Culture: grants to bodies active at European level, 2004-2006 action programme

2003/0115(COD) - 09/01/2004 - Commission communication on Council's position

The text of the common position is largely acceptable to the Commission, which in particular has accepted, in a spirit of compromise, the reduction in the duration of the programme as requested by Parliament and the Council. The Commission is also in a position to confirm the agreement reached at the budgetary conciliation on 24/11/03 on "earmarking", gradual reduction and clauses derogating from the Financial Regulation. The Commission nevertheless attaches importance to the coherent application of the criteria of Article 2 of the Council Decision on committee procedures (1999/468/EC), the implications of which were highlighted in the judgement of the Court of 21 January. Bearing in mind the budget laid down in the proposal, the criteria of this Article would not be met. Without maintaining its reservation, the Commission therefore presented a unilateral declaration on this subject. Moreover, the Decision should reflect the agreement reached between the co-legislators on 24/11/03, namely: - extension of the system of designated beneficiaries until 2005; - given that the Decision will only be adopted during 2004, inclusion of two derogations from the Financial Regulation worded as follows: "For grants awarded in 2004, it will be possible for the period of eligibility of expenditure to start on 1 January 2004, provided that the expenditure does not precede the date on which the grant application was lodged or the date on which the beneficiary's budget year starts. During 2004, in the case of beneficiaries whose budgetary year starts before 1 March, an exception may be granted to the obligation to sign the grant agreement within the first four months of the start of the beneficiary's budget year, as referred to in Article 112, paragraph 2 of Council Regulation 1605/2002/EC, Euratom on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities. In this case, the grant agreement should be signed by 30 June 2004 at the latest". The Commission notes the Council's decision to introduce in Article 6 an appeal to the Management Committee of the Culture 2000 programme relating to various measures for implementing the programme of Community action to promote organisations active at European level in the area of culture.