European social Fund ESF: guidelines for the innovative measures (Regulation (EC) No 1784 /99, Art. 6)

2000/2127(COS) - 13/03/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present the guidelines for the various types of innovative measures in the context of Article 22 of the General Regulation (1260/99/EC) of 21 June 1999. CONTEXT : Article 49.2 (d) of the General Regulation requires the Commission to consult the Committee on the types of activity which should be supported under this heading. The purpose of this paper is to set out the Commission's broad intentions in this field, and to seek the Committee's opinion on them. Firstly, Article 49.2 (d) provides that "the Committee shall deliver opinions on the draft Commission guidelines relating to the Community initiative referred to in Article 20(1)(d)("EQUAL") and for the various types of innovative measure in the context of Article 22 in the case of support from the ESF." However, Article 22 of the General Regulation does not define innovative measures; but it provides that they shall contribute to the preparation of innovative methods and practices designed to improve the quality of assistance under Objectives 1, 2 and 3. In addition, n, Article 6 of the revised ESF Regulation provides that: - in accordance with Article 22(2) of Regulation EC/1260/99, the Commission may finance preparatory, monitoring and evaluation operations in Member States or at Community level which are necessary for the implementation of operations referred to in this Regulation. They may include: - operations of and innovatory nature and pilot projects concerning labour markets, employment,and vocational training; - operations directed, within the framework of social dialogue, at staff from enterprises in two or more Member States and concerning the transfer of special knowledge relating to areas of intervention by the Fund. Furthermore, the Commission intends to promote the idea that the ESF should now be seen as the financial support instrument fo the European Employment Strategy, and in particular to seek, through innovation and development combined with diffusion of the results, to contribute a better implementation of the ESF itself. An example of this may be found in the current activity concerning "local social capital. Moreover, the Commission's intention, in launching a pilot activity drawn, so that when the definition of such activities is carried out within mainstream ESF, the lessons learned from the pilot may be of use. More generally, the Commission will seek to identify, each year, areas of concern to the Employment Strategy - for example, the increasing tendency to look to the local level for implementation of effective labour market measures - and to guide the areas of intervention for innovative measures around these. The types of activity concerned in this way could include: - pilot and demonstration projects; - action-research projects; - projects aimed at demonstrating the transferability of experience in particular fields; - experimental activities concerning the modernisation and adaptation of the various institutions involved in the labourmarket. As regards social partners, they should be encouraged to generate new ideas and to spread best practice in order to contribute more actively to a successful implementation of ESF objectives and the Employment strategy. Operations should therefore include: - activities aimed at increasing the knowledge of beneficiaries about the causes and driving forces of economic, technological, institutional and industrial change so that this knowledge can be applied in programmes and actions thus taking positive advantage of change; - exchange of experience regarding approaches to the challenges created by industrial change. These operation will be implemented through a process of Calls for Proposals, which will indicate the fields to be covered, the types of beneficiary and operation targeted, the conditions to be imposed upon successful applicants, and an indication of the financing likely to be available. The Committee will be informed about these as they come forward. In conclusion, the Committee is invited to express its opinion of this paper, and more particularly on the types of innovative measures indicated above.