

Agenda 2000: Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession ISPA 2000-2006, aid for applicant countries

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Following on from the outcome of the Berlin Summit (23.03.1999) and the overall agreement reached by the Fifteen on Agenda 2000, this text constitutes the Council's consolidated version of the Regulation establishing an Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (2000-2006). Among the modifications made by the Council, it should be noted in particular that the grants are strictly related to the conditions laid down by the Accession Partnerships for each country and to the fact that the projects have to be in line with the requirements of the *acquis communautaire* with respect to the environment. The Council also modified the rate of Community intervention : it is set at 75% of public or equivalent expenditure (the rate of 85% originally proposed by the Commission could only be granted on an exceptional basis using specific procedures). However, it should be noted that for a given measure, the combined intervention from ISPA and another Community funding source cannot exceed 90% of the total expenditure relating to this measure. The Council has, furthermore, introduced some clarifications with regard to the committee procedure and has strengthened Member States' decision making powers. The Commission, however, in charge of the execution, follow-up and evaluation of projects. It can, in addition, propose the granting of funds on its own initiative, where there is an overriding Community interest. The Council also laid down specific details regarding the form and content of applications for Community funding from potential beneficiaries. Annexes provide details regarding the types of information that need to be supplied by the beneficiaries, as well as the criteria that will be applied by the Commission in evaluation projects. Lastly, the Council clarified the details regarding the redistribution of resources when a beneficiary country loses, because of its accession, the right to benefit from ISPA. It should be noted that the Berlin Summit set (for indicative purposes) at EUR 1.04 billion per year the amount of pre-accession structural aid for the period 2000-2006.