Fight against fraud: protection of the Communities' financial interests, strategic approach

2000/2279(COS) - 28/06/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to outline the main guidelines of the multi-annual strategy (2000 to 2005) in relation to the protection of the Communities' financial interests. CONTENT : to be in line with the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council, the orientations of this communication are complementary to the measures already taken to ensure good, sound and rigorous management of the different policies of the EU and to prevent the risk of irregularities or misappropriation of funds. This communication is in line with the same process of strengthening public finance and represents more particularly the approach which the Commission intends to present to the European Parliament and the Council on the fight against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests. It relies on the new institutional framework and the complementarity of the Member States and the institutions. Community public finance is governed by provisions included in the EC Treaty (Articles 274 to 280). The preparation, implementation and protection of the Communiuty budget is the responsibility of the European institutions and the Member States. The European Parliament and the Council, as well as the Commission, have particular responsibilites in this area. The new Article 280 of the EC Treaty sets out an objective of effective and equivalent protection throughout the Community. It requires all the responsible authorities in the Member States to organise close and regular cooperation with the Commission. It introduces a new legal base to allow the European Parliament and the Council to adopt by codecision procedure the measures to prevent and combat attacks on the Communities' financial interests. Article 280 of the EC Treaty calls finally for a policy of permanent evaluation and transparency which must be implemented on the basis of the Commission's annual report drawn up in cooperation with the Member States. To satisfy the objectives of the EC Treaty, the new approach must be based on a strengthened culture of cooperation between the national and Community levels. It must include at the same time a prevention policy and an effective financial follow up and sanction policy. To put this global strategy project in a longer term context and achieve tangible and measureable results, the Community and the Member States will have to act with determination and plan their efforts in a multi-annual strategy (2001 to 2005) around four main strategic guidelines: - an overall legislative anti-fraud policy: (the development of the regulatory system towards more effectiveness and coherence); - a new culture of operational cooperation: (full participation and concerted commitment of the national and Community authorities on the ground); - an inter-institutional approach to prevent and combat corruption: (the strengthening of the credibility of the new obligations of the Treaty); - enhancement of the penal judicial dimension (adaptation of national criminal prosecutions to the new obligations of the Treaty). The main lines of this strategy represent major challenges to be faced around which will have to be organised all the initiatives and priorities to be implemented in the annual programme.COS002279 28/06/00 BAS EN PURPOSE : to outline the main guidelines of the multi-annual strategy (2000 to 2005) in relation to the protection of the Communities' financial interests. CONTENT : to be in line with the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council, the orientations of this communication are complementary to the measures already taken to ensure good, sound and rigorous management of the different policies of the EU and to prevent the risk of irregularities or misappropriation of funds. This communication is in line with the same process of strengthening public finance and represents more particularly the approach which the Commission intends to present to the European Parliament and the Council on the fight against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests. It relies on the new institutional framework and the complementarity of the Member States and the institutions. Community public finance is governed by provisions included in the EC Treaty (Articles 274 to 280). The preparation, implementation and protection of the Communiuty budget is the responsibility of the European institutions and the Member States. The European Parliament and the Council, as well as the Commission,

have particular responsibilites in this area. The new Article 280 of the EC Treaty sets out an objective of effective and equivalent protection throughout the Community. It requires all the responsible authorities in the Member States to organise close and regular cooperation with the Commission. It introduces a new legal base to allow the European Parliament and the Council to adopt by codecision procedure the measures to prevent and combat attacks on the Communities' financial interests. Article 280 of the EC Treaty calls finally for a policy of permanent evaluation and transparency which must be implemented on the basis of the Commission's annual report drawn up in cooperation with the Member States. To satisfy the objectives of the EC Treaty, the new approach must be based on a strengthened culture of cooperation between the national and Community levels. It must include at the same time a prevention policy and an effective financial follow up and sanction policy. To put this global strategy project in a longer term context and achieve tangible and measureable results, the Community and the Member States will have to act with determination and plan their efforts in a multi-annual strategy (2001 to 2005) around four main strategic guidelines: - an overall legislative anti-fraud policy: (the development of the regulatory system towards more effectiveness and coherence); - a new culture of operational cooperation: (full participation and concerted commitment of the national and Community authorities on the ground); - an inter-institutional approach to prevent and combat corruption: (the strengthening of the credibility of the new obligations of the Treaty); - enhancement of the penal judicial dimension (adaptation of national criminal prosecutions to the new obligations of the Treaty). The main lines of this strategy represent major challenges to be faced around which will have to be organised all the initiatives and priorities to be implemented in the annual programme.