# Environment: promoting NGO primarily active in the field of environmental protection (Community action programme)

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PURPOSE : to establish a report on the experience gained in the application of Decision 97/872/EC on the Community support to NGO's primarily active in the field of the environment. CONTENT : this report was established in the light of the experience gained by the Commission in the implementation of the Action Programme during the first three years, 1998-2000, and the experience gained by the during this period. In order to collect information on the Action Programme in a systematic way, a survey was produced, which was disseminated to all the services of the Environment DG (the Programme co-ordinator) and to external stakeholders (present and previous beneficiaries). The aim of the survey was twofold: 1) to compile information on how the provisions of the Programme and their implementation had been perceived in the past by the Commission and the NGOs in order to produce this present report; 2) to compile information on how the provisions of the Programme could be amended to better fit the needs of the Commission and the stakeholders in case of a renewal of the Programme. This would then require a Draft Proposal for a new Council Decision (see COD/2001/0139). The general objective of the Programme is to promote the activities of NGOs, which are primarily active in the field of environmental protection at a European level by contributing to the development and implementation of Community environmental policy and legislation. The financial contributions granted under this financial instrument (covering both 'running costs' and activities) are meant to enable environmental NGOs to carry out a number of activities for the benefit of Europe·s environment and society as a whole. These NGO activities include, among others, bringing the citizens closer to the European Union by making EU policies comprehensible and relevant to everybody as well as the provision of channels for feedback to the Commission of citizens' views and concerns. The collective experience gained by both the Commission and consulted NGOs (including all present and previous beneficiaries), as outlined in the survey replies, indicates that the Programme should be renewed, preferably for a period of 5 years · but with certain modifications, such as an expansion of the geographical scope in order to include Candidate Countries' NGOs and NGOs of the Balkans. The evaluation of budget line B4-3060 (under the SEM 2000 initiative), which comprises an in-depth analysis of the efficiency and justification of this financial instrument, has been duly taken into account and the results of this study support the conclusions of this Report for a renewal: A renewal of the Action Programme is also supported by the [Proposal for a Sixth Environment Action Programme], which provides for a continuation of NGO funding to environmental NGOs in order to facilitate participation in the dialogue process. The strategic approach of the [Proposal for a Sixth Environment Action Programme] recognises the need for empowering citizens, and the measures proposed include extensive and wide-rangingdialogue with stakeholders in environmental policy-making. The Programme also foresees co-operation with environmental NGOs in the Candidate Countries in order to raise awareness.