

Agenda 2000: pre-accession, coordinating aid to the 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 regarding the co-ordination of aid to the applicant countries in the framework of the pre-accession strategy for the period 2000-2006 (including Phare). Among the important changes made by the Council, it should be noted in particular that there is a clearer division of tasks between the funds under consideration (ISPA, the agricultural instrument and Phare). The Phare programme will have to focus specifically on the funding of support specifically linked to the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* (administrative and institutional capacities of candidate countries) and investments. Phare may also fund measures in the environment, transport, agriculture and rural development fields. The Council also modified the comitology rules governing this regulation by giving a more important role to the committee currently overseeing the Phare programme. Lastly, the Council clarified the minimum criteria and conditions for decentralising management to implementing agencies in applicant countries. It should be noted that the Berlin Summit for indicative purposes set a total for pre-accession aid for the 2000-2006 period at EUR 3.12 billion per year (of which 1.56 billion would be for the Phare programme).