Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

1995/0098(CNS) - 08/05/1996 - Modified legislative proposal

In its amended proposal, the Commission took over several of the amendments adopted by the EP in the House. These amendments related, in particular, to actions aimed at: - promoting the exchange of experiences at all levels within the framework of the programme, - contributing, within the framework of the actions implemented, to the prevention of natural and technological disasters, particularly by including the risks of disaster in environmental impact assessments and by taking preventive measures, - helping to ensure that those primarily responsible for and most directly involved in civil protection were better prepared and thus better able to respond to emergencies, - improving technical forecasting methods by means of demonstrations and pilot projects, - promoting collective solidarity. Research activities should give priority to the techniques which were least harmful to the environment. In the annex dealing with the implementation of actions on the ground, the Commission stated that actions relating to training and the exchange of experiences should also involve specialists and technicians involved in civil protection (particularly the services responsible for dealing with disasters in isolated and ultra-peripheral regions). With regard to simulation exercises, the actions should be aimed at improving effectiveness and speed of response in the event of disasters. In the case of pilot projects, the emphasis was placed on projects designed to increase the speed of response of the emergency services. These projects should, where possible, be multinational and make an impact and be publicised throughout the Union. The Commission also took over in part the amendments aimed at: - giving greater consideration to environmental aspects when forecasting disasters (particularly floods), - enhancing the sense of shared responsibility on the part of citizens and public awareness of hazards (particularly in connection with accidental discharges of toxic substances), - emphasising the role of NGOs and their possible participation in the programme, - implementing actions in close cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, particularly in the Union's isolated and ultra-peripheral regions, - keeping Parliament better informed of the programme's implementation. However, the Commission did not accept the amendments aimed at: - strengthening Community cooperation in the field of civil protection or coordinating the resources available to combat disasters at regional and supraregional level, - integrating a reference to the fifth Community programme on the environment, - providing for Community disaster simulation exercises and measures for peripheral regions in conjunction with third countries, - granting aid to NGOs to help them to improve the resources at their disposal in case of disasters within or outside the Community, - changing the comitology procedure (including the submission of the committee's assessment to Parliament), - amending the financial aspects of the action programme.