Development cooperation: democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

1997/0191A(SYN) - 29/04/1999 - Modified legislative proposal

In its re-examined proposal, the Commission accepted 13 of the 28 amendments proposed by the Parliament (besides those already included in the Council's common position) either in whole or subject to modifications or adjustments. The amendments relate to: - the replacement of a type IIIa regulatory committee with an advisory committee, - the deletion of the limit of the Regulation's application (31 December 2004), - the deletion of Article 10 and recital 23 concerning the financial reference amount (260 million euro for the 1999-2004 period), - the need to report to Parliament on emergency operations, - improving the visibility of Community action, - requiring beneficiary organisations to undertake to propagate, respect and promote democratic principles and human rights without any discrimination, - limiting technical assistance and administrative expenses. On the other hand, the Commission did not accept that the Parliament should be kept informed of the work of the Committee. It considers that the desire for transparency should not mean that absolutely all the Committee's proceedings take place in public: confidential discussions are needed when choosing projects to protect the Committee from pressure or manipulation. Basing opinions on a series of pre-established criteria should satisfy the need for transparency. The Commission did not accept the procedure called for by the Parliament regarding emergency operations (prior consultation of the EP). Other amendments were rejected either for reasons of substance or form in that they are redundant or for certain other specific reasons, such as: - stiffening the requirements relating to the programming of measures: in the Commission's view, the Council's common position broadly satisfies the EP's requests made at first reading; - the concept of good governance as a fundamental objective of the Regulation (for legal reasons, since this concept cannot be placed on the same footing as fundamental rights and democratic principles); - excessive evaluation of projects; - an excess of coordination between the Member States and the European Parliament.