Palestine, refugees: 10th EC-UNRWA Convention 1999-2001, the EC budgetary contribution prior to signature

1999/0143(CNS) - 08/07/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: approval of a new EC-UNRWA Convention regarding the Community's contribution to the UNRWA's regular programme, as well as its food aid programme. CONTENT: The draft agreement lays down for the period 1999-2001 the contribution of the Community to the regular budget of the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), and allows for the annual setting of the Community contribution to its food aid budget according to annual discussions between officials of the respective organisations and the annually determined needs of the refugee population. Under this Tenth Convention, the UNRWA is requesting a contribution of 120,82 million euros for the period 1999-2001. this sum would cover the funding of education and health programmes. These contributions may be modified by an exchange of correspondence between the parties within the period of the validity of the agreement. The Commission has borne in mind during negotiations that, at some point, UNRWA would hand over its functions to the Palestinian Authority, and even other administrations in the region. By the end of 2000, political developments regarding the refugees will be reviewed by the parties, and an evaluation of any plans UNRWA has drawn up, and, if this is the case put into effect, for the hand-over. Such a review will enable the Commission to foresee the order of magnitude of the Agency's level of contribution UNRWA may request the Community to make beyond the life of a tenth Convention. It is therefore possible that the UNRWA's financial requirements fall even during the 1999-2001 period. This could be the case, for example, if any of the Agency's functions were during the life of the Convention to be handed over, thus reducing UNRWA's recurrent costs. An article has therefore been included in the text to allow for necessary adjustments in the Community contribution under this Convention.