

Agenda 2000: European Regional Development Fund ERDF

1998/0114(COD) - 20/01/1999 - Modified legislative proposal

This amended Commission proposal takes account of the amendments approved by the European Parliament on 19 November 1998 to the Commission's initial proposal. When Parliament's amendments were voted upon, the Commission noted that the vast majority of them did not differ substantially from its proposal. The Commission is able to accept, in full or in part, a number of amendments on the following lines : - they follow the general logic of the reform of the Structural Funds since they simplify the common rules for implementing the Structural Funds and restrict the Regulations governing each Fund to its specific provisions, essentially its scope; - in general, they continue the tried and tested provisions governing the ERDF, adding clarifications where required. In that sense, the Commission does not consider it helpful to select amendments which are acceptable in substance but which seek to specify particular areas or sectors for ERDF assistance which are already covered in more general terms or those which seek to introduce fresh areas of assistance outside the scope of the ERDF. Also included in this revised proposal are the changes made so far in the course of examining this proposal. - In the first recital of the proposed Regulation, reference is now made to the contribution of the ERDF to reducing 'the gap between the levels of development of the various regions and the extent to which the least-favoured regions and islands, including rural areas are lagging behind. - A new recital 4a states that the ERDF should provide assistance within the framework of a comprehensive and integrated strategy for sustainable development and ensure synergy with assistance from other Structural Funds; - Specific reference is also made to the important role of culture and tourism in job creation; - In several instances in the revised proposal, reference is made to the creation and/or maintenance of permanent jobs; - The importance of the diversification of economic sites is also cited as falling within the scope of ERDF funding in Objective 1 and 2 areas; - Also falling within the scope of ERDF funding for equality between men and women, in addition to the establishment of firms, are measures to fund infrastructure and services enabling the reconciliation of family and working life; - The aims of Interreg and Innovative measures are clarified as being the 'harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the whole of the Community's territory.