EC/Cyprus agreement: 3rd multiannual programme for small enterprises SMEs 1997-2000, cooperation

2000/0099(CNS) - 26/04/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to conclude an Agreement establishing co-operation between the Republic of Cyprus and the European Community within the framework of the Third Multiannual Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union (1997 to 2000). CONTENT : this Proposal for a Council Decision represents the legal instrument for the conclusion of this Agreement establishing co-operation between Cyprus and the European Community within the framework of the Third Multiannual Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union (1997-2000). Council Decision 97/15/EC of 9 December 1996 establishes the Third Multiannual Programme for SMEs provides that this programme shall be open to the participation of Cyprus and Malta. Moreover, as stated in the resolution of the EC/Cyprus in Community programmes is one of the elements of the pre-accession strategy to be implemented for that country in accordance with the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 6 March 1995 and the conclusions of the European Council in Luxembourg of 12-13 December 1997. The latter were confirmed by the European Council of Helsinki in December 1999, as far as the pre-accession strategy is concerned. The services of the Commission conducted negotiations with Cyprus on the basis of the Council Decision of December 1996. In accordance with the Council Decision, the Agreement, initialled on 8 February 2000, contains the following elements: - the Republic of Cyprus will participate in the measures: C. "Help SMEs to Europeanise and internationalise their strategies in particular through better information services" and E. "Promote entrepreneurship and support special target groups", in principle in the same way as the Member States of the Community; - the terms and conditions for the submission, evaluation and selection of applications and proposal of pilot projects, programmes and any other measures shall be the same as these applicable to organisations and individuals of the Community; - Cyprus shall provide, where necessary, the appropriate structures and mechanisms at national level required for its participation; - Cyprus shall make an annual financial contribution corresponding to the cost of the its participation in the Programme; - reponsibility for the implementation of the Programme will be vested in a Joint Committee; Cyprus will also be invited to attend co-ordination meetings prior to the formal sessions of the Programme committee; - the Agreement will be concluded for the duration of the programme. The Agreement designed to establish close co-operation with Cyprus in the field of SMEs is in the interest of the Community. It also represents an essential stage in Cyprus's preparation for accession. The conclusion of the Agreement is therefore of considerable importance. Ideally, it should enter into effect in the second quarter of 2000 so as to enable the Republic of Cyprus to take part inthe action, including the calls for proposals foreseen for the rest of the year. In conclusion, in view of the foregoing, the Commission invites the Council to adopt the Proposal for a Decision and to notify the Cypriot authorities that have procedures necessary for the entry into force of the Agreement have been completed on behalf of the European Community.