

Development cooperation with South Africa

1999/0070(COD) - 12/03/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend regulation 2259/96/EC on development cooperation with South Africa with a view to adapting and improving support provided by the Community to this country. **CONTENT:** In November 1996, the Council adopted regulation 2259/96/EC on development cooperation with South Africa (see procedure entry SYN95110), referring to a financial amount of 500 MECU for the EPRD (European Programme for Reconstruction and Development in South Africa) from January 1996 to December 1999. This regulation expires on 31/12/99. As a result, the Commission is proposing a new regulation aimed at continuing support to this country, while amending and strengthening certain areas of cooperation: These adaptations relate to the following areas: 1) enhancing the visibility and coherence of cooperation by targeting EU intervention on a limited number of sectors, namely: - support for policies, instruments and programmes aimed at the progressive integration of the South African economy into the world economy, job-creation, development of the private sector, regional cooperation and integration (particular attention will be given to support for the establishment of a free-trade area under the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and South Africa); - improvement of living conditions and delivery of basic social services; - support to democratisation, the protection of human rights, sound public management, the strengthening of local governments and involvement of civil society in the development process. Programmes shall focus on the fight against poverty, take into account the needs of the previously disadvantaged communities and reflect the gender and environmental dimensions of development. 2) to set up tri-annual programming and regular dialogue with the Member States and the South African government as to the strategy to be followed (the Commission shall draw up a recapitulative strategy paper which shall take account of the results of the most recent overall evaluation of operations financed under regulation 2259/96/EC, and on which the Commission and the committee for the new programme should agree. On the basis of that examination, the Commission will forward to the committee, for information, a tri-annual indicative programme, to be submitted to the South African government for its agreement); 3) to simplify and adapt the procedures for granting Community financing with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of actions undertaken: it is proposed that those activities which are eligible for financing from the budget should be adapted and more clearly defined and that, whenever possible, the usual procedures of partners should be adopted (notably, by following the procedures provided for by the Lomé Convention, of which South Africa is a qualified member), and the decision-making process should be simplified (lightening committee procedure for the financing of actions costing between EURO 5 and 25 million); 4) transferring responsibility for certain decisions, up to now taken in Brussels, to the Commission delegation in South Africa and the beneficiary of the EPRD (in the first instance, contracts will be signed by the South African government); 5) to ensure a more effective management and follow-up of cooperation, by the creation of additional Local Agent posts in the Commission delegation in South Africa and the programming of an annual envelope for technical assistance. It should be noted that, provisionally, in its financial statement, the Commission judges an amount of EURO 875 million to be necessary to cover the cost of this cooperation for the period 2000-2006 - i.e. EURO 125 million per year. EURO 127.5 would be proposed for 1999.