Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

1995/0336(SYN) - 24/04/1997 - Council position

In its common position on the Community action programme promoting non-governmental organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection, the Council largely followed the amended Commission proposal: 10 of Parliament's 21 amendments were thus included in their entirety or in part. Those accepted included: - a definition of NGOs taking part: 'independent and non-profit-making organizations primarily active in the field of environmental protection'; - Community assistance, which can cover activities of environmental NGOs initiated by the organizations themselves; - eligible costs: unpaid work and donations in kind may be taken into account (up to a level of 10%); - the timetable for calls for proposals for activities and decisions on financing: decisions on financing will be taken before 31 May, as asked by Parliament, and calls for proposals will be announced before 31 January; - the possibility of continuing the programme beyond the phase covered by the proposal. The Council modified the following amendments proposed by Parliament: - the maximum rate of funding should not exceed 50% of NGO budgets and their administrative costs (and not 60% as Parliament wanted); - there is no reference to duration of funding (in practice this means that an NGO could receive funding under this programme for its entire four year duration). The Council also made some changes to the text of the proposal. It has simplified the terminology used ('subsidy' and 'Commission-financing' have been replaced by 'financial assistance' and 'financial contribution', 'costs' has been substituted for 'expenditure', etc.). The Council has also changed the programme's procedure and dates from 1996-2000 to 1998-2002 (the date for presentation of the report has also been changed from 30 June 1999 to 31 December 2000). The Council has also: - introduced the financial reference amount in the text: ECU 10.6 m; - deleted references to the 'polluter pays' principle and the subsidiarity principle in the recitals (because they are covered elsewhere); - introduced a reference to Community environmental legislation (as well as policy) under areas of activity eligible for financing; - detailed the general criteria for the selection of activities for financing; - made a better distinction between NGO activities eligible for financing and their administrative costs (a financial contribution for administrative costs will be considered only for NGOs working at European level in the context of their general working programme); - stated that the list to be published each year in the Official Journal should include details of the beneficiaries and the amounts allocated; - provided for an annual report to the Council and Parliament on the state of implementation of the programme.