LIFE II: financial instrument for the environment (amend. regul. 1973/92/EEC)

1995/0093(SYN) - 20/09/1995 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The Committee of the Regions welcomed the Council proposal presented by the Commission to amend the LIFE Regulation and reiterated the need to include the environment in economic spatial development planning in the Community. Measures under LIFE should not go against the principle of concentration, which was a matter for the Structural Funds policy. LIFE should target specific areas of action following simple, transparent procedures. Priority should be given to local projects with a transnational dimension. The Committee estimated that the proposed figure of ECU 450 million fell short of the programme's ambitions. Concerning the selection criteria, the Committee called for the LIFE information brochure to be readily accessible to applicants and invited the Commission and the Member States to involve the regions and local authorities in the dissemination of information to project partners. Concerning procedure, the Committee considered that the regions and local authorities should participate in the compilation and submission of project proposals in order to reduce effectively the number of projects submitted that were not eligible for financing under LIFE and improve the overall quality of proposals and the transparency of the procedure. Measures to accompany the implementation of the LIFE programme were required for the preparation, analysis or promotion of information in this area. The Committee stressed that representatives of the regional and local authorities should be able to participate in the decision-making process by proposing projects for financial support to the European Commission. LIFE could provide a basis for securing greater cohesion in the actions of Member States with regard to environmental problems and ensure a better balance between environmental policy and the other Community policies.