

Agenda 2000: European Social Fund ESF

1998/0115(COD) - 14/04/1999 - Council position

The Council common position on the ESF has taken up the general approach of the draft regulation proposed by the Commission. The Council text incorporates a majority of the amendments adopted by the European Parliament and incorporated in the amended proposal (7 amendments, relating in particular to eligible measures under the fund, tackling segregation on the basis of gender, new sources of employment in the sector of the social economy reconciling family and professional life, accompanying socio-educational measures...) with the exception of 4 amendments, some of which were considered fundamental, particularly those amendments relating to the following: - synergies to be created between the ESF and the other funds in the context of efforts to concentrate interventions; - the priority to be given to the promotion of a qualified and adaptable workforce or to specific measures aimed at improving women's access to the labour market; - granting a fixed percentage of 1% of the overall allocation under the ESF to finance actions via NGOs involved in this area. Elsewhere, the common position redefines the field of application of the ESF according to 5 clear policy priorities: - developing and promoting active labour-market policies to combat unemployment; - promoting equal opportunities for all in gaining access to the labour market; - promoting and improving education and vocational training; - promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable labour force; - improving women's access to and position in the labour market. The Council adds that the priorities of the national employment action plans will be taken into account within the framework of funding interventions.