

Relations EU/Western Balkan countries: partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and the association process

2003/0267(CNS) - 13/11/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish European Partnerships for the countries participating in the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP), being Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999. **PROPOSED ACT** : Council Regulation. **CONTENT** : the Thessaloniki European Council of 19 and 20 June 2003 reiterated its determination to support the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries and stated that the Western Balkan countries will become an integral part of the EU, once they meet the established criteria. It endorsed the introduction of European Partnerships for the above-mentioned countries. The priorities of the European Partnerships will be based on the Commission's political, economic and strategic priorities in the light of the assessments in the Annual Reports, with due consideration to the criteria defined by the European Council and to issues particular to the Western Balkans. The European Partnerships will identify priorities for action in supporting efforts to move closer to the European Union and serve as a checklist against which to measure progress. They will reflect the particular stage of development of each country, be tailored to their specific needs and be drawn up following contacts with the countries concerned. The countries would be expected to respond to the European Partnerships by preparing and implementing plans with a timetable and details of how they intend to address the European Partnership's priorities in terms of financial and human resources. The progress in implementing the priorities will be monitored regularly by the Commission, notably in the Annual Reports and through the structures set up under the SAP. This proposal establishes the legal base to draw up European Partnerships for the countries of the Western Balkans to be adopted by the Council by qualified majority. The priorities of the European Partnerships will also be adopted by the Council by qualified majority. The proposed framework regulation has no financial implications. Community assistance will continue to be the assistance provided for under existing financial instrument (s), in particular Council Regulation 2666/2000/EC (CARDS).