Development cooperation: Asian and Latin America countries ALA

2002/0139(COD) - 02/07/2002 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a framework for the implementation of a Community policy of cooperation through the financing of projects and programmes with the Asian and Latin American (ALA) countries. CONTENT : the Commission adopted this proposal for a new regulation for its co-operation with Asia and Latin America (ALA), thus completing the overhaul of the main Regulations governing the way assistance is provided to third countries. This forms part of the drive to reform the EU's external assistance programmes, which is a key priority of this Commission. The proposal aims to improve the speed of implementation of projects and increase their quality and effectiveness. The underlying philosophy for the new regulation is: 1) achieve faster commitment and disbursement of aid; 2) improve quality through rigorous planning for periods of 5 to 7 years in country and regional strategies; 3) improve financial management of assistance through simplified decision-making procedures; 4) make implementation of aid more coherent through increased co-operation with Member States and other aid donors. The objectives of cooperation are defined in a broad way, to make it possible to intervene in all areas of cooperation covered by the agreements between the Community and the partner countries and under the policy and cooperation guidelines adopted in the relevant forums. It is during the programming exercise that sectors and cooperation activities will be precisely defined, according to the characteristics and needs of each partner country or region. The proposed Regulation does not prejudge these choices. It should be flexible enough to answer the priorities of the moment. In general terms, cooperation and assistance under the proposed Regulation will have to take account of the objectives of development policy as defined in Article 177 of the Treaty, and further developed in the Conclusions of the Development Council and in the joint statement of the Council and the Commission of 10 November 2000. In this context, the proposed Regulation, when setting out the broad objectives of assistance, refers in particular, to sustainable development, to poverty reduction, to the integration of the partner countries in the world economy, to trade and investment, to regional integration and to strengthening the links between the partner regions and the European Union. Similarly, the modernisation and improvement of institutional capacities is included as an essential principle of cooperation. This will contribute, in particular, to the promotion of democratic principles, of the rule of law and of human rights as well as to the improvement of the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime. As regards programming, within the framework of the reform of the management of external aid, the Commission considers a key objective to strengthen multiannual programming in order to reflect the political objectives and the priorities of the EU. The proposed Regulation establishes clear principles for programming: a strategy paper will serve as a basis for establishing multiannual indicative programmes, which will in turn make it possible to draw up annual action plans. These principles are of general application, except in particular cases. The establishment of a rigorous and coherent programming system will improve the effectiveness of aid, link Community cooperation better to reform programmes pursuing short and medium term objectives and ensure its complementarity with the assistance provided by other donors. In accordance with the criteria established in Council Decision 1999/468/EC, the Committee provided for in the proposed Regulation will act according to the management procedure provided for in Article 4 of the aforementioned decision. With regard to the participation in public tenders, the proposed Regulation provides for the untying of aid at the regional level. It also provides for the participation of the candidate countries. Specific provisions allow other countries to participate, on a case-by-case basis, in particular, for the purposes of cofinancing and of regional cooperation in Asia. In accordance with the aforementioned statement of the Commission of 25 April 2001, the participation of other countries in the procurement of services and products for the fight against communicable diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria is also authorised on a case by case basis. Lastly, with a view to simplifying and reducing the number of legal bases, the proposed Regulation encompasses aid activities for uprooted people. It also introduces the possibility of financing rehabilitation activities. This will make it possible to handle issues relating to the transition between relief,

rehabilitation and development in a more coherent way. Under the new framework for assistance, EUR 2.52 bn for co-operation with Asia and EUR 1.27 bn for co-operation with Latin America are envisaged for the period 2003-2006.