ODYSSEUS programme 1998-2002: mutual assistance concerning immigration, border controls and asylum

1997/0909(CNS) - 09/07/1997 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: joint action introducing a programme of training, exchanges and cooperation in the field of asylum, immigration and crossing of external borders. The programme (Odysseus) has the following purposes: - to develop cooperation between administrations responsible for the implementation of these policies in the Member States, - to improve mutual knowledge of working methods in this field. CONTENT: the Odysseus programme is established for a period of 5 years from 1997 to 2001 and covers not only training, exchanges and cooperation but also detection of false documents (it incorporates the Sherlock programme which deals with this subject). It concerns the fields of asylum, immigration and crossing of external borders. An annual programming of Odysseus defines the priorities for measures to be taken in consideration of the following: . Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, . the existence of current Community legislation, . the existence of legislative proposals under discussion in this field, in order to anticipate their coming into force by appropriate cooperation between administrations, . priorities set by the Council in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, . any other cooperation requirements. The general objective of the programme is to extend existing cooperation in these fields between Member States and to step up cooperation with the countries which have applied for accession. - Actions to be taken: this comprises work experience placements focusing on theoretical and practical knowledge, visits to other Member States by officials and research with a view to the use for teaching purposes of miscellaneous material, documents and databases or directories used by the administrations of the Member States. -Structure of the programme: . in the field of asylum, actions mainly concern coordinated application of the Dublin Convention determining the State responsible for examining applications for asylum and close cooperation between the competent national administrations of the Member States (particularly coordinated application of procedures and other legal instruments, conditions for reception of asylum seekers, etc.); . in the field of immigration, projects mainly concern admission of third-country nationals to the Community, conditions relating to their entry and travel within the Union, residence rules, etc. and combating illegal immigration; . in the field of crossing of external borders, actions concern the practical organisation of checks (particularly the security of identity documents). Specific subprogrammes will comprise measures involving applicant countries. - Financing criteria: projects must involve at least 3 Member States and may also involve States applying for accession. The level of Community finance is to be 60% of the cost of the actions (under certain circumstances this may be increased to 80%). - Management of the programme: the Commission is to manage the programme in accordance with the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977. It is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating projects. A draft annual programme is to be drawn up by the Commission. It will be assisted by a committee consisting of representatives of the Member States, which will mainly decide on the annual programme and on the division of the appropriations available among fields of action. - Report: a report to the European Parliament and the Council is to be drawn up annually on the action taken. - Funding: ECU 14 million (including ECU 5 million from the Sherlock programme).