

South-east Europe, western Balkans: Community assistance, CARDS programme, 2000-2006

2000/0111(CNS) - 04/10/2000 - Legislative proposal

This amended proposal, (presented before the adoption of the EP's opinion) seeks to take into account the new guidelines proposed by the Commission concerning the reform of the management of external aid. The main aim of the reform is to improve radically the speed, quality and visibility of external aid. The programming principles are clearly set out: a strategy framework will serve as a basis for establishing an indicative multiannual programme which will enable the annual programme to be drawn up. These principles were not clearly affirmed in the previous proposal and should apply in all except exceptional cases. Stepping up programming and setting out a strategy framework to provide a basis for the assistance should allow the Member States to express their views on the priorities and broad guidelines for assistance within the management committee. The guidelines on the reform of external aid recommend that the committees' contribution focus on the programming phase rather than on specific projects, as it is at the programming stage that important issues of policy and strategy arise. It is proposed that the management committee, together with the Commission, would examine the strategy framework (country strategy paper) on which programming is to be based. The multiannual and annual programmes would be submitted to the committee for its opinion. The experience gained since the Agency began operations in February 2000 has highlighted the need to make the decision making process mechanisms connected with reconstruction programmes faster and more operational. It is proposed that the reconstruction programmes proposed by the Agency must be able to be adopted by the Commission without needing to be reviewed by the management committee, and, therefore, that the management committee procedure should not apply. Other minor amendments should be noted: - a distinction is drawn between assistance that can be provided by UNMIK and the OHR under the Regulation regarding assistance and that which is covered by Regulation (EC) 1080/2000; - there should be complementarity between Community assistance and bilateral assistance provided by the Member States; - the alteration of the Regulation setting up a European Training Foundation to allow the Foundation to pursue activities in the countries which are recipients under the regulation on assistance; - the amendment of the Council Decision granting a Community guarantee to the EIB against losses under loans for projects outside the Community to replace the reference to the Obnova Regulation with a reference to this Regulation. The proposed modifications do not entail financial consequences.