the overall budget foreseen by the Commission for the implementation of the two Regulations was EUR 212 million).