Displaced persons: solidarity in the admission and residence of beneficiaries of the temporary protection

1998/0222(CNS) - 24/06/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to submit a new proposal completing the arrangements for temporary protection of displaced persons and on the admission and residence of beneficiaries of this scheme. SUBSTANCE: On 5 March 1997 the Commission presented a proposal for a joint action concerning the temporary protection of displaced persons (CNS97081). Part of the initial text was concerned with sharing responsibilities between the Member States in applying the temporary protection scheme, i.e. sharing the burden of temporary refugees and also the financial burden. This point had the effect of blocking further discussions on the initial text. For this reason the Commission has decided to separate this part of the text so that the temporary protection scheme can be adopted more easily. However, to maintain a clear political link with the initial text, the Commission proposes that this text come into force simultaneously with the text of the temporary protection scheme. The new text is therefore presented as a framework decision with effects which are linked to application of the temporary protection scheme. Its main provisions are as follows: - implementation of the 'solidarity principle' to assist Member States which are particularly affected by admission onto their territory of beneficiaries of the temporary protection scheme; this solidarity will mainly be expressed through financial aid from the Community budget: 1) to contribute to emergency measures (temporary accommodation, means of subsistence and emergency medical aid) during the first three months of the temporary protection scheme, in the form of flat-rate financial aid; 2) to promote reception projects in the longer term (housing costs, social assistance, education); this aid would involve a scale for distribution between the Member States; - as a subsidiary measure, burden-sharing: this implies a possible redistribution of beneficiaries of temporary protection between Member States before or on arrival on the territory of the Member States. This last, particularly ambitious, provision would be difficult to implement and in reality only applicable in the event of a serious crisis, and it should not be allowed to conflict with the principles of the Dublin Convention on determination of the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application. The financial statement annexed to the proposal provides for the creation of a Community budget heading to cover emergency aid for the first three months of temporary protection. It also includes use of an existing budget heading (B5-803: ECU 3.75 million in 1998, EUR 5 million for 1999) on policy on asylum seekers and other displaced persons for longer term projects.