Agriculture: characterisation, collection and use of genetic resources, programme 2004-2006

2003/0321(CNS) - 22/12/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a new Community programme to promote the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture. PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation. CONTENT : Council Regulation 1467/94/EC launched a five-year Community programme, which terminated on 31 December 1999. Three Calls for proposals were published during that period (1994, 1996, 1998). Almost half of the 21 projects which were selected under this programme are still ongoing. In February 2000, independent experts drew up an evaluation report on the implementation of the programme. The recommendations of the evaluation can be summarised as follows: - maintain and strengthen the action, while taking care to ensure a better balancebetween projects on "plants" and "animals", - include the concept of on-farm conservation and respond to local requirements (biogeographic regions) while promoting more active participation by NGOs, - increase co-ordination between the Member States and the Commission with regard to negotiations and actions at FAO level, - target measures more towards a broader coverage of the participation of Member States in a certain category of projects. A series of consultations of stakeholders took place in 2000, and certain recommendations emerged in the course of the various consultations on the content of the new Community programme. The Commission's proposal on the new programme contains the following principal aims: - finance measures to promote the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture, allowing for a wider coverage of plant and animal diversity and, at the same time, helping implement the Biodiversity Action Plan for Agriculture, with particular emphasis on complementing the scope (as regards beneficiaries and/or eligible actions for funding) of the "Rural Development" Council Regulation 1257/1999/EC; - promote the exchange of information and close co-ordination between the Member States and between the Member States and the Commission, with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture, in line with the requirements and needs of the Common Agricultural Policy, - facilitate co-ordination in the field of international undertakings on genetic resources in agriculture, in particular within the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the FAO's Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Since the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture are essential to the sustainable development of agricultural production and of rural areas, the legal basis of the action is Article 37 of the Treaty. The new programme will cover the following elements: - the framework of the programme, including the objectives, the scope and the type of the actions to be promoted, as well as the essential provisions to be followed in the implementation of the future Community programme; Actions to be promoted are defined as targeted, concerted, or accompanying action; - programme implementation through actions that aim to support at Community level work undertaken at local, regional, or MemberState level. Smaller-scale measures may cover on-farm conservation (reproduction of genetic resources by farmers, on their own farm); - on-farm genetic resources conservation activities which should be a means to promote the conservation of genetic material, varieties and races as well as the characterisation and utilisation of those varieties and races in agriculture in line with the aims of the CAP towards a sustainable agriculture. They shall be transnational, taking into account, if appropriate, bio-geographic regional aspects; - the role of the Commission regarding programme co-ordination and international representation in relation to the undertakings on genetic resources in agriculture implemented at international level; - the setting up of a Committee on genetic resources to assist the Commission and act as a management committee when consulted on the adoption of calls for proposals and proposed actions, and as a consultative committee for other questions related to genetic resources. - the Community contribution to the targeted actions must not exceed 50% of the total cost of the actions; - the Community contribution to concerted and accompanying actions must not exceed 80% of the total cost of the action; - however, a 1000% contribution is permitted for matters such as evaluation of proposals. FINANCIAL

IMPLICATIONS : Budget lines and headings: - 2003: line B2 - 517 "Plant and animal genetic resources", - 2004 and following years: line 05 04 03 02; "plant and animal genetic resources", - 2004 and following years: technical assistance (contract for the provision of services) should be foreseen on a new budget line to be established. - Overall figures - Total allocation for action (Part B): EUR 10 Million for commitment appropriation. - Period of application: from the adoption up to end 2006. However, the duration of the actions co-financed extends beyond the duration of the Community programme: a final last call for proposals for actions will be launched in 2006 and the related selected actions will last until 2010/2011. Commitments regarding technical and administrative assistance will last until 2010/2011. - Overall financial impact of human resources: EUR 216000. Total number of staff : 2.