EC/Turkey relations: implementation of measures to promote economic and social development

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PURPOSE : to establish a report on the activities financed under Council Regulation 257/2001/EC regarding the implementation measures to promote eocnomic and social development in Turkey. CONTENT : adopted in January 2001, Council Regulation 257/2001/EC aims to implement measures to promote economic and social development in Turkey. With a total budget of EUR 135 million for a period of 3 years, the Regulation aims to provide financial support for measures to promote economic and social development in Turkey. Since January 2001, only one project has been established in the planned indicative programme of the Regulation. It concerns a Regional Development Programme (GAP). The EU contribution to this project is EUR 43,5 million. The overall objective of the GAP Regional Development Programme is to improve the economic and social conditions of people living in the South-East of Turkey. The programme will support national objectives such as sustained economic growth, alleviation of regional disparities, increasing productivity and employment capacity in the region. The project has three components: - SME Component: training of staff for SME centres, provision of information, advice and training in various fields (management, finance, accounting, marketing, internet trade) for start-ups and entrepreneurs and potential Turkish and foreign investors; - Rural Development Component: in the South-East region of Turkey, many rural households have a subsistence livelihood, based on primitive agriculture and animal husbandry. To reduce poverty and alleviate those adverse conditions a Rural Development and micro Credit Component will be implemented. It will enhance the geographical coverage of income-generating opportunities, rural extension and advisory services, further processing and rural marketing, credit provisions, and improved environmental awareness in the GAP region; - Cultural Heritage Development Component: the primary target of the Cultural Heritage Component is the people living in the GAP Region as well as the local government and the municipalities in charge of protecting/safeguarding and preserving the local cultural endowment and finally the Ministry of Culture, offically responsible for documentation, maintenance and enhancement of the cultural heritage. The Programme in its totality will enhance the conditions for the reduction of socio-economic disparities affecting the South-East of Turkey. It will emphasise the human dimensions of development through operations at the grass roots level. For the 2002 financial year, similar initiatives are foreseen in other poor provinces of Eastern and South-eastern Turkey. With regard to the Development Programme, it was developed during the course of 2000. A feasibility study in the region was carried out by external experts in direct co-ordination with the EC Representation in Ankara, after which a Financing Proposal was drawn up. The MED Committee, on 5 December 2000, gave unanimously a positive opinion on the proposal. It should be added that projects have not yet started. Therefore no evaluations were carried out during the reporting period. Lastly, the overall partner for the project is the GAPRegional Development Administration, which is attached to the Prime Ministry in Turkey. The GAP Regional Development Administration coordinates a multisectoral, integrated regional development project, the South-Eastern Anatolian Project called 'GAP'. For the implementation of the SME component of the programme, the GAP administration will sign a contract with the United Nations Development Programme's Resident Representation to a Turkey (UNDP-Turkey). For the Rural Development and Micro Credit Component the GAP Administration will sign a contract with the Development Foundation of Turkey (TKV). It is an indigenous, private, NGO and non-profit development organisation that was incorporated in 1969 for promoting rural and agricultural development projects among Turkey's rural poor. This association is well placed for and fully supports the gender-balanced approach to developemnt. TKV has played a pioneering role in devising and implementing environmental awareness programmes for duplication by government agencies.