Consumers: general framework for Community activities 1999-2003

1998/0028(COD) - 28/01/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: Provide a legal basis for consumer protection activities eligible for Community funding for the period from 01/01/1999 to 31/12/2003. SUBSTANCE: The legal framework proposed is based on Article 129a of the Treaty and seeks to underpin and supplement the policy followed by the Member States in this area. The mechanism which will have a budget limited to ECU 114 million over a five year period and is not a multi-annual programme of measures, since it is not possible to foresee the problems which will require Community intervention, but rather a general framework of activities seeks to provide funding for measures in the following four sectors: (1) Consumer health and safety: risk assessment inspection and control measures will be funded, for example the preparation and drawing up of opinions of scientific committees or the expert knowledge required for inspections in the food, veterinary and plant health sectors. (2) Protection of the economic interests of consumers with regard to products and services: Funding will be provided to improve cooperation between the market monitoring organizations and mechanisms for resolving disputes, particularly of a cross-border nature. (3) Education and awareness of consumers: funding will be provided for comparative product testing and the promotion of specialized European centres. (4) Promotion and representation of consumer interests: funding will be provided to take account of consumer views in drawing up Community standards and policies and supporting certain representative organizations at European level. The actions will be limited to consumer policy within the Union. They may also cover food safety together with other Community public health initiatives. The activities will include: - measures taken by the Commission to underpin national policies, - measures taken by European consumer bodies under the conditions defined in the proposal, - specific consumer protection projects submitted by consumer organizations. Funding in the last two cases will be limited to 50% of available appropriations.